OFFICIAL REPORT

OF THE

STATES OF DELIBERATION OF THE ISLAND OF GUERNSEY

HANSARD

Royal Court House, Guernsey, Wednesday, 21st October 2026

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T. L. Bury
A. K. Cameron
H. L. Camp
G. M. Collins
R. P. Curgenven
D. F. Dorrity
S. J. Falla
A. Gabriel
J. A. B. Gollop
L. T. Goy
M. A. J. Helyar
R. M. Humphreys
N. R. Inder
B. R. Kay-Mouat
A. Kazantseva-Miller
M. S. Laine
M. P. Leadbeater
R. Le Brun
M. Malik
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P. S. N. Montague
A. J. Niles
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C. N. K. Parkinson
T. M. Rylatt
A. S. Sloan
G. A. St Pier
J. D. Strachan
L. C. Van Katwyk
S. P. J. Vermeulen
S. Williams

Representatives of the Island of Alderney

The Clerk to the States of Deliberation

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

Absent at the Evocation

Deputy C. P. A Blin (*relevé à 9h 45*) ; Deputy H. L. de Sausmarez *relevé à 9h 45*) ;
Deputy S. T. Hansmann Rouxel (*relevé à 9h 45*) ; Deputy S. R. Rochester (*absent de l'Île*) ;
Alderney Representative E. Hill (*relevé à 10h 54*) ;
Alderney Representative E. A. J. Snowdon (*relevé à 10h 38*)

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States of Deliberation

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

[THE BAILIFF *in the Chair*]

PRAYERS
The States' Greffier

EVOCATION

CONVOCATION

The States' Greffier: Billet d'État XVI of 2026. To the Members of the States of the Island of Guernsey, I hereby give notice that a meeting of the States of Deliberation will be held at the Royal Court House on Wednesday, 21st October, 2026 at 9.30 a.m., to consider the items listed in this Billet d'État, which have been submitted for debate.

The Bailiff: Thank you, States' Greffier.

STATEMENTS

COMMITTEE *FOR* ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

General Update Statement –
Statement by the President of the Committee *for* Environment & Infrastructure

The Bailiff: Good morning, everyone.

I will now invite the President for the Committee *for* Environment & Infrastructure to address his General Update Statement.

Deputy Gabriel: Thank you, madam.

Since the Committee last reported to the Assembly, the emphasis has been on delivery: improving services, progressing key projects, and being realistic about available resources. What can realistically be done with the people and money available.

Since our last update, the Committee has published its Work Plan for this political term. Our priorities are practical: improving climate and coastal resilience, planning infrastructure for the long term, strengthening energy security, delivering more reliable on Island transport and protecting the natural environment.

This update therefore concentrates on what has changed since April, where the Committee is driving improvements, and what Islanders should expect next.

Transport: I will start with buses, and I will be the first to admit that the service has not been good enough in the past few weeks and months. Stagecoach, the operator, has accepted that it has fallen short. The Committee has been pressing the company every week, and its Managing Director is meeting us today to set out the action being taken to deliver the service Islanders are entitled to expect under the contract.

Although I was unable to attend the recent Bus Users Group meeting due to pre-planned surgery in the UK, I will be meeting representatives and the Managing Director next week to discuss their concerns too.

We know people rely on these buses to get to work, school, appointments, and family. The operator must now turn its commitments into a service that is reliable on the road, not just reassuring to us on paper. The Committee will be using all the levers in the contract to ensure that this happens and happens soon. Contract management weaknesses have been identified and are being addressed.

There is positive news too. Two further electric buses have arrived, completing this phase of fleet replacement, and they will enter service in the coming weeks. We are modernising the fleet in a measured way with these vehicles that have lower whole-life costs than diesel alternatives, while ensuring that Stagecoach are keeping the focus on the basics: buses that are clean, dependable and there when the timetable says they will be.

Road safety work continues as well. In the last academic year, 402 students completed Bikeability. That is 402 young people with better skills and more confidence on our roads. It is a modest scheme with a very practical result.

In September, we introduced a new online process for temporary traffic management applications, together with scalable charges. Applicants can now provide the information digitally. It reduces paper handling, saves officer time and make the co-ordination of roadworks across the network more efficient, helping to reduce conflicts and unnecessary disruption. Just as importantly, the new charges recover the costs of processing, co-ordinating, signing and checking traffic management more directly from those who require it, rather than leaving those costs with the whole taxpayer generally. It may not set many hearts racing, but efficient government rarely comes with a fanfare.

Following the States' decision on transport-related taxation, implementation is now a priority workstream. We will work with the tax reform programme to prepare carefully and make the arrangements as clear and as workable as possible. That work has consequences for capacity though and timing elsewhere, and we will be open about those choices rather than pretend everything can be done at once.

On to essential infrastructure: the new animal and clinical waste incinerator is in its final stages of being complete, and cold commissioning is completed. Hot commissioning and reliability testing are now well under way until the full introduction of full waste streams in November. The project has taken longer than planned due to supplier issues, but remains within budget. Once fully in service, the new facility will replace ageing equipment, reduce operating costs, and provide a more efficient long-term service.

On coastal defence, along with the day-to-day maintenance on walls and other features, on a priority basis, the Committee is enhancing the practical information used to plan maintenance and future investment. Work is progressing on a consolidated condition report, supported by an electronic asset register and a forward maintenance schedule for sea defences and coastal features. This will help identify priorities earlier, plan repairs more systematically, and support future investment decisions. We are also on track to complete under budget the vast majority of coastal revenue works by the end of the year.

Work on the implementation of an enabling flood defence in the Bridge area continues. This project will help unlock development at major housing sites, including Leale's Yard and sites in and around the Braye du Valle area, as well as provide enhanced protection against major flood events for key infrastructure, businesses and households in the area.

Site investigations works have now been completed, and the results are being reviewed which will inform the short list of potential design options, from which a preferred flood defence design should be chosen. This deliverable represents the completion of stage one. Stage two of the project will involve detailed design work, a planning application and procurement of construction works. It is anticipated that stage two of the project will commence in January next year. This will be followed with a planning application and an invitation to tender for the construction works.

The Committee continues to support both the Braye du Valle regeneration area and Guernsey Development Agency through the political oversight groups that I attend, and through direct work with the services whose responsibilities overlap with the Agency's plans. Our role is to help keep that work joined up with transport, flood protection, energy and the wider needs of the area.

Moving on to energy and it is resilience. Energy security is not an abstract subject on an island. We import much of what we use, so resilience, affordability and reducing our reliance on oil must be addressed together.

The Committee has been working with Guernsey Electricity and the STSB on the next steps to deliver additional electricity interconnection, as previously agreed by the States a few years ago, and a joint policy letter is due to come before the States before the end of the year around the decisions on how to implement that second interconnector.

Investment is needed to improve resilience, reduce further reliance on the on Island power station and limit exposure to oil-price fluctuations too.

We are also contributing to the work led by P&R on offshore wind. That work crosses many policy areas, which is why it must remain connected to the Electricity Strategy and to the Marine Spatial Plan (MSP). Developers and Islanders alike need clarity about how these issues are being considered.

Alongside that, officers continue to assess options for the future supply of hydrocarbons, like liquid fuels, petrol, diesel, kerosene – that is what hydrocarbons are – working with local fuel suppliers. The intention is to return to the States with a proposed approach in 2027. We continue to monitor international developments and maintain contact with UK counterparts and local suppliers. At present, the Committee's focus is on evidence, contingency planning and keeping the Island informed.

Trade and environmental health also falls under our mandate. The announced UK-EU summit in a month's time on 20th November is also important for Guernsey. Our officers, supported by External Relations and other States' teams, have been working with UK counterparts on the possible sanitary and phytosanitary arrangements (SPS) in any revised UK-EU arrangements.

Guernsey's inclusion remains subject to wider political approval. But significant progress has been made on how the necessary work could operate if the States agrees that inclusion is right for us. If UK-EU summit agreement is reached, we will need to move quickly to secure those benefits.

Our natural environment: good progress has been made on Guernsey's first Marine Spatial Plan. The community response to the summer survey was strong and showed both a clear wish to protect the marine environment and an interest in the opportunities of the blue economy, including renewable energy. The draft plan will be published for consultation before a final version is brought to this Assembly in the second half of next year.

There has been really positive engagement from the dairy industry with the new Public Goods Credit Scheme approved by the States last year. This year's dry conditions were a reminder that land needs to be managed for resilience as well as production. The scheme is designed to help farmers do that while delivering benefits for the environment.

Our Land Management team is working with major land owners and the Fire Service on practical planning for wildfire risk. No land-management approach can remove that risk altogether though, but co-ordinated planning can identify sensible steps to reduce it and improve preparedness and response if or when an incident occurs.

Asian hornets have presented a much greater challenge across the Channel Islands this year. The Committee will review its strategy at the end of the season, as it does each year. I want to thank the

volunteers who support this work. With an operational budget of around £10,000, early detection and control can avoid far greater costs in future.

Officers have also worked closely with Vive La Vallette following the bathing pool water-quality issue, and discussions continue on longer-term improvements to the shared cesspit. The immediate task was to respond quickly. The longer-term task is to reduce the chance of a repeat.

Madam, this is a wide mandate, which I have touched on in some areas, and we will not pretend money or staff time is unlimited. Some decisions are and will be difficult. Some projects will need to be sequenced. The test must be whether the work protects essential services, improves resilience, offers value for money, and makes a real difference to Island life.

That is why the Committee will keep reviewing its Work Plan and its priorities. We will challenge poor performance, as we are doing on the buses. We will back practical improvements, such as the digital roadworks process.

The work is not about grand claims. Much of what we do is unseen unless it goes wrong. It is about steady delivery: safer journeys, stronger infrastructure, secure supplies, healthy land and seas, and public services that use limited resources with care.

There is a great deal still to do, I will be the first to admit that, but there is also solid and real progress. This Committee will keep working with colleagues across the States, with Alderney, with industry, with volunteers, and the wider community. We will listen, we will challenge, and we will get on with the job.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Thank you, Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy de Sausmarez, Hansman Rouxel and Blin, do you wish to be relevéd?

Deputy de Sausmarez: Yes, please, madam.

The Bailiff: Deputy Vermeulen.

Deputy Vermeulen: I thank the President for his comprehensive update.

Could I ask whether his officers were involved in the Legionella scare at Beau Sejour, and if so, did they trace where the actual source was?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: While I have officers who are responsible for environmental health protections, I am not aware that they were directly involved in reporting back to E&I. I understand that, because they sit jointly with Health and E&I, that they may well have reported back to Health officials because it is a public health rather than an environmental issue, which of course is very important.

The first answer is I do not know. If it falls under our mandate, which I doubt, I will check and I will get back to you within the prescribed time in writing.

The Bailiff: Deputy Le Brun.

Deputy Le Brun: Thank you, madam.

Given the reported failures of the bus contract in *The Press* today, how much longer will it be before we reconsider who has got the contract to operate the buses and whether or not we take it back into public operation? Because it is a critical service that we are almost wholly paying for the service as it is now.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: The bus contract is a multi-faceted arrangement, and there are many things to take into account when appointing a provider. The provider, that is Stagecoach, was awarded the contract on a scoring basis after an extensive tender process. The bus service has not been in public use or the States of Guernsey operation for a very significant period, and I would suggest that it coming into the control of the States of Guernsey to operate would be a huge undertaking, but one that is possible and which is why the Committee and the States of Guernsey own the assets, the buses, in case of a failure, and an immediate failure, as was happened a significant period ago with Guernsey buses.

The Committee is analysing reports and again, as in my update, I have a meeting with the MD today. I have got a meeting next week – the whole Committee has got a meeting with the MD today to actually get to the bottom of the failures and their turnaround plan. So it would be a significant undertaking for the States of Guernsey to undertake to run the bus service. That is not necessarily on the radar.

The Bailiff: Dseputy Gabriel, you have gone over your time.

Deputy Gabriel: Sorry.

The Bailiff: Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: Thank you, ma'am.

CT Plus obviously was previously running buses, but obviously the employment of Stagecoach in 2024, and I believe on the basis of the service delivery value for money risk was higher, and that is the basis for the *[Inaudible 9:49:06]* at the time. Given the fact that we own the buses, we sat two people across, so therefore do you not think that perhaps that decision at the time was probably wrong?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Definitely not.

The Bailiff: Deputy Blin.

Deputy Blin: Thank you, ma'am.

I would like to also personally thank Deputy Gabriel because throughout this period we were in communication a lot about some issues and Deputy Gabriel was constantly responding. My question will be for Deputy Gabriel regarding an update, as he probably can guess, about the noisy vehicles, the tests and the process there. It has been very good having a statement every time from himself and from the President of Home Affairs.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: That was not in my update because that is an ongoing situation at the moment where our traffic and highway services staff are trained to operate the machinery, the noise level meters, and they are liaising with colleagues at Home because traffic and highway staff do not have the power to stop vehicles. So they are liaising with colleagues at Home and police, Bailiwick Law Enforcement (BLE), to accompany them so that they can collect data. That data, when collected, will inform how and when we introduce a decibel limit.

The Bailiff: Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: Thank you, ma'am.

On buses, but a slightly different point, are there any conversations happening around the app? From my personal experience it is not very user-friendly. Unless you know the obscure name of the exact bus stop that you want to go from, which I think only Deputy Gollop knows, it is quite difficult to use, certainly not for tourists. I do wonder if there are any planned improvements to that.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: I, like Deputy Gollop, unfortunately know where the stops are because – I am not necessarily a prolific bus user like him but, for example, Admiral Park, if you want to get to Waitrose or any of the stops around there you need the First Tower Lane stop, which is not immediately obvious or anything like that. There are plans to assess with the operator and the app provider. Unfortunately it is a provider and it is not necessarily bespoke for Guernsey, so it does need tailoring, and that does cost. It is on a cost-benefit analysis and also skills-based analysis as well. But yes, there are moves to improve the app.

The Bailiff: Deputy Rylatt.

Deputy Rylatt: Thank you, madam.

I thank the President for his update. Given the original completion date for the Combined Waste Solution Project was early 2026 and then subsequently revised to Q3 this year, can the President confirm my understanding of his update that the new facility is now due to come online next month?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Yes, the combined waste incinerator at the moment is in hot test phase. There has been some delay, which was none of our making and all based on the supplier, and the contract that we have with them supports our position and the delay we have incurred and the extra costs, which is why we are still on budget and in a favourable position, albeit we are not able to take the full waste stream yet. But, as we speak, it is in hot commissioning testing before full handover, and I think in my Statement I said in November.

The Bailiff: Deputy Le Brun.

Deputy Le Brun: Thank you, madam.

Given through Rule 14 questions and an FOI to the police that I have revealed that there is no speed limit for driving on the pavement separate to that of the road, and it is almost impossible for the police to enforce currently because there are just vague guidelines of 'a crawl' and 'with due care', and it is up to an individual officer's assessment, which means it depends on what officer is on duty on any given day of whether they think something is inappropriate, would the Committee put a limit of five miles an hour on the pavement so that everybody has a guideline?

It is not just about enforcement, but it is about creating an expectation and culture that everybody realises that there is an objective speed that they can recognise on the speedometer that they are supposed to be keeping to while driving on a pavement because there is evidence that it is a problem. There are people hiding in gateways. I have shown you videos of children hiding in gateways as buses are driving past them at 20 miles an hour on a pavement.

The Bailiff: That is your minute.

Deputy Le Brun: Thank you.

The Bailiff: But very fast speaking, well done.

Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Road safety is an important feature of the Committee's mandate and we do respond to it. It is around proportionality and pavement surfing – driving or mounting the pavement is a necessity in Guernsey because of our road networks. Unless we turn Guernsey into a one-way system with cycle contraflows and pavements everywhere.

Deputy Le Brun: I understand that. That is why we need a speed limit.

The Bailiff: Deputy Le Brun, shush, please.

Deputy Gabriel: Unless we turn Guernsey into a one-way system, then that is not necessarily going to happen. Putting in a legislation, which is then enforceable, again is not necessarily practical. It is incumbent on everyone that is a driver to drive responsibly and, if they need to, mount the payment to do that in a responsible manner.

The Bailiff: Deputy Ozanne.

Deputy Ozanne: Thank you, ma'am.

Deputy Rylatt has asked part of what I wanted to ask, but building on that and looking at our waste incineration, are we still taking food waste off the Island to be processed in the UK? Are there any plans to revisit that so that we can harvest the biomethane gas potentially with other Channel Islands, because it does seem extremely expensive to be sending that to the UK when we could be using it ourselves?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Thank you.

Waste does form part of the mandate in that we create waste policy. How it is arranged and exported is up to Guernsey Waste. But anaerobic digestion, which happens at the moment, is where our food waste is exported. At the moment, the current arrangements are practical and proportionate for our amount of food waste rather than creating a plant on Island to convert to biogas. Conversion to biogas is an energy-intensive and expensive way of creating gas. and the policy at the moment – I am having to remind myself. In fact, I will get back to you, Deputy Ozanne, in writing.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: I was actually pleased and proud. I was part of the Policy & Resources Committee that made the hard decision to buy Leale's Yard. One is impressed today and reassured to hear Deputy Gabriel make the point that the flood defence plans are approaching the end of stage one, with stage two just around the corner with design brief and so on.

But can he give an indication whether the flood defences will be in place by late 2028, early 2029, so that we can get on with Leale's Yard construction and indeed other projects across the Braye du Valle that may include the salt pans area? What timeframe are we looking at in the longer term?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Flood defences are essentially important. You cannot rush them, you cannot do them on the cheap, because they have to protect critical national infrastructure. I am not going to commit to a timeline at the moment. I have impressed upon officers that the timeline needs to

be in place early, that the defence needs to be in place early. They came to me with a timeline, an indicative timeline based on where we are with phase two. We are at the end of phase one, entering phase two, and that had 2028 in it, and I said that was too late.

The Bailiff: Deputy Le Brun.

Deputy Le Brun: Talking of timelines, with the bus service how much longer would the Committee be prepared to watch the failings currently before they step in, just to reassure the public that the Committee would be prepared to do something?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel, if you take the view that you have already answered this question, I would support that view because I think it is a repeat just said in a different way from the previous question.

Deputy Inder. Your microphone please, Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: I beg your pardon. Sorry, ma'am.

Deputy Gabriel, despite the issues currently being discussed around the buses, is it not the case that many visitors to Guernsey are highly complimentary of the bus service and regard it as a value part of their experience on the Island. By the way, I know the answer to the question.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Thank you, Deputy Inder.

You have reminded me that, yes, visitors form an integral part of the passenger makeup in the summer. Our bus service, its frequency, its coverage, its operation, the friendliness of the drivers, and the ability to provide a little bit of tourist information at various points is always welcomed. Also the cost; a tourist pass, the top-up system that we operate. is very efficient so we do not have to cap fares at £2 because we are already less than that; £1.60 is the entry fee.

The Bailiff: Deputy Curgenven.

Deputy Curgenven: Thank you.

I actually think I owe you an apology, madam, as I have been calling you 'ma'am', which I think Deputy Camp has pointed out is incorrect.

The Bailiff: I know how I am addressed bothers a lot of other people but it does not bother me, as long as it is polite.

Deputy Curgenven: Thank you, madam.

I actually saw Deputy Leadbeater go to rise and I think he is going to ask the same question as me. I was actually surprised that Deputy Gollop did not get up to ask it. Is there any news on the tuna licences. *(Interjection)* Oh, it is not for you. Okay, I rescind my question, madam, apologies.

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, Madam Bailiff.

I was approached by a taxi driver who has recently invested into a plate and invested into electric vehicle asking about fast-charging facilities in the Island. I think there is one available at St Martin's that was down at the time and he asked me if I knew if there was any appetite from E&I to invest in more facilities to be able to support taxi drivers transitioning to electric vehicles.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Thank you, Deputy Leadbeater.

Taxis form an important part of the public service mandate, and we welcome their transition as well to EVs, but Government necessarily should not be in a place – and it is my view that Government does not provide fuel, so it should not necessarily be providing charging points specifically for PSVs or the public. We do not man and provide fuel stations. So perhaps at car parks, yes. Fast chargers are exceptionally expensive and they are also reliant on the electricity grid to supply them. The one at St. Martin's is not a government facility, it is not a States of Guernsey facility, and is provided by a local operator.

The Bailiff: Deputy Helyar.

Deputy Helyar: Thank you, ma'am.

As a western Parish Deputy, I have had many complaints about the number 61 route, which I understand was the amendment to the schedule that was approved by the Committee on recommendation of staff. This bus can never arrive on time in town because the change to the schedule means it arrives after registration, and several pupils have now received detention as a result of being late every morning. Would the President accept that the staff should accept responsibility for recommending to the Committee a schedule which can never arrive on time?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: I have investigated route 61 because, again, it is part of my local route. It has been running late recently, again we are into the depths of operation and the weeds here. It has been running late because of roadworks and congestion. It is scheduled to arrive at 8.08 in the Grange and, expanding on what Deputy Helyar has said, I understand that passengers on it use the scheduled service to get to the private colleges, Elizabeth and Ladies College, and that the officers are involved when they looked at many different aspects of providing that services were using 0830 as an arrival time for school, and 0808 seemed feasible in their minds in their presentation. But again, this is one stop, one arrival time for one service out of a total of 42 scheduled services that run multiple services and multiple stops every single day.

The Bailiff: Deputy Blin.

Deputy Blin: Thank you, madam.

Taking advantage of your allowance for multiple questions first, I would just like to go back to the President of E&I, just on the basis of Deputy Leadbeater's question. As part of the Electricity Strategy, we are trying to get the island electrified and pushed through. When one says, and I understand the point, you cannot be there to pay for the fuels like you do not do for the other ones, but on the other hand, without the points and the permissions from Government, it is very hard to progress. So it concerned me. It would be interesting to hear the question – if you could reply to that to help me understand, as I am getting contacted by the drivers as well with the same issue.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: I am not sure what the question was, madam.

The Bailiff: I think he wanted to understand why you considered it not appropriate for your Committee to support the electronic charging points.

Deputy Blin: Based on the Electricity Strategy.

Deputy Gabriel: Okay. In my view, and this is solely a personal view, not necessarily a Committee view, that Government necessarily should not be involved in the provision of fuel arrangements because we can be slow to react and the open market is there for people to provide. There is already a provider in the market. If they can identify land and a service availability that they want to provide a fast charger, in my view there is nothing stopping them. In fact we have got a paper coming up in this session around relaxing the rules around EV charging.

The Bailiff: Deputy Humphreys.

Deputy Humphreys: Thank you, madam.

Earlier in the year the Committee launched a review with regard to the reduction in age for e-bike use. Is there any update on the review and proposed action and will, having seen some crazy behaviours this summer, it potentially include mandatory use of cycle helmets?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: There are two very distinct questions in there and I will address the age limit first. The age limit for e-bikes seems to have spiralled out of control after perhaps a throwaway comment that I made personally in perhaps two Update Statements ago, in that it is my view that it could be reviewed and lowered again. This has not come to Committee. The e-bike licensing falls under, crazily, driving licence legislation and there is a EU Fourth Directive which again, because of our reciprocal arrangement with the EU for driving licences, that review has to happen in the EU first and then would be rolled out across the rest of the reciprocal licensing arrangement jurisdictions, of which we are one. If that then has an option to review and lower the e-bike licensing then, yes, we will consider that as part of a wide range of driving licences change.

The Bailiff: Thank you.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller, then Deputy Falla, then Deputy Collins. Everybody else has asked a question and that will be the end of our question time. Thank you very much.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Madam, Deputy Gabriel is on record that the Island is looking scruffy and that the decision to remove glyphosate, which I support, has not worked and that something needs to be done differently. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

We know how the appearance of the Island is very important for tourism industry and visitor experience. Can the President confirm if work and budget have been prioritised as part of next year's budget or as part of the wider Committee Work Plan?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: I will be very brief. Option B in the Budget Report allows for increased budget and that E&I increased budget means an extra pass of weeding zone 4, which is the rest of the Island. Option A does not include that, so we need to be very careful about what we do, how we do it, and weeding of roads in the wider scheme whilst, yes, it contributes to our scruffiness and on our tourist economy is perhaps lower on the scale, but again, in my view, it is an important part of the makeup of our Island. I will be doing what I can within my budget parameters next year to increase the roadside weeding.

The Bailiff: Deputy Falla.

Deputy Falla: Thank you, ma'am.

In relation to Deputy Humphrey's question, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of young women riding e-bikes with a pillion passenger and not wearing helmets – I think potentially because they do not look very nice – and not necessarily terribly safely. I wonder if the Committee has given any thought to education and advice for young riders of e-bikes.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: I mentioned in my Update Report around the Bikeability has been rolled out, and it is a very worthwhile scheme and it instils road safety, road awareness in an early age, but helmet hair among young people is an issue, especially if you spent a lot of time in the morning getting it ready. Fortunately I do not have that problem. But it is not mandatory, and that is a slippery slope making something like that mandatory because then you have got all the problems of enforcement. It is down to, again, responsible use of the vehicle.

If you are travelling at 16-plus miles an hour under your own power, or even electrically to get there, you can have as much lovely hair in the world, but it does not help you in a hospital bed.

The Bailiff: Deputy Collins.

Deputy Collins: Thank you, madam.

In order to complete the mandate of the E&I Committee, attendance at Committee meetings is key for making decisions. My question to the President is: will the Committee support more openness on attendance records being published?

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Thank you, Deputy Collins.

That is a leading question, if ever I saw one. I hope you will be asking all the other five Update Statement Presidents that question. Attendance should be mandatory. Because we are a Committee-based system, all of the work gets done in Committee, and this is a legislation approval Chamber and debating Chamber and, again, attendance should be published. There should be mitigating reasons, as well, for non-attendance. We all have illness, surgery, whatever commitments that cannot be planned for.

The Bailiff: Thank you.

That brings us to the end of question time for the Committee *for* Environment & Infrastructure.

Questions for Oral Answer

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Redevelopment of King Edward VII site

The Bailiff: We will now turn to the Questions.

Deputy Humphreys.

Deputy Humphreys: On 12th June, the Committee issued a media release saying that it was pleased to announce that substantial progress has been made with the potential redevelopment of

the western part of King Edward VII site as part of the first phase of redeveloping the former hospital. Following a request for expressions of interest within the care home industry in July 2022, the Committee selected CI Healthcare as the preferred delivery partner. The Committee is acutely aware of the pressures on the industry and the limited availability of care home beds in the Island, and this collaboration is welcome news for the people of Guernsey. The operator will take the lead on the redevelopment and has advised that it is expecting to have the facility ready for occupation in the latter part of 2027. With no obvious activity on site, what are the obstacles preventing progress on this much-needed residential home?

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Thank you, madam.

The Policy & Resources Committee has, on 20th October, considered a draft policy letter about this part of the King Edward VII site, which it intends to lodge shortly. Because the matter is subject to ongoing commercial discussions, I cannot go into any further details at this stage.

The Bailiff: Are there any supplementary questions in relation to the – Deputy Humphreys.

Deputy Humphreys: Please could the Committee clarify whether HSC are fully sighted on the current process?

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Thank you.

Yes, both HSC and ESS are being consulted on the draft policy letter as we speak. My understanding is they already have the draft policy letter.

The Bailiff: Second supplementary question from Deputy Humphreys.

Deputy Humphreys: Are we able to have a definition of how shortly 'shortly' is?

Deputy de Sausmarez: This is what –

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Sorry, I am being very impatient this morning.

I think this is what is known as a hostage to fortune situation. But, yes, we are hoping it is going to be very shortly, as in within the next few weeks. Although this does hold me hostage to fortune, we are hoping to be able to debate it this year.

The Bailiff: Thank you.

Any more supplementary questions in relation to the original question?

Yes, Deputy Oswald.

Deputy Oswald: Correct me if I am wrong by just making a comment –

The Bailiff: It should be a question, Deputy Oswald.

Deputy Oswald: Right. I think I will sit down. *(Laughter)* Sorry.

The Bailiff: There we are.

Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: Was it clarified what is said by HSC are being consulted on this report because I keep seeing a furrowed brow from *[Inaudible 10.13.25]*.

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: I suspect the officers have the policy letter. Whether it has reached the political Members or not is a different matter. But actually Deputy Oswald and I did have a conversation about it yesterday, so I know that it will not come as a surprise. The reason that HSC and ESS are both involved is, of course, they are the key stakeholders in the SLAWS programme to which this relates.

The Bailiff: Deputy St Pier, first supplementary question.

Deputy St Pier: Thank you, madam.

Given that it is over four years since this project was announced, is the Committee satisfied with the pace of progress in delivering the project?

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Yes, there was an agreement in principle which was announced last year, and that has not changed. We have been actively progressing that, and Deputy St Pier will know that it was under active progression, it is just the how. Actually, in terms of pace, I would say this policy letter has been turned around in extremely short timeframes compared with policy letters' normal timeframes. I would say this has been a matter that we have progressed as fast as we possibly can and, as I mentioned in answer to Deputy Humphreys's question, we are keen that it is brought to this Assembly for debate at the earliest opportunity.

The Bailiff: Second supplementary question from Deputy St Pier.

Deputy St Pier: Thank you, madam.

Whilst it is encouraging to hear that this particular policy letter has been turned around quite quickly, is the President in a position to give any more colour as to why it has taken so long to make really so little progress in the four years since the project was announced, given the urgency with which the site is needed?

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: The reason it requires a policy letter is obviously because it is a decision that is required by the States, so it is not something that falls within the delegated authority of P&R, so it is not something that the Committee can enact in isolation of the Assembly. While I am hoping that it is something that will resonate with the Members of the Assembly, and other Members of the Assembly will share the sense of priority that I know is afforded it by P&R, ESS and HSC in terms of expanding capacity in the care sector, it is a matter for this Assembly to decide and therefore that is why a policy letter is needed.

The Bailiff: Deputy Oswald, supplementary question.

Deputy Oswald: I will ask a question now.

In view of what Deputy de Sausmarez said about the urgency for this policy letter, bearing in mind that we have had some opportunity to review the process so far, but not a lot, will the Policy

& Resources Committee give full credence to whatever we may have to comment upon the proposed plans which have caused us some concern?

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Yes, that is exactly the nature of consultation and its entire purpose, and that is why HSC and, indeed, ESS are being consulted and why we would not publish the policy letter before we have received that feedback.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder, first supplementary question.

Deputy Inder: I just wonder if – it may be even more a question for the President of Health & Social Care, but I detect that the work on this is done at officer-to-officer level. I also detect that the President of HSC is not fully sighted on it. Does it concern the President at all that there seems to be a lower level of comms between officers and officers, yet it may not have been communicated fully from political level, from President to President? Does that raise any concern at all?

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: As I have said in the answer to the original question, P&R considered this on 20th October, which was yesterday morning. So the committee considered the draft policy letter, the first draft of that policy letter, yesterday morning at I think probably about nine o'clock to 9.30. Deputy Oswald and I had a conversation at 2.30 yesterday afternoon, and the policy letter had been revised and was on its way, as far as I was concerned, me having already reviewed that draft policy letter and had a conversation with Deputy Oswald – I apologise, I have not had a chance to have a similar conversation with Deputy Bury – by the end of the day.

So no, there was both very significant political input at this stage, very speedy response and direct communication between the two Presidents in that case.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop, first supplementary question.

Deputy Gollop: Will this development, which indeed started in my time when P&R were looking at it, I remember vividly, will it also include meaningful consultation with Deputy Williams and the Housing Committee Board, because there is a housing element here of providing extra houses and then producing a knock-on effect whereby other homes on the Island could be freed up for sale or rent?

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: I do not understand the logic of Deputy Gollop's question. We are talking about the refurbishment of a facility that has been redundant for 12 years or so and restoring that to a useful purpose in terms of providing additional care bed capacity, which, I am sure all Members of the Assembly are aware, is a pressing need, given the projected increase of the part of our community that is likely to require that kind of care.

We obviously talk very regularly with the Committee *for* Housing, and I am sure we will continue to do so, but I do not think there is a direct link that Deputy Gollop is suggesting.

The Bailiff: Deputy Sloan, second supplementary question.

Deputy Sloan: Thank you, ma'am.

I just want to repeat the question that was asked earlier. If the first time the policy letter was considered was yesterday, and it has not been made in June 2025, and this is referred back to

something that the request for *[Inaudible 10.20.06]* 2022, I am not entirely sure if the President answered Deputy St Pier's question, which was, is she pleased with that pace of progress?

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: So to explain again, the original way – so the agreement in principle was made in June 2025 and that has not changed, that has not wavered. We have been working towards delivering on that ever since. The issue is that the conversations that Deputy St Pier will be aware of, and the way of achieving that, is not the way that the Committee believes can achieve that aim. There has been a lot in the very detailed consultation and commercial discussions with the provider. We are putting forward a different proposal of how to achieve that aim, and that is what has taken the time. It has been a complex series of conversations and negotiations, and they have informed the policy letter.

But I would ask the Assembly's patience for, hopefully, depending on the consultation feedback obviously, we are hoping to be in a position to publish that policy letter in the relatively near future, and everything at that stage will be much clearer.

The Bailiff: Deputy Curgenven, first supplementary question.

Deputy Curgenven: Thank you, madam.

I wonder if the President could explain how much has been spent on this process to date, and if the President cannot answer now, would she commit to answering at a later date, please?

The Bailiff: Deputy Curgenven, I am going to say to Deputy de Sausmarez that this I think goes beyond the original answer, which is what the supplementary question should be focused on, but if she wishes to answer she is welcome to. No, she is not going to answer that.

You may put a second supplementary question then, Deputy Curgenven.

Deputy Curgenven: Yes, thank you, ma'am. For six years I've been calling you 'ma'am', I am sorry; it is going to take a while to break the habit.

The President has kindly explained the process, but would she explain whether she is happy with the pace of progress since 2022?

Thank you, madam.

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez, I think you have answered this question, but you are welcome to answer it, if you wish.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Yes, just to point out that obviously I have not been on P&R since 2022. It has just been the last 18 months. It has been a high priority for us. We have progressed it as fast as we possibly can, and I think we are probably the busiest Committee as well, so we have progressed this at every opportunity. But it is, as these things often are, a slightly more complex matter than was perhaps originally envisaged.

The Bailiff: Deputy McKenna, first supplementary question.

Deputy McKenna: Thank you, Madam Bailiff.

I hope that this question to P&R is so good that the only finger Deputy Inder will give me is the thumbs up? *(Laughter)* I love Deputy Inder. He is the greatest Deputy that has ever lived. You ask him, he will tell you. *(Laughter)*

I am delighted P&R said that they see the urgency in the third of the King Edward Hospital and of course with bed blocking and the urgency, so it is great; I think it is positive. Could they just tell me, or tell all of us actually, what the plan is for the other two-thirds of the King Edward?

The Bailiff: Deputy McKenna, it does go beyond the original answer, so I will leave it to Deputy de Sausmarez to decide whether we should just answer it, and it is not within their mandate, so there we are, that gives the answer.

Any more supplementary questions? Thank you.

COMMITTEE *FOR* HOME AFFAIRS

Criminal Justice (Special Verdicts) (Guernsey) Law 1961 Reform

The Bailiff: In that case, we will move to the next question, which is by Deputy Rylatt.

Deputy Rylatt: Thank you, madam.

In separate judgments handed down in October 2024 and September 2026, concerns have been raised about the pressing need to reform the Criminal Justice (Special Verdicts) (Guernsey) Law 1961. In the most recent judgment, the legislation was described as 'not fit for purpose' with a modern law providing an appropriate range of disposal options said to be 'long overdue'. Given the clear importance of ensuring that the courts have appropriate powers in such cases, can the Committee *for* Home Affairs advise what progress has been made towards reforming this legislation and when proposals are expected to be brought before the States?

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, Madam Bailiff.

This law relates to defendants who are found unfit to plead and who are found not guilty by reason of insanity. I can assure the Assembly that work is already underway within the Law Officers' chambers to review this law. However, this work is having to be balanced alongside other competing priorities.

The issues raised in the judgments are legally and operationally complex, and the work to revise the Law in this area engages multiple stakeholders with different interests, which will need to be consulted on the relevant proposals. As such, it is not possible to say at present when proposals will be put before the States, but the Committee would intend that to happen during the course of 2027.

The Bailiff: First supplementary question by Deputy Rylatt.

Deputy Rylatt: Thank you, madam.

I am grateful to the President for his response and the indication that proposals are intended to come before the States next year. Given that concerns about the legislation were highlighted two years ago and with work now underway, can the President confirm when the need for reform first came to the Committee's attention?

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: I can confirm that when I received the Rule 11 question from Deputy Rylatt, it was the first time that it came across my desk.

The Bailiff: Second supplementary question by Deputy Rylatt.

Deputy Rylatt: Thank you, madam.

Can the President then shed any light on why those issues were only brought to the Committee's attention relatively recently, given that the first of the judgments he has referred to was handed down in October 2024?

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: As I said, this piece of legislation just does not interact with the Committee. This is something that we have never interacted with, had any conversations about. And the first time I was aware that there was issues is when it was brought to my attention by Deputy Rylatt. Home Affairs may be responsible for this legislation because it is criminal justice legislation, but it is not something that we interact with and it is not something we have been engaged with previously.

The Bailiff: Deputy St Pier.

Deputy St Pier: Given the response, which seems to suggest that this is a priority, does the President consider it odd that it does not appear on the list of priority legislation?

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: I was unaware of this. This is a piece of work that has been undertaken by the Law Officers' chambers. It is not something that is being undertaken by the Committee *for* Home Affairs. As I said previously, I had no knowledge there were concerns in this area until I opened the email and read the Rule 11 questions from Deputy Rylatt.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder, first supplementary question.

Deputy Inder: I think it is worth asking then, given there seems to be a bit of a chasm which goes on sometimes in Law Officers and what Home Affairs do. I am just wondering for the future, is it worth the President of Home Affairs and his Committee actually writing to Law Officers and asking in cases like this or any other further example, where something might be unpolitical and affect this mandate, it might be worth them writing to you or any future President earlier, and just trying to make that connection between your political – sorry, the Home Affairs political role and what life in the world of Law Officers.

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, madam.

This is that there has probably been interaction between the Law Officers' chambers and officers within the Committee *for* Home Affairs. I can see Madam Procureur nodding her head. This is something that it does not need any political engagement at this point as far as I am aware, so the work will be undertaken by the Law Officers in consultation with officers from the Committee, and when they are at a time when a paper can be prepared to bring to the Committee that is when the political Members will be engaged.

The Bailiff: Any more supplementary questions in relation to this question?

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Victor Hugo Centre – Agreement to Lease

The Bailiff: In that case we will turn to the next question which is posed by Deputy St. Pier.

Deputy St Pier: Thank you, madam.

What progress has been made, if any, on agreeing the terms of a lease or an agreement to lease with the Victor Hugo Centre LBG?

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: The Heads of Terms are in an advanced stage and have been largely agreed. The outstanding items are currently being finalised with input from both parties' legal advisers. Once the Heads of Terms are agreed, the agreement to lease and lease documentation will be prepared. A public statement will be issued jointly at the conclusion of the process.

The Bailiff: First supplementary question, Deputy St Pier.

Deputy St Pier: Yes, thank you, madam.

Given the commitment by both sides to this proposed transaction, including of course largely vacating the property and other commitments and spending on both sides, does the President agree that to all intents and purposes the Heads of Terms are somewhat academic and really, I guess, the key supplementary question here is why has it taken so long to agree Heads of Terms?

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: I think the answer is Deputy St Pier would be right in the normal context. My understanding is that actually these Heads of Terms are so much more detailed that actually they have done an awful lot of the groundwork for the actual agreement for lease and lease documentation itself. So actually there has not been duplication, it has been a very thorough process. I think ultimately it is a helpful one that will get us to the outcome that we are all keen to see.

The Bailiff: Second supplementary question by Deputy St Pier.

Deputy St Pier: Again it will be a bit familiar question, given previous questions in a similar area. Is the Committee satisfied with the pace of progress in this issue and is it being progressed fast enough?

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Certainly we have had regular meetings with those responsible; the third party involved, which is obviously a charitable structure. We have had regular conversations, as Deputy St Pier will be aware as he has been involved in some of them, and I have not heard any dissatisfaction from them. I checked in on this recently and it is progressing, I think, to the satisfaction of all parties, but I will double check.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: The planning permission for the building was granted, I think it was sometime in June or July from memory, and it is not a very good one. There had always been an issue with the

second floor, and I think it was staff around the Probation Service. Now quite clearly to actually get into the building you have to make sure there is vacant possession. Can the President give us any indication whether that second floor has been cleared to allow the LBG to actually get into the building and start effectively making the changes as agreed by Planning, I think in June or July of this year?

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: I know that the Probation Service is a well-considered issue in relation to that building, and I understand that we do have a solution that is nearing completion. I do not have a definitive update to provide, but I will provide it as soon as one is available.

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Madam, I am one of the Deputies that is actually in regular contact and being chased also by the Victor Hugo Centre in relation to the lack of completion of the lease agreement. This project has been on the table now since well before the last political term, so probably now coming to three years, and the charity is operating on goodwill, having submitted the application, having incurred tens of thousands of costs in developing the application and continuing to work on a goodwill basis.

Could the President commit that this is time to really complete this lease agreement and provide a more definitive timeline to do so?

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: I think, as Deputy Kazantseva-Miller will be aware, conversations that involve legal parties, and I would stress that legal parties on both sides do often take a long time, but absolutely I am happy to commit to providing a timeline as soon as we are able to. In fact I already have done so in my original answer to the question.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder, second supplementary question.

Deputy Inder: I am going to pursue this. Deputy de Sausmarez was in the same States I was last term and back in 2020 there was something called the Property Target Operating Model (PTOM), and we were told very early on in our term that the Probation Service is going to move in 18 months' time; well that is five years ago. Not a question for now, but could she please write to all Deputies at some point or provide a statement exactly where we are with Probation Service because we were told five years ago it was going to be out of the Victor Hugo Centre within 18 months.

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Obviously, five years ago I was not responsible for any of those timelines, so I was not party to any of those discussions. But I would say that when it comes to moving services, as Deputy Inder will be aware, there is quite a lot to consider and make sure that we get right, and we certainly do not want to move any services more than once. I would also add that it has been relatively recently that the Victor Hugo charity has finished the final fundraising to enable us to get to the stage where we can now look to move things forward.

But, yes, it is really important that when we move services, especially a service like the Probation Service, that it is done properly. We would not want to move services before we need to necessarily, but obviously that is a really important part of this process and it is one that we are committed to doing well and getting right.

The Bailiff: You do not have a supplementary, you have used your two, I am afraid.
Deputy Ozanne, first supplementary question.

Deputy Ozanne: Thank you, madam.
Given the responses that Deputy de Sausmarez has given us this morning, I wonder if she would like to comment whether this is a resource issue or is it a prioritisation issue, i.e. has she got the resources she needs to be able to do this within the timeframes that are being demanded?

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: The question relates to the legal process, the Heads of Term, the agreement for lease, the lease documentation, that is legal resource and I would remind Deputy Ozanne that is a resource issue on both sides of the equation. This involves the third party and it involves their legal advisers. As far as I am aware, there is not a resource issue but I will go and check and if there is I agree it should be addressed, but we are talking here about a legal process.

The Bailiff: Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: Thank you, madam.
I just want to check that my microphone is on. A lot of people are saying they cannot hear me.

The Bailiff: It is on.

Deputy Sloan: Apologies. Just a point of clarification, ma'am, for you this is as loud as I can speak. The point of clarification in an earlier answer, the President referred to other parties not being dissatisfied. Can I just ask if those other parties included P&R and to the specific question of whether P&R are satisfied with the pace of progress?

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: I think P&R would like to see this moving forward as quickly as we possibly can.

A Member: Hear, hear.

The Bailiff: Second supplementary question from Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: *[Inaudible 10.37.15]* can I just ask whether she can respond to that important question?

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: I think it is important that the work is done well. I would obviously like things to be completed sooner – everyone would – but we want it to progress as quickly as we possibly can. That is the outcome. That is what we are working towards. I am going to check in again. We checked in yesterday. We know that it is progressing. As I mentioned to Deputy St Pier, the Heads of Terms are far more detailed than they would ordinarily have been. So it does all seem to be moving forward in the direction that we are all hoping it to be. Yes, I would love it to be completed sooner, if that answers Deputy Sloan's question.

The Bailiff: Any more supplementary questions in relation to this Rule 11 question?

In that case I will welcome the Alderney Representative Snowdon; well done for making it through the windy skies and do you wish to be relevéd?

Alderney Representative Snowdon: Yes, please. Thank you very much.

COMMITTEE *FOR* HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

Martha's Rule

The Bailiff: We turn then to the next supplementary question, which is another one by Deputy St Pier.

Deputy St Pier: Thank you, madam.

In September 2023, following the decision of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to implement 'Martha's Rule' to amplify patient voice in NHS England, in response to a Rule 11 question, the Committee said that it:

> ... will however keep informed of the formalisation of any such 'Rule' in the NHS and consider whether any further measures need to be adopted locally.

On 22nd September 2026, following the success of the Rule in the inpatient environment and a pilot in ED, NHS England has announced that the Rule will now expand into every ED department in England, with phased implementation through to March 2028.

In light of this, what further developments have there been or will there be in respect to the local adoption of Martha's Rule?

The Bailiff: Deputy Oswald.

Deputy Oswald: Madam Bailiff, I thank Deputy St Pier for his very important question.

The evidence from the pilot studies in the UK showed that Martha's Rule is benefiting patients and resulting in changes to the management of cases. The Committee strongly supports patients, family and staff being able to raise concerns about a patient's condition, seek escalation where they remain concerned, and have access to an independent clinical review.

Many of the principles underpinning Martha's Rule are already reflected in practice in Guernsey. HSC is now working to formalise these arrangements in line with the recommendations of Martha's Rule and intends to align with the UK position and formally implement the changes in accordance with the NHS timetable.

The Bailiff: First supplementary question from Deputy St Pier.

Deputy St Pier: Thank you, madam.

I have two. I am grateful for the President's response and the Committee's commitment to the adoption of Martha's Rule locally. In the 2026-27 NHS standard contract with all NHS trusts and foundations, it is expected that implementation in the inpatient environment, inpatient acute services, should be completed by 31st March, 2027, and more recently a commitment has been made to implement within Emergency Departments by March 2028.

For the avoidance of doubt, can the President confirm that the timetable he was referring to in his original response captures those same dates?

The Bailiff: Deputy Oswald.

Deputy Oswald: Indeed, Deputy St Pier, I can confirm that.

The Bailiff: Second supplementary question from Deputy St Pier.

Deputy St Pier: I am very grateful both for the clarity and brevity of the President's response. Thank you.

In June 2026, the programme was also extended to maternity and neonatal services following the Ockenden review and once again, for clarity, is the Committee committed to a similar extension to maternity and neonatal services here in Guernsey?

The Bailiff: Deputy Oswald.

Deputy Oswald: Again, an important question.

We have to realise that we are a small hospital in a small island, and in terms of the breadth of experience and what staff we have available to provide the appropriate service in those particular areas, particularly obstetrics, paediatrics, and maybe even to a less extent in some other areas, such as ENT or psychiatry is more difficult.

We are working on workarounds to that, which would undoubtedly involve at times a consultation off Island with expert advice elsewhere.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop, first supplementary question.

Deputy Gollop: As I understand it, Martha's Rule came as a result of a tragic death of a young girl with sepsis. My question is, bearing in mind I think it specifies that a second clinical opinion should be immediately sought, are the resources being planned sufficiently in Guernsey to allow that for 24-7, not just for that type of case, but for the neonatals? Because it surely requires not just the commitment of Health & Social Care, but also the availability of professionals who would be prepared to independently give a second opinion. Or have I misunderstood what the proposal would mean?

The Bailiff: Deputy Oswald.

Deputy Oswald: I think we have to be clear about what Martha's Rule actually means. It is not a route to a second opinion about an underlying diagnosis. It is a route for escalation of care where patients or relatives or staff are concerned that a deteriorating situation has not been observed and is not being acted upon.

As such, currently there is adequate provision for that 24 hours a day, seven days a week in the hospital with the outreach team from the Intense Care Unit, in particular, playing an important role in this, and they could of course outreach to any area where a patient is deteriorating.

As I mentioned to Deputy St Pier, it is more difficult in areas where the breadth of experience or availability staff locally matches the size of our hospital and our community. In those circumstances we are looking at workarounds to exactly satisfy those issues, but I can assure you that in the case of any patient deteriorating suddenly and unexpectedly in hospital, help is at hand all hours of the day.

The Bailiff: Deputy Camp.

Deputy Camp: Thank you.

If the provision is identified as the Committee is adequate at the moment, then why exactly does there need to be a decision to implement Martha's Rule when this, to me, seems like it is the basic standard provision of care? So why the jump to a formal rule?

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Oswald.

Deputy Oswald: I thank Deputy Camp for that.

She makes a good point. As I pointed out in my response, the actual principles behind the establishment of Martha's Rule are already firmly established and practised locally. Certainly in my clinical days, I was an active proponent and, indeed, intervened on a number of occasions, much to the ire of the medical community in years gone past. Indeed, my appointment to the Hospital Committee here was delayed by a year because I upset somebody in exactly those circumstances.

So this is a long-standing principle that I hope all of my colleagues will understand and appreciate. I think it is appropriate to formally align with the UK NHS position, so I have got no issues about that.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Any more supplementary questions? Thank you.

STATES' TRADING SUPERVISORY BOARD

Extension of summer opening hours – Ports Division

The Bailiff: Then we will turn to Deputy Gollop's questions to the President of the States' Trading Supervisory Board.

Deputy Gollop: Thank you, Madam Presiding Officer; and Deputy Helyar and his Committee for the answers that he has given.

My first question is, has a robust business case been prepared by the Ports Division of STSB for the proposed extension of summer opening hours from 9 p.m. to 10.30 p.m., taking into account extra additional overheads such as fuel and power, security, staffing costs, maybe with overtime, and potential neighbourhood disruption with later flights, including those that come after the official later closure window.

The Bailiff: Deputy Helyar.

Deputy Helyar: Thank you, ma'am.

Yes, Guernsey Ports has completed detailed costings of the impact of the changes to Guernsey Airport summer opening hours which are being put in place for 2027. We do not anticipate this will result in additional cost to Guernsey Ports and should in fact make a positive contribution.

In terms of later flying, the extended opening hours do not encroach outside the hours when extensions are currently provided in response to operational issues or other disruption to schedules.

The Bailiff: Is there a supplementary question?

Deputy Gollop: My first question would be, will, subject to commercial sensitivities, Guernsey Ports eventually clarify whether the experiment, which I do support, will in fact make a positive contribution to the finances of the airport?

The Bailiff: Deputy Helyar.

Deputy Helyar: Yes.

The Bailiff: Second supplementary question, Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: My second supplementary question is, the answer does not quite cover the potential neighbourhood disruption issue, by that I mean extra noise and traffic. Surely the decision four days a week to extend, with the possibility, with life being what it is, that the planes will therefore be more likely to be even later than of a 9 p.m. closure. Have they been consulted, which might include the Forest Parish Douzaine?

The Bailiff: Deputy Helyar.

Deputy Helyar: I believe I have already answered that. In terms of later flying, the extended hours do not encroach outside the hours when extensions are currently provided.

The Bailiff: Any more supplementary questions?

Unforeseen consequences – consultation

The Bailiff: In that case we will turn to question 2.

Deputy Gollop: Thank you.

Have unforeseen consequences been considered, including the need to consult with public transport providers and Environment and Infrastructure to ensure additional later bus public services and taxis are readily available?

The Bailiff: Deputy Helyar.

Deputy Helyar: Thank you, ma'am.

By definition, any consequences that are unforeseen will not have been foreseen. However, the proposed changes to opening hours are essentially no different to the current arrangements that are in place now for individual ad hoc extensions to airport opening hours. Taxis use a dedicated webcam and flight information data to plan for the last aircraft arrivals, and discussions are planned with the bus operator to understand whether later bus services can be offered on the four days where the airport opening hours will be extended for the summer of 2027.

The Bailiff: First supplementary question, Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: I stand corrected on the unforeseen, it is just, to me, it was unforeseen possibly to Environment & Infrastructure because they published a new bus timetable of a year that actually has a reduction in certain evening departures from the airport. So my question is, will the discussions with the bus operator maybe include adjustments to the subsidy grant payment that the States pay the bus company?

The Bailiff: Deputy Helyar.

Deputy Helyar: Thank you, ma'am.

I believe I have already answered that. Discussions are planned with the bus operator to understand whether later bus services can be offered on the four days where the airport opening hours will be extended for the summer of 2027.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel, supplementary question number one.

Deputy Gabriel: Thank you.

Will Deputy Helyar agree with me, it is my understanding that the additional late services are running out the weekend, Friday through to Monday, and if that is correct there is a night bus service already operating?

The Bailiff: Deputy Helyar.

Deputy Helyar: The days planned are Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, so the majority will be at the weekends, yes.

Additional costs

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop, your third question.

Deputy Gollop: My third question is, has there been agreement moving forwards with essential States' agencies, such as police, law enforcement and Customs & Immigration, to ensure disruption, add on costs and shift patterns are not affected in complexity or cost?

The Bailiff: Deputy Helyar.

Deputy Helyar: Thank you, ma'am.

As already mentioned, the changes to the summer opening hours are no different to the current arrangements that Guernsey Airport has in place for individual ad hoc extension to operating hours, save that the later opening is planned, more predictable and therefore less likely to attract overtime pay. Detailed plans will be finalised in early 2027.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: While I am gratified and satisfied to hear that detailed plans will be finalised early next year, does that not mean though that the potential for extensions beyond 10.30 and a reorganisation of shift systems for a regular four day a week change, which I actually thought was Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, will in fact mean that there could be cost and manpower implications in other areas of the States beyond Ports and STSB?

The Bailiff: Deputy Helyar.

Deputy Helyar: As I said in my earlier answer, detailed plans will be finalised in early 2027.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder, first supplementary question.

Deputy Inder: I am going to try and ask a less miserable question. I am just intrigued, the extended opening hours for the airport, can the President give us any indication of the economic benefits for the Island?

The Bailiff: Deputy Helyar.

Deputy Helyar: Off the top of my head, no, I am not able to answer that question.

The Bailiff: Any more supplementary questions? Thank you. That now ends Question Time for this part of the Order Paper. States' Greffier.

Billet d'État XVI

ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

COMMITTEE *FOR* ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Appointment of an ordinary member of the Guernsey Banking Deposit Compensation Board – Ms Karen Gibbons appointed

Article 1.
In accordance with section 3(4) of the Banking Deposit Compensation Scheme (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Ordinance, 2008 as amended, the following appointment, by the Committee for Economic Development to the Guernsey Banking Deposit Compensation board is laid before the States of Deliberation:-
Ms Karen Gibbons as an ordinary member with effect from 1st September 2026.
Ms Gibbons has been appointed as ordinary member until 31st August 2031. The States of Deliberation have the power to annul the appointment.
The Committee for Economic Development has concluded that Ms Gibbons is suitable to be an ordinary member of the Guernsey Banking Deposit Compensation board.

The States' Greffier: Article 1, the Committee *for* Economic Development, Appointment of an ordinary member of the Guernsey Banking Compensation Board.

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Madam, I rise briefly to speak to the reappointment of Ms Karen Gibbons as an ordinary member of the Guernsey Banking Deposit Compensation Scheme Board.

The scheme plays a vital role in maintaining confidence in our financial system by providing depositors with compensation of up to £50,000 per qualifying deposit in the unlikely event of a Guernsey-licensed bank failure. The Board overseeing the scheme is a statutory and independent body, and its integrity and experience are crucial to its effective operation.

Ms Gibbons has served diligently as an ordinary member since 2022. Her reappointment for a further five-year term from 1st September 2026 has the full support of the Scheme's Board. She is eligible under the Banking Deposit Compensation Scheme Ordinance and has confirmed her willingness to continue serving.

The Committee *for* Economic Development has reviewed the application, including her updated CV and considers Ms Gibbons' continued professional contribution and experience to be of significant value. Accordingly, the Committee approved her reappointment on 14th July and laid the relevant instrument appointment before the States in accordance with the statutory requirements.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Thank you.

Does anybody wish to speak in debate? Yes, Deputy Laine. *(Interjection)* You do not need to, but thank you.

Alderney Representative Hill: Ma'am, may I be relevé, please?

The Bailiff: Yes, you may indeed. Alderney Representative Hill is relevéd. I am glad that you managed to make it through the stormy skies.

Does anybody else wish to speak in debate on this? In that case, we will go straight to voting. I hope everybody has signed into their SEV. I will just give you a few moments to do so before I ask the States' Greffier to open the vote. States' Greffier, would you open the voting please?

There was a recorded vote.

Carried – Pour 38, Contre 0, Ne vote pas 0, Did not vote 1, Absent 1

Pour	**Contre**	**Ne vote pas**	**Did not vote**	**Absent**
Burford, Yvonne	None	None	Blin, Chris	Rochester, Sally
Bury, Tina				
Cameron, Andy				
Camp, Haley				
Collins, Garry				
Curgenven, Rob				
de Sausmarez, Lindsay				
Dorrity, David				
Falla, Steve				
Gabriel, Adrian				
Gollop, John				
Goy, David				
Hansmann Rouxel, Sarah				
Helyar, Mark				
Hill, Edward				
Humphreys, Rhona				
Inder, Neil				
Kay-Mouat, Bruno				
Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha				
Laine, Marc				
Le Brun, Ross				
Leadbeater, Marc				
Malik, Munazza				
Matthews, Aidan				
McKenna, Liam				
Montague, Paul				
Niles, Andrew				
Oswald, George				
Ozanne, Jayne				
Parkinson, Charles				
Rylatt, Tom				
Sloan, Andy				
Snowdon, Alexander				
St Pier, Gavin				
Strachan, Jennifer				
Van Katwyk, Lee				
Vermeulen, Simon				
Williams, Steve				

The Bailiff: They voted pour 38 and 1 Member was not in the Chamber at the time of voting. I therefore declare that that Proposition has been carried.

STATES' TRADING SUPERVISORY BOARD

2. Appointment of non-executive directors, Guernsey Post Limited – Mr Dominic Edmonds and Ms Alicia Andrews appointed

Article 2.
The States are asked to decide:-
Whether, after consideration of the policy letter entitled 'Appointment of Non-Executive Directors – Guernsey Post Limited' dated 10th September, 2026, they are of the opinion:-
To approve the appointment of Mr Dominic Edmonds and Ms Alicia Andrews as non-executive directors of Guernsey Post Limited

The States' Greffier: Article 2, the States' Trading Supervisory Board, Appointment of non-executive directors, Guernsey Post Ltd.

The Bailiff: Deputy Helyar.

Deputy Helyar: Thank you, ma'am.

I will be very brief. I do not have anything to add to the content of the policy letter. We are asking for the approval of Mr Dominic Edmonds and Ms Alicia Andrews as non-executive directors. This is the third level of governance through which this has been, possibly unnecessarily. These appointments have already been reviewed as a result of the process by the board itself, by the STSB, and the cherry on the cake, now the Assembly.

So I will just ask, please, Members, if you could all provide the cherry on the cake and vote for approval of the two non-execs.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Does anybody wish to speak in debate on this? No, in that case, States' Greffier, can you kindly immediately open the voting on this?

There was a recorded vote.

Carried – Pour 39, Contre 0, Ne vote pas 0, Did not vote 0, Absent 1

Pour	Contre	Ne vote pas	Did not vote	Absent
Blin, Chris	None	None	None	Rochester, Sally
Burford, Yvonne				
Bury, Tina				
Cameron, Andy				
Camp, Haley				
Collins, Garry				
Curgenven, Rob				
de Sausmarez, Lindsay				
Dorrity, David				
Falla, Steve				
Gabriel, Adrian				
Gollop, John				
Goy, David				
Hansmann Rouxel, Sarah				
Helyar, Mark				
Hill, Edward				
Humphreys, Rhona				

Inder, Neil
Kay-Mouat, Bruno
Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha
Laine, Marc
Le Brun, Ross
Leadbeater, Marc
Malik, Munazza
Matthews, Aidan
McKenna, Liam
Montague, Paul
Niles, Andrew
Oswald, George
Ozanne, Jayne
Parkinson, Charles
Rylatt, Tom
Sloan, Andy
Snowdon, Alexander
St Pier, Gavin
Strachan, Jennifer
Van Katwyk, Lee
Vermeulen, Simon
Williams, Steve

The Bailiff: There voted in relation to this Proposition in relation to the appointment of non-executive directors to Guernsey Post Ltd, pour 39. I therefore declare that the Proposition has been carried.

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

3. The Guernsey Financial Services Commission Re-Election of Commissioners – Propositions carried

Article 3.
The States are asked to decide:
Whether, after consideration of the Policy Letter dated 8 September 2026, of the Policy & Resources Committee, they are of the opinion:
1. To extend Anna Guggenheim KC's term of office as an ordinary member of the Guernsey Financial Services Commission for a further three-year term with effect from 24th January 2027;
2. To appoint Anna Guggenheim KC as Chairman of the Guernsey Financial Services Commission with effect from 1st June 2027;
3. To extend Robert Girard's term of office as an ordinary member of the Guernsey Financial Services Commission for a further three-year term with effect from 24th January 2027;
4. To extend Paul Hodgson's term of office as an ordinary member of the Guernsey Financial Services Commission for a further three-year term with effect from 24th January 2027.

The States' Greffier: Article 3, the Policy & Resources Committee, the Guernsey Financial Services Commission Re-election of Commissioners.

The Bailiff: Deputy Niles.

Deputy Niles: Madam, I will say a few words because I think it is important to highlight the individuals that stand for these positions and the importance that they serve in our community.

The Guernsey Financial Services Commission plays a central role in maintaining the reputation and integrity of the financial sector. The calibre of its commissioners matters enormously. I am

pleased to say that the three individuals before the States today represent exactly the kind of experience and expertise the Island needs at the helm of its regulator.

Anna Guggenheim KC, has served as a commissioner since January 2024 and as Vice-Chair since July of that year. She brings to the role a distinguished career spanning the Guernsey Bar, a partnership at Babbé specialising in financial services litigation and before that as a career as a barrister and circuit judge in London. She is well placed to succeed John Aspden as Chair, and the Committee is confident in that succession. I would also take this opportunity to acknowledge John's significant contribution as Chair and mark he has left on the Commission during his tenure.

Robert Girard joined the Commission in January 2024, a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Bankers with 45 years of experience at NatWest, including 12 years on the RBSI ExCo and as Country Head in Guernsey. He brings deep banking experience and thorough understanding of the Bailiwick context.

Paul Hodgson also joined in January 2024 and brings more than 35 years in financial services, specialising in fiduciary administration and insolvency. His leadership of Guernsey International Business Association (GIBA) and his long career at Butterfield make him a well-known and respected figure across the finance sector.

Together, these three commissioners bring complementary skills at a time when our regulatory environment is evolving rapidly, when we are trying to balance growth with regulation, and when the Commission's work in support of the Finance Sector Growth Strategy is gaining real momentum. The Committee recommends all four Propositions and I urge the Assembly to do so.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Does anybody wish to speak in debate on this? In that case we will go straight to voting please, States' Greffier. Would you open the voting?

There was a recorded vote.

Carried – Pour 39, Contre 0, Ne vote pas 0, Did not vote 0, Absent 1

Pour	**Contre**	**Ne vote pas**	**Did not vote**	**Absent**
Blin, Chris	None	None	None	Rochester, Sally
Burford, Yvonne				
Bury, Tina				
Cameron, Andy				
Camp, Haley				
Collins, Garry				
Curgenven, Rob				
de Sausmarez, Lindsay				
Dorrity, David				
Falla, Steve				
Gabriel, Adrian				
Gollop, John				
Goy, David				
Hansmann Rouxel, Sarah				
Helyar, Mark				
Hill, Edward				
Humphreys, Rhona				
Inder, Neil				
Kay-Mouat, Bruno				
Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha				
Laine, Marc				
Le Brun, Ross				
Leadbeater, Marc				
Malik, Munazza				
Matthews, Aidan				
McKenna, Liam				
Montague, Paul				
Niles, Andrew				

Oswald, George
Ozanne, Jayne
Parkinson, Charles
Rylatt, Tom
Sloan, Andy
Snowdon, Alexander
St Pier, Gavin
Strachan, Jennifer
Van Katwyk, Lee
Vermeulen, Simon
Williams, Steve

The Bailiff: There voted in relation to this Proposition pour 39. I therefore declare that the Proposition has been carried.

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

4. Tax on Real Property Appeals Panel - Appointment of Members and Designation of Chairman – Proposition Carried

Article 4.
After consideration of the policy letter entitled 'Tax on Real Property Appeals Panel – Appointment of Members and to Designate a Chairman and Vice-Chairman dated 14th September 2026, they were of the opinion to agree to:-
(a) Appoint the following as members of the Tax on Real Property Appeals Panel for a period of five years with immediate effect:
- Mr Russell Clark
- Mr George Jennings
(b) Re-appoint the following as members of the Tax on Real Property Appeals Panel for a period of five years with immediate effect:
- Ms Julia White
- Mr Keith Charles Bell
- Mr Raymond Thomas Le Poidevin
- Advocate Robin Gist
and
(c) To designate Ms Julia White as the Chairman and Mr Russell Clark as Vice-Chairman for a period of five years with immediate effect.

The States' Greffier: The Policy & Resources Committee, Tax on Real Property Appeals Panel – Appointment of Members of Designation of Chairman.

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Thank you.

If anyone is puzzling over the title, there is a small typo it is supposed to be Appointment of Members and Designation of Chairman, which might make more sense. This is TRP Appeals Panel, so it really does what it says on the tin, but it is an independent body and it is the type of thing where actually I think the community really benefits from the time and expertise that Members serving on these panels really bring.

I think it is befitting to start with some thanks to the outgoing members, Ms Audrey Branch, she is the outgoing Chair, and Mr Roy Burke for their service on the panel. This seeks to appoint Mr

Russell Clark and Mr George Jennings and to reappoint Ms Julia White, Mr Keith Bell, Mr Ray Le Poidevin and Advocate Robin Gist to the panel and also to designate Ms Julia White as Chair and Mr Russell Clark as Vice-Chair. All of that for periods of five years, I think with immediate effect.

I am sure the information in the policy letter will hopefully have satisfied any questions, but happy to take any if there are any.

The Bailiff: Does anybody wish to speak in debate on this matter? No? In that case, we will go straight to the vote. States' Greffier, would you kindly open the voting, please?

There was a recorded vote.

Carried – Pour 39, Contre 0, Ne vote pas 0, Did not vote 0, Absent 1

Pour	Contre	Ne vote pas	Did not vote	Absent
Blin, Chris	None	None	None	Rochester, Sally
Burford, Yvonne				
Bury, Tina				
Cameron, Andy				
Camp, Haley				
Collins, Garry				
Curgenven, Rob				
de Sausmarez, Lindsay				
Dorrity, David				
Falla, Steve				
Gabriel, Adrian				
Gollop, John				
Goy, David				
Hansmann Rouxel, Sarah				
Helyar, Mark				
Hill, Edward				
Humphreys, Rhona				
Inder, Neil				
Kay-Mouat, Bruno				
Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha				
Laine, Marc				
Le Brun, Ross				
Leadbeater, Marc				
Malik, Munazza				
Matthews, Aidan				
McKenna, Liam				
Montague, Paul				
Niles, Andrew				
Oswald, George				
Ozanne, Jayne				
Parkinson, Charles				
Rylatt, Tom				
Sloan, Andy				
Snowdon, Alexander				
St Pier, Gavin				
Strachan, Jennifer				
Van Katwyk, Lee				
Vermeulen, Simon				
Williams, Steve				

The Bailiff: There voted in relation to this Proposition, pour 39. I therefore declare that the Proposition has been carried.

APPENDIX REPORT

COMMITTEE *FOR* HOME AFFAIRS

Guernsey Police Complaints Commission Annual Report 2025 –
Motion to debate carried

To resolve, pursuant to Rule 20 of the Rules of Procedure of the States of Deliberation, to debate the Appendix Report to Billet d'État No. XVI 2026 entitled 'Committee for Home Affairs – Guernsey Police Complaints Commission 2025 Report.'.

The States' Greffier: The Committee *for* Home Affairs, Guernsey Police Complaints Commission Annual Report 2025, motion to debate.

The Bailiff: Deputy Curgenven.

Deputy Curgenven: Thank you, Madam President.

Last year this Assembly voted overwhelmingly to debate the Police Complaints Commission's report. Yet today we seemingly find ourselves facing the exact same underlying issues.

The President of Home Affairs, Deputy Leadbeater, has rightly acknowledged that our complaints regime needs urgent modernisation, naming it a top priority for his Committee. He promised us a root and branch review, with nothing off the table, and committed to bringing recommendations back to the States. Those commitments are very welcome.

But the fundamental question remains, is the system delivering the independence and clarity that the public expects? A debate on this report is the single best, and perhaps the only, opportunity for this Assembly and the public we serve to scrutinise the facts, challenge the answers, and demand accountability. As Deputy Dorrity highlighted in yesterday's press, the Commission's 2025 report makes clear that independent oversight is vital, warning that operational pressures risk blurring the line between scrutiny and policing.

The message is simple. Public trust depends on doing the right thing through the right process. Supporting this debate is how we show the public we are serious about earning that trust. That trust is especially critical because the Commission remains strictly bound by statutory limits. It does not investigate every complaint, cannot determine outcomes, and lacks any real power to overturn police decisions.

If we, as elected representatives, cannot clearly explain how such a constrained system works, how can we expect the public to trust it? That scepticism has lingered far too long. Supporting this motion allows for a constructive debate on whether the review is genuinely addressing the structural flaws and whether the new process will be truly independent and transparent. That is the standard the public rightly expects of us to uphold.

I thank Deputy St Pier for seconding this motion, and I urge Members to support it. Thank you.

The Bailiff: Thank you.

Deputy St Pier, do you formally second this motion?

Deputy St Pier: I do, Madam.

The Bailiff: Thank you.

Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, madam.

I do find there is a certain irony in Deputy Curgenven drawing attention to the fact that we are a year down the line and we have made no headway, when he is probably the main protagonist in diverting resources away from our Committee priorities. But, either way, I am quite happy and the Committee are happy to debate this report. Last term it was Deputy St Pier and myself that were bringing in the motion to debate these reports and we have no issues. It is an important subject. The review does remain on the Committee's priority list and I urge Members to support the motion to debate.

The Bailiff: States' Greffier, would you open the voting on the motion to debate?

There was a recorded vote.

Carried – Pour 36, Contre 2, Ne vote pas 1, Did not vote 0, Absent 1

Pour	Contre	Ne vote pas	Did not vote	Absent
Blin, Chris	Laine, Marc	Parkinson, Charles	None	Rochester, Sally
Burford, Yvonne	Malik, Munazza			
Bury, Tina				
Cameron, Andy				
Camp, Haley				
Collins, Garry				
Curgenven, Rob				
de Sausmarez, Lindsay				
Dorrity, David				
Falla, Steve				
Gabriel, Adrian				
Gollop, John				
Goy, David				
Hansmann Rouxel, Sarah				
Helyar, Mark				
Hill, Edward				
Humphreys, Rhona				
Inder, Neil				
Kay-Mouat, Bruno				
Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha				
Le Brun, Ross				
Leadbeater, Marc				
Matthews, Aidan				
McKenna, Liam				
Montague, Paul				
Niles, Andrew				
Oswald, George				
Ozanne, Jayne				
Rylatt, Tom				
Sloan, Andy				
Snowdon, Alexander				
St Pier, Gavin				
Strachan, Jennifer				
Van Katwyk, Lee				
Vermeulen, Simon				
Williams, Steve				

The Bailiff: There voted in relation to the motion to debate pour 36, contre 2, and there was 1 abstention. I therefore declare that the motion has passed.

ARTICLES ADJOURNED OR DEFERRED FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

STATEMENTS

COMMITTEE *FOR* EMPLOYMENT & SOCIAL SECURITY

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

The Bailiff: Now I will move on to the Articles adjourned from previous meetings and a raft of statements. We will start with the statement from the President for Employment & Social Security.

Deputy Bury: Thank you, ma'am.

With more than a year of the political term now firmly under our belt, and despite a few changes to our line-up, I am confident that the Committee *for* Employment & Social Security has gotten to grips with our extensive policy and operational agenda. That in mind, the Committee has been hard at work to develop its Work Plan, which I am pleased to say we published at the end of last month.

ESS's mandate is broad and varied, and that is clearly reflected in our priorities for the remainder of the term. Firstly, we want to make sure that the Island's social security system is sustainable and able to meet future demand while promoting intergenerational fairness. Another of our top priorities is to support the wellbeing of Guernsey's workforce and expand opportunities for workforce participation, which we will do through our Work and Wellbeing Strategy.

We also have an ageing population to consider and must ensure that the social security system is equipped to meet the needs of those who require social care. At the other end of the age spectrum, there is also a role for us to play in improving outcomes for children and creating an environment where families can thrive and participate fully in society and the economy.

Finally, by broadening legal protections against discrimination and ensuring access to justice through the Island's legal aid schemes, we are committed to supporting a fair and socially-just society.

With these goals in mind, we have given critical priority status to several workstreams in our Work Plan, and these include implementing agreed changes to the Long-Term Care Insurance Scheme and developing proposals for a new model of community long-term care, implementing any approved changes to the structure of social security contributions, identifying and implementing savings opportunities and developing proposals for shared parental leave and the right to request flexible working. Not only do these workstreams align with the Committee's goals, but each also helps to support or deliver at least one Government Work Plan super priority.

Alongside these, our Work Plan identifies other workstreams as important, and these have either been explicitly identified in a GWP area of focus or support an area of focus, such as continuing the development of the Prevention of Discrimination Ordinance, implementing reforms to the legal aid schemes, progressing the extension of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and investigating ways to support productivity and participation in work.

In addition to those priorities, the Committee oversees a significant amount of business-as-usual work and must also play its part in reducing public spending, which I will return to in a moment.

Narrowing our priorities down was not an easy task and, in all honesty, we have not achieved that to the level we would like. Given limited officer resource, funding constraints and the absence of an established prioritisation system or resource allocation solution within the organisation, prioritisation remains challenging and I am sure we all recognise that there is an ongoing tension

between ambition and deliverability across Government. Despite this challenge, we are committed to progressing the priority areas we have identified.

We have also been making progress on many ongoing workstreams recently, but before I speak to those I would like to briefly cover savings, as I know this is an area that everyone is keen to hear about. The Committee has established a Savings Working Party, which has been turning stones and actively looking for opportunities to make savings and efficiencies, including invest-to-save opportunities. So far over 30 areas have been identified for further investigation and Members will see some initial steps being taken in our upcoming annual uprating letters.

I am grateful to Deputies Ozanne, Rylatt and St Pier for continuing this important workstream, and would like to thank Members who recently attended an update about the work we have been doing towards achieving saving targets. If any Members missed this presentation but would like to know more, please drop me a line and we can arrange another presentation or a one-to-one.

We do recognise our responsibility to reduce spending but we must also ensure that any changes do not unfairly affect Islanders who need support and who have often contributed throughout their working lives. Taking this into account, any benefit changes must be carefully assessed to avoid unintended consequences. Many changes require legislation change, which takes time, and transitional protections are often required, meaning savings are realised longer term rather than immediately. While we all want rapid savings, we have to be realistic that genuine quick wins are limited.

One of our pre-existing invest-to-save workstreams is the Work and Wellbeing Strategy, which I mentioned earlier, and I would like to give a bit more detail now on what that actually means. We know that sickness and incapacity benefit claims have increased in recent years. We are acutely aware of the increased challenges that some young people face. A recent report found that almost 1 million young people aged 16 to 24 are not in education, employment or training in the UK, what is known as NEET.

In Guernsey, there are around 100 people aged 17 to 25 claiming sickness or unemployment-related benefits. The UK report suggests that their welfare system focuses more on income replacement rather than helping people find work. However, this is something we are already prioritising. Our Work and Wellbeing Strategy, which was launched in May last year, is a five-year programme to improve workforce participation, reduce the duration of sickness absence and ensure that people who experience illness, injury or disability receive the right support at the right time.

The strategy is built on partnership across Government, employers, healthcare professionals and the third sector. The work includes the formation of a dedicated ESS work support team, a review of our back-to-work provisions, regular training and awareness sessions with GPs and practitioners, and implementing a new work and wellness assessment tool which focuses on individual strengths and needs, and takes a positive approach centred around what a person can do with the right support to get them back into work.

A key message emerging from both the strategy and operational data is that our early intervention is working, and we have seen the increase in sickness-related claims start to slow. Between May last year and this year, the work support team received around 1,500 referrals for individuals experiencing barriers to employment due to ill health or disability, and they resolved 1,375 cases. Over 900 individuals returned to work, increased their work participation or re-engaged with job seeking. Of these, 679 were supported by work support case managers to return to work or re-engage with job-seeking activities.

Interventions take place during the critical rehabilitation window, with engagement typically incurring within the first few weeks and months when support is most likely to have a positive impact. Early conversations help build personalised return to work plans with the individual and their healthcare providers. To break down potential barriers to accessing early support, we are actively promoting on social media services provided by officers and have also partnered with Guernsey Mind to provide regular drop-in sessions for customers engaging with the work support team.

To be clear, our approach is not about targeting or penalising people with a health condition, or pressuring people back into work before they are ready. Instead, it is about ensuring that no one faces health challenges alone, that employers have access to the advice and support they need, and that people are given every opportunity to remain connected to the workplace while recovering.

To help the workforce reach its full potential, we need an inclusive, adaptable labour market that opens doors to work and helps people stay in it, while striking the right balance between worker protections and supporting economic participation.

In other areas, we have been busy tying up some loose ends from last term. These include implementing changes to the eligibility criteria for Family Allowance and Widowed Parent's Allowance, meaning from 1st September this year payments of both benefits continue until a child finishes school in the year they turn 18 rather than ceasing on their 18th birthday.

We have also been working to implement changes to the Long-Term Care Insurance Scheme agreed by the States in February last year. This includes introducing a user contribution towards residential care costs and amending one of the residency conditions to be eligible to receive long-term care benefit. Members will have seen that some of the required legislation to make these changes was on the Billet for our last two meetings and has now rolled into this one. However, further work is needed and it is complex work, including the minute details of financial assessments to ensure that only those that can afford to pay will do so, as well as anti-divestment rules. We intend to bring forward regulations for this in due course.

On this subject, I would like to thank Members for engaging with the briefing session delivered by Deputies de Sausmarez, Oswald and I on 20th May. The three Committees we represent continue to work closely together via the political oversight group with particular focus on the design of a new long-term care model which sits under the SLAWS. ESS's role includes funding arrangements and sustainability considerations, including exploring the expansion of the scheme to provide care benefit to people receiving care in their own home, considering the introduction of a higher rate of benefit for people with more complex care needs, reviewing the case for and against moving from what we have now, which is a residency-based entitlement, to a contributions-based system. There is also reviewing Severe Disability Benefit and Carer's Allowance and ensuring that any proposals for change are financially sustainable and fair across generations.

Turning briefly now to pensions, as of 1st October last year the statutory duty on employers to automatically enrol eligible employees in a workplace pension has been enforced for all employers. By way of a reminder, Your Island Pension, known as YIP, is the States' facilitated workplace pension scheme, administered by Sovereign Pension Services CI Ltd. As of 16th September this year, 4,697 Islanders have a YIP account. As YIP is not the only qualifying workplace pension, overall participation figures will be higher. However, updated data on this is not yet available due to IT issues at Revenue Service. But, without doubt, the provision of a second pillar pension scheme for Guernsey and Alderney workers will reduce future reliance on income support and will improve people's financial security in retirement.

Moving on to an entirely different area, as part of our statutory responsibilities, actuarial reviews of both insurance funds are underway. There have been unavoidable delays to this work because population earnings and unemployment data, which is essential to review the process, has been unavailable for some time. We postponed the reviews for a while to await the data, but as this is outside of ESS's control and still being resolved, we have worked with the actuaries to find a way forward. We anticipate that the review will be finalised before the end of this year.

Finally, this has been a particularly busy time of year for our business-as-usual activity at ESS. This work is essential to ensure that lower income Islanders do not fall below an acceptable minimum standard of living. Work is complete on the annual uprating process, with proposals due to come before the States today and at the Budget meetings take effect at the start of 2027. As part of this, we are reviewing methodologies to seek out saving opportunities and ensure a sustainable and balanced approach over the long term. But upholding fiscal responsibility while also ensuring that financial support is available to those who need it is a difficult balancing act. That in mind, the

Committee is taking a careful and considered long-term view. Some steps have been taken for 2027, but more analysis is required before introducing any more substantial reforms.

Given the scale of work I have covered in this statement, I am very pleased that in June we welcomed Wendy McHugh as a non-voting member of the Committee. Her significant experience in HR and employment relations aligns closely to some of our priorities. She has already made many valuable contributions.

In closing, ma'am, the Committee is under no illusions about the scale of the programme of this work, but we are determined to make meaningful progress against our priorities this term.

I welcome any questions from Members.

The Bailiff: Thank you.

Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: Thank you for the update, Deputy Bury.

I think it is the same programme as Deputy Bury referenced NEETs, and I am going to try and put a positive spin on this actually. If there are a million NEETs in England, many of whom are actually graduates who cannot find work, that would roughly translate to 1,000 in Guernsey. But the President gave a position of 100 in Guernsey; would she agree then that shows us that Guernsey is in actually a relatively good place compared to our northern neighbour?

The Bailiff: Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: I welcome Deputy Inder's new temperament to the Assembly. *(Laughter)* But, yes, I entirely agree. The figures he has just stated there does shine a positive light on where we are, but we must be on top of it. We do know that our younger people are suffering with their mental health, and there might be things coming down the line. But I absolutely welcome his comment and do believe that the approach we are taking is the right one and has actually been applauded in the UK. We have been asked to go and speak to local councils about our approach so that they can take the benefits as well.

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Madam, Deputy Inder stole my statistics from my question and I think I just want to reference again the Milburn report and the catastrophic data that is coming out of it, and what seems to be like much more positive news from Guernsey.

There is a talk about the death of the Saturday job as one of the elements contributing to that lack of connection between potentially education early in young people's lives and employment. Would the President perhaps be open to working on a joint project with Economic Development and Education on raising more awareness about ways to employ young people and perhaps working with employers to really try to bring that Saturday job back and ensure that it is available for young people to apply to when they are young, so we do not rest on our laurels but we are working on active projects to help facilitate that engagement with employment early on?

The Bailiff: Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: I think we are always open to working with others on positive initiatives. I think it would be useful to understand the problem. I know that obviously we have not had age laws but they come down the line soon. In personal experience, my youngster has just recently secured a Saturday job and it was not hard, but perhaps for younger people it might be. So I do think that support for employers in this area – because once they start employing young people they move into safeguarding and so I think supporting that area would be really useful. So, yes, I will wait to hear from Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Thank you.

I very much welcome the Update and, in particular, the priorities that ESS will be focused on. I was very pleased to see that shared parental leave is among those priorities. Evidence seems to suggest that some of the factors that make a successful shared parental leave policy are or include non-transferable leave for each parent – which I will come back to – sufficient income replacement, flexibility in how leave is used, simple administration and integration with wider family policies, for example with affordable childcare.

I am particularly interested in whether the Committee is minded to consider the element of non-transferable leave for each parent because the evidence does seem to suggest that that element in particular is very effective at improving fathers', in particular, participation in raising their children, which has obviously much wider benefits. So I would appreciate hearing from the President whether she will.

The Bailiff: That is your minute.

Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: Thank you, ma'am.

Certainly on a personal level, that is something I am very aware of as well. One of the benefits we have in being so far behind on this is that we are able to see what has been implemented elsewhere. Then it has been improved elsewhere. So we can now benefit from that. We are open to exploring all the opportunities. And, as I say, I suppose that is, rather sarcastically, one of the benefits. We can see what has and has not worked elsewhere and make sure that we choose what is most appropriate for Guernsey and what works best for the aims that we are trying to achieve.

The Bailiff: Deputy Oswald.

Deputy Oswald: I thank Deputy Bury for her very informative statement. You have referred in your statement specifically the good work done by the political oversight group (POG) on the SLAWS programme. My question refers directly to matters raised about links by Deputies Inder and Kazantseva-Miller. In view of the impending publication of the Milburn report and the potential Island-wide importance for this, do you consider that setting up a similar POG as what we have experienced in SLAWS to actually oversee developments related to the outcome of the Milburn report would be an appropriate way to go?

The Bailiff: Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: Thank you, ma'am.

Possibly, although there is the skills workstream which I think would have a potential overlap here, and I am grateful to Deputy Oswald for giving me the opportunity to wave the ESS flag in the skills area, because I think on previous terms it has very much been an Education and an Economic Development-focused workstream, for obvious reasons, but the flag we are waving now is that ESS really have a part to play in that. The employment part of our mandate I do think gets forgotten sometimes, we are viewed as the unemployment part, but actually if young people do not have the right pathways, the right skills, ultimately they end up with us and we pick up the pieces. Then you potentially need more intensive support further down the line.

Whether a POG is the right solution, or whether the skills workstream is, we would like to be there and be part of it.

The Bailiff: Deputy Van Katwyk.

Deputy Van Katwyk: Thank you, ma'am; and I thank the President of ESS for her update.

The President mentioned supporting our ageing population and those who have contributed their entire lives. I would just like to ask, has the President or this ESS Committee received any formal or informal complaints regarding changes to the married woman's pension that happened a long time before Deputy Bury was President of the Committee, in 2004?

The Bailiff: Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: Thank you, and I am grateful to Deputy Van Katwyk for raising this.

We have had a couple of enquiries which we have considered and responded to. What has surprised me though is that I have not had an enquiry from him, considering it is clearly a topic that he is investigating and interested in. I have extended an invite to explain this complex policy area and the changes in a far better way than I will be able to do in 90 seconds now, but there is a raft of information that we can share to ensure his full understanding of that situation.

We have had a couple of enquiries which we have responded to with the similar information that we would share with him.

The Bailiff: Deputy Collins.

Deputy Collins: Thank you, ma'am.

In order to complete the mandate of the Committee of ESS attendance at Committee meetings is very key for making decisions. My question to the President is, will the Committee support more openness on attendance being published?

Thank you, ma'am.

The Bailiff: Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: I am tempted to say that this is not in my mandate and it is for SACC to be honest, ma'am, but I get the gist.

Absolutely, I think 'transparency' is important. I am not sure whether publishing statistics in this nature without any context is actually transparency. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) I am not a fan of presenteeism. Just having a bum on a seat does not mean that someone has read the papers or contributed to the meeting very well, and just because someone is not there it does not mean they have not read the papers and contributed.

There are many reasons why someone might not be able to attend. It does not mean they are not doing their job, and I do think statistics like this presented in a cold format without context can be a bit misleading. But if it is what people want then of course we will provide the data.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: I do not want to just do presenteeism.

I became aware recently at a parish meeting that the costs of funerals, etc., is rising. Some parishes charge a grave change exhumation cost. Is the Committee committed to maintaining the current or improve levels of the various bereavement, widowed parents, widowed allowances that are payable, bearing in mind the cost of funerals is rising?

The Bailiff: Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: Thank you, ma'am.

I think the Death Grant would be more the appropriate benefit that would apply to Deputy Gollop's concerns around funeral costs. Like everything, as part of our Savings Working

Group all benefits are being looked at, particularly those that were established quite some time ago when the context was quite different.

Whether or not I can say that we are committed to maintaining the rate, I do not think I would commit to that right now, but I can assure Deputy Gollop and Members that all of these things - particularly the fact that there are several different benefits that relate to death – are being reviewed in the round to see if they could be more appropriate and modernised.

The Bailiff: Deputy Humphreys.

Deputy Humphreys: You are aware that Sovereign Trust, who manage the YIP were found guilty of gross negligence and 'a jaw-dropping level of neglect' in the case in the Royal Court in Guernsey earlier in the year. Has the Committee considered this verdict and whether the ongoing role of Sovereign in managing the YIP is appropriate, as promised in your statement made in March 2026?

The Bailiff: Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: The final judgment is awaited on that case, just to be clear on that, so we await that. But I can absolutely assure Deputy Humphreys and Members that we have interrogated this situation, both with Sovereign and our procurement teams. We are fairly satisfied of the processes, some of which were outside of our control, and we continue to keep an eye on the unfolding situation. But we are reassured that the actual funds – because Sovereign act in the trustee – for the YIP are safe. Any further action that may need to be taken will be considered after the final judgment.

The Bailiff: Deputy Blin.

Deputy Blin: Thank you, ma'am.

A question for Deputy Bury in the role. With the years I had previously working with Job Centre – prior to being a Deputy – we had a lot of opportunities to help getting into work, etc. Is there anything being done, given the advent of the strength of AI, to work on any opportunities as part of the back-to-work opportunity and help within the centre and the support they get from the other organisations?

The Bailiff: Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: I think in all likelihood we are probably looking at AI from the other end of the spectrum. Deputy Rylatt is our lead in this area and I know he is working closely with Economic Development. We do have a workstream in our Work Plan to do some workforce impact forecasting, but I think Deputy Blin raises a good and more positive angle on how AI could possibly help with upskilling of people.

I think there is plenty going on in the Island right now in that space. Deputy Rylatt and Deputy Le Brun have attended lots of the sessions put on by the Chamber of Commerce. I probably would not be able to say, yes, we have absolutely committed to doing so, but I will take that back with us, and certainly with the work that Deputy Rylatt is doing in this area I know he will be cognisant of looking at things in such a way.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: I would be interested to know whether the policy thinking behind the grants for GP and nurse consultations have moved to Health & Social Care, but specifically within the ESS mandate is the Committee actively negotiating with GP practices about the increasing tendency of

those practices to have double or triple appointments, and the fees adjustment that are made for persons who are in receipt of income support?

The Bailiff: Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: I do not know that we are receiving reports that those in receipt of income support, and so get their medical costs covered, are needing double or triple appointments. If that data should come through then of course we can look at it. Obviously we do pay a negotiated rate for those appointments.

If it is an issue I would need some data to back that up and then we could obviously look at it, but at the moment I am not aware of that being highlighted as a problem.

The Bailiff: Any more questions?

Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: Thank you, ma'am.

Obviously we had the benefit of a nice convivial chat at a hearing a few weeks ago, and this is not a curveball or anything like that. In that hearing we discussed the issue of the fact that we can demonstrate the majority of pensions costs is being driven by *[Inaudible 11:37:50]* about 90%. But the same cannot be said for income support in terms of in actuality we looked at possibly *[Inaudible 11:38:01]* driving costs or extended through that area. And we also discussed the fact that the actual *[Inaudible 11:38:10]* economy had actually driven the cost of social security higher than originally projected when the actuarial forecast has been made.

This seemed to pre-empt the *[Inaudible 11:38:20]* on that hearing. Does the President agree that the provisional sort of view of the Committee that having a counterfactual of the previous historic projection actually going forward, so –

The Bailiff: That is your minute, Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: *[Inaudible 11:38:38] (Laughter)*

The Bailiff: Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: I think it is fair to say that when creating new policy we are always looking back as well as forward so, yes, that is a good idea.

The Bailiff: Deputy Vermeulen.

Deputy Vermeulen: I thank the President for her comprehensive update. I was delighted to hear that the figure of 100 is relatively small in comparison to what the UK is experiencing, not in employment or educational training.

But another thing that popped up today is that the UK is looking at Universal Credit being withdrawn from inmates in the prison, and I would be negligent if I did not ask: do you pay any form of income support to inmates who are incarcerated at present?

The Bailiff: Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: Thank you, ma'am; and I thank Deputy Vermeulen for his question.

I have to be very honest that I do not know the answer to that, but I think it is a really interesting question so I will ensure to make sure that, as in the usual manner, a written answer is furnished within the timeline.

The Bailiff: Any more questions before we finish this period of questioning? No, in that case, thank you, Deputy Bury.

General Update Statement – Statement by the President of the Committee *for* Home Affairs

The Bailiff: We will move then to the Update Statement from the Committee *for* Home Affairs.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, Madam Bailiff.

When I spoke in the Assembly at the end of 2025, the Committee detailed its priorities for this political term, with a focus on its policy mandate and role within the legislature. Our commitment to improving justice outcomes by supporting a safe, fair and inclusive society for everyone in the Bailiwick is resolute.

Justice policy is a fundamental pillar of any modern society and remains a core focus for the Committee. The Committee's mandate is grounded in legislation that should be reviewed regularly to ensure it remains relevant and up to date. This is evident in the Committee's current priorities, including the progression of work in relation to a review of the police complaints legislation, population policy, and placing victims first by advancing domestic abuse and sexual violence protections. However, identified priorities and best-practice reviews can be disrupted by the reactive nature of the Committee's mandate, as emerging operational issues and risks must, at times, take priority.

Practical examples of these time-critical and otherwise unplanned challenges this term include bilateral prisoner transfer agreements, participation in GCC Free Trade Agreements, import control orders, drink/drug-drive statutory instruments, Alderney gambling legislation and consideration of the UK's National Security Act, all of which are critical to maintaining the security of the Bailiwick and its participation in the global marketplace.

The responsive nature of the Committee's mandate, coupled with the delivery of its governance and regulated responsibilities, diverts resources away from policy priorities. The Committee is mindful of the need to balance these responsibilities to ensure that we are focusing our resources on the areas where our community will feel the benefit most.

The Committee is pleased to be able to report its intention to develop a Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, reaffirming its commitment to preventing violence before it occurs, improving support for victims and survivors, and ensuring that services, legislation and criminal and family justice responses continue to evolve in line with emerging risks and best practice.

There will be consultation with key stakeholders and third-sector partners to help shape the priorities and objectives of the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. There will be an initial focus on alignment with the Istanbul Convention, improving data collection and analysis, strengthening prevention and early intervention through education, awareness-raising and work with schools and the wider community. Further, the strategy will continue to modernise legislation and justice processes to ensure that they are victim-centred and fit for purpose.

Work has begun to consider the scope of a review of sentencing policy. The intention is to take a holistic approach to the subject, acknowledging its integration within the wider context of justice. The review is not intended to revisit individual cases or judicial decision-making. Instead, it will focus on the framework within which sentencing decisions are made, including legislative tools, available disposals, guidance, data and system capacity. Engagement with stakeholders will be key to the success of this work.

In the intervening months since the Committee's first Update Statement, there has been an increasing focus on the Committee's oversight of its operational functions. This statement will look to provide an update on service activity and the discharge of the Committee's oversight responsibilities.

A number of these services, including law enforcement, probation, prison and population management, are delivered by statutory officials. It is essential that the Committee's oversight responsibility does not fetter operational independence. This means that it is not appropriate for the Committee to insert itself into operational activities, whether that is case handling, client interactions or staffing matters.

The Committee's focus is on ensuring services are delivered efficiently, consistently and in line with statutory obligations. It does so through direct engagement with its service leads and formal business monitoring sessions. Some of the highlights reported were: Guernsey Customs & Immigration Service is continuing to work with HMRC on co-operation and mutual administrative assistance agreements, providing a framework for the exchange of information to help combat customs fraud, facilitate legitimate trade and ensure compliance with customs regulations. Electronic Travel Authorisations (ETAs) for foreign national visitors were introduced on 23rd April 2026.

In the area of road safety, the police have had a sustained focus on the fatal five. Work has been taking place to support the introduction of new drug-driving legislation, which it is anticipated will take place before the end of the year.

The Guernsey Cyber Security Centre launched on 9th June, opened by my Vice-President, Deputy Gollop. The Centre will provide advice and support to businesses and the public, help build cyber resilience in the community, carry out threat evaluation and analysis, as well as co-ordinate responses to significant cyber incidents.

This year has come with challenges, which we are committed to responding to in a robust and open way. In that vein, the Committee looks forward to the conclusion of the independent proceedings taking place in relation to the Prison. Whilst the results of these matters are not yet known, the Committee will ensure that the service is equipped to respond to any learning identified in order to improve service outcomes.

Had I given this Update Statement in July, I would have acknowledged the increased scrutiny that population management has faced. This challenge is ongoing. In the first quarter of 2026, the volume of employment permit applications remained broadly consistent with recent years.

In March, there was increased pressure on the service as a consequence of the policy change agreed by the Assembly last term, which saw short-term employment permits limited to three years for the first time since the regime was introduced. The Committee responded to concerns raised by industry in March by agreeing to a temporary extension policy for individuals reaching their short-term permit cap.

As a result of increased demand for population management services, at the beginning of the summer the Committee supported the implementation of a support plan, put in place to relieve some immediate operational pressures, improve customer service and support the processing of applications.

Since taking these steps, the Committee has acknowledged the concerns that remain in relation to processing times and the potential impact of changes in leadership. The Committee is keen to provide reassurance that it is focused on ensuring stability in the service and tackling the backlog of permit applications. The Committee received a comprehensive briefing at its meeting on Tuesday this week. The figures did not make for great reading; however, the extent of the issue is now clear and the focus is on tackling the backlog in a timely way. That will require an injection of resources.

In the coming months, the Committee will focus on the broader question of population policy and the need for the population management regime to evolve and flex to respond to the needs of industry, whilst acknowledging the consequences of accessing a worldwide employment pool on our Island. In the coming weeks, the Committee will formally commence engagement with industry and cross-Committee engagement.

The Committee has a well-established operational service structure, charged with the delivery of responsive, demand-led services. This can present challenges when progressing the delivery of the Committee's broad policy mandate and exploring transformational initiatives.

During the next six months, the Committee will focus on scrutiny, stability and sustainability of its services, and investment in the workforce so that services can do better.

Thank you, madam.

The Bailiff: Thank you.

We will now start 20 minutes of questions.

Deputy Van Katwyk.

Deputy Van Katwyk: Thank you, my lady, and thank you – *(Laughter)*

The Bailiff: Lady?

Deputy van Katwyk: No? I was just trying it out. My fair lady? *(Laughter)*

Thank you to the President for his update there, especially on the issues with the population management application process. Would Deputy Leadbeater agree that there is a part to play for artificial intelligence in helping sort out the situation? Is he hoping that will be part of the resource injection?

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, Madam Bailiff; and I thank Deputy van Katwyk for his question.

Yes, it is something that we are considering. I think there is a system upgrade that is being used or something in the Revenue Service using AI agents to try and improve efficiency there. The plan is, if that is successful, to replicate something like that across to population management. I thank Deputy Van Katwyk for previously offering his services to assist us in that regard.

Thank you, madam.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: Thank you, madam; and thank you, Deputy Leadbeater, for your update.

There was a time when foreign workers who found themselves in front of the Magistrate's Court were given a fine or a sentence with an alternative, and I remember it was leave the Island for three years. Often the case they would just leave. They had a scrap in town and, that is it, they were gone.

In my view, working in Guernsey is a privilege. Would the Committee consider applying that policy or a similar policy to licence holders, and withdraw those licences to those that have met a certain criminal bar?

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, Madam Bailiff; and I thank Deputy Inder for his question.

Your population management permit can be withdrawn if you acquire certain criminal convictions while you are in Guernsey. Once somebody's permit is withdrawn their ability to live and work in Guernsey is withdrawn and so they would leave the Island.

That is something we could pick up as part of the sentencing review, to look at that thoroughly, to make sure and examine that we have got the correct laws and policies in place in order to be able to mitigate any issues that we may have with people coming into an action with the criminal justice system while they should be here on licence. I will take that forward as part of the sentencing review.

The Bailiff: Deputy Strachan.

Deputy Strachan: Thank you, madam. Thank you for the update, Deputy Leadbeater.

I am very pleased to see that the Committee is taking a proactive stance on violence against women and girls. What I wanted to ask was what role you think will be part of your plan and part of carrying this out in the local third sector organisations we have, and indeed the corporate sector?

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Yes, I thank Deputy Strachan for her question.

We want to engage with partners on a piece of work like this. The Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy engages the third sector and it engages other organisations. I just noticed a quick thing in *The Guernsey Press* today that I see Safer have come out in support of the piece of work that we are doing, and Safer are a key partner. We had the CEO and the Chair into the Committee not that long ago, and just discussed all of the issues around the VAWG space.

It is an interesting area because I think the Director of Strategy – I think that is her title – within Home Affairs has been looking at the Welsh model. The Welsh have got quite an interesting model that I think is providing some good benefits. We are trying to develop this strategy in consultation, yes, certainly with other agencies, with third sector organisations, and keeping a wide lens on how other jurisdictions are tackling this issue.

The Bailiff: Deputy Falla.

Deputy Falla: Thank you, madam; and thank you to Deputy Leadbeater for his update.

The President has previously been quoted as saying that sentencing is a matter for the courts. I would like to know his opinion on to what extent the outcome of the Home Affairs review of sentencing can influence the courts.

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: That is going to be teased out during the course of the review. It is a very difficult piece of work. It is not every day that you review the Sentencing Guidelines right the way across the piece, as we are looking to do.

We are looking to undertake the review in two separate phases, acknowledging the difficulty in navigating all of the challenges that we will have on this pathway. We have had good engagement, Madam Bailiff, with yourself so far. We are very optimistic that we can work with the judiciary and with all the other stakeholders. We have got somebody that knows our justice system inside out that prepared the original justice review that this Assembly considered a couple of terms ago, and we are really excited about the opportunities.

We are not going to get to a sort of panacea where everybody is happy with justice; unfortunately I do not think that is ever going to be somewhere we could arrive. But we are hoping to improve things. We are hoping to be able to give the judiciary more tools in their box, more options, and so the community can look at the sentences that are meted out and feel confident they reflect the values of our society.

The Bailiff: Deputy Camp.

Deputy Camp: Thank you.

The Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy is clearly welcomed. I just want to ask whether the Home Affairs Committee will use any of that work when looking at domestic and interpersonal violence more broadly, particularly violence against all persons, including domestic abuse, given we do not live in a binary gender society.

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, madam.

I thank Deputy Camp for her question and I totally agree. There are many men in our society that are subject to the horrors that domestic abuse can bring. I know men personally myself that have come to me with stories and anecdotes as to the experiences that they have had over the years.

The overwhelming majority of incidents of domestic abuse though are committed to women. We know that statistics do not lie. We effectively have our Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy and we are developing this into a Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, but the other work from the previous strategy does not end in 2025 when it says in the top of the strategy 2022 to 2025. All of that work keeps going. All of that work keeps needing to be reviewed, legislation needs to be made to make sure it is up to date. We are constantly in contact with law enforcement, with the Public Protection Unit, trying to give them all the tools in the box that they need to be able to combat domestic abuse and violence against women and girls in general.

I am not saying it is isolated, it is a completely gender-based problem, domestic abuse. I am not saying that whatsoever. But the thing is we get criticised for not having a VAWG Strategy and we get criticised for having a VAWG Strategy, so effectively we cannot really win in that area. But, yes, we are not taking our focus off violence committed to men whatsoever, it still remains a priority. Domestic abuse across the piece is a main priority for this Committee.

The Bailiff: Deputy Collins.

Deputy Collins: Thank you, ma'am.

I took the President up on his offer to go to the Guernsey Prison, which I have done twice in fact this year. Two deaths have apparently been recorded in custody this year at the prison and are subject to an independent report, is my understanding. Will these reports be made public? Is it in the interest of the public that they are?

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, Madam Bailiff; and I thank Deputy Collins for his question.

First of all, there were two deaths in custody but they were not both at the prison. One was a natural death which occurred at the Princess Elizabeth Hospital, the other one was an unfortunate incident which happened at Les Nicolles Prison.

We are anticipating the publication of the Ombudsman's report imminently. I was hoping to be able to have those reports and have the findings of those before I gave this statement today so I could share some of the findings and the Committee's response, but unfortunately we are still waiting for the reports.

I have no idea what the Ombudsman is going to publish. I do not know if there is going to be a redacted version, I do not know what the process is going to be. I do know that the victim's family will be given a copy of the report, the Committee will be given a copy of the report. I do not know what is going to be confidential, what can be published, and what not. But whatever the Committee can publish and is allowed to publish it will publish.

The Bailiff: Deputy Ozanne.

Deputy Ozanne: Thank you, Bailiff.

The President hinted earlier today, and indeed in his statement, that a lot of officer time has been taken up in responding to freedom of information requests and other questions. I am wondering if he is able to give us an indication of how much time or how many questions he has been having to deal with and how that may compare or not with other Committees. It would be helpful to understand the true impact that is having on his Committee's work.

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, Madam Bailiff.

I sincerely thank Deputy Ozanne for that question because it is a big problem with us. We have a very small team in our office. Single figures. We have one officer working full time now on subject access requests. That is one officer taken out full-time. We have other officers dealing with FOIs, Rule 11s, Rule 14s, other enquiries that come in. So it has really hamstrung us this term.

The progression of the police complaints review has stalled completely because the officer that is supposed to be conducting that review has to react to all these questions that keep coming in and these subject access requests that keep coming in. It is absolutely bizarre. We did not anticipate this volume at the start of the term. If we had have known the volume that would be coming in we would have asked for an extra two or three resources, because this is what we need. We need two or three people dedicated to responding to these and we have only got single figures in our office. It is a massive problem for us and I am glad that Deputy Ozanne raised that so I can share my concerns with the Assembly about this.

Thank you, madam.

The Bailiff: Deputy St Pier.

Deputy St Pier: Thank you, madam.

I commend the President of the Committee for a commitment to developing a Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. Seeking to collate the statistics and data that exists in statutory and non-statutory agencies clearly is an important part of developing that strategy. But does the President agree with me that in developing a strategy it is also going to be necessary to undertake specialist qualitative research as well as just the statistics, and to undertake that specialist qualitative research is likely to require additional resources?

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, madam; and I thank Deputy St Pier for that question.

It is going to be a big piece of work; we understand that. We have got to work with partnership agencies. We have a data vacuum across the States of Guernsey, as I think I have mentioned before. Criminal justice data is something that we really want to get our hands on, not just in this area but lots of other areas, hate crime, etc. We need to gather data, we need to be able to understand the problems if we are to be able to address the problems.

Deputy St Pier's point about resource being needed to undertake work is a valid one. We have the Internal Fund which sits under the Seized Assets Fund, which the Committee is considering putting an application in to fund a data collection piece of work that will cover the criminal justice piece: hate crimes, violence against women and girls, domestic abuse in the home or be that out in the night-time economy. That is the kind of thing we are looking to tap into the Seized Assets Fund for, to be able to progress this work and gather the data that we need so that we can make balanced and informed decisions about the violence against women and girls piece of work.

The Bailiff: Deputy Matthews.

Deputy Matthews: Thank you, madam.

It was widely reported that there were some problems with collecting population data across the States, and delays including to the electronic census, which I believe were resulting from issues at the Revenue Service. Does the President feel that his Committee have good information about how effective population controls are being and what the population of the Island is?

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, madam. I thank Deputy Matthews for his question.

No, I do not believe we have all the data. We do need some up-to-date population statistics. While we are undertaking this review we are going to need more numbers. We are getting data out of the Population Management system at the moment as regards to the permits that we process, people that are waiting, people that are here on Island and working and just waiting for renewals, etc.

This is a very laborious task because it is all manually extracted currently, but we had the interim population management administrator go into the office and she has got stuck right in; she has lifted up all the drain covers and tried to understand where the problems are and how we can start to extract that information. This is why we have got the figures now. We have got all the figures of the entirety of the problem, which we did not actually have before. It has taken someone to go down there and physically spend a few weeks manually extracting that information out of the system.

But as pointed out before by Deputy Van Katwyk's question, we are looking at other ways of streamlining this through systems, through AI, and to try and help us streamline the process of the data that we hold. There is other population data that we do not hold, and that is out of our hands unfortunately.

The Bailiff: Deputy Collins.

Deputy Collins: Thank you, ma'am.

In order to meet the mandate of the Home Affairs Committee, attendance at Committee meetings is key for making decisions. Without at least three informed bums on seats decisions cannot be made. My question to the President, is the Committee supportive of more openness on attendance records being published?

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: It is not something we have discussed at Committee, but I do not think we have got any issue with it. Again, same as Deputy Bury, this is not really something across our mandate, it is a SACC matter, so Deputy Hansmann Rouxel could maybe answer that question when she gives her next update.

But I have actually personally been looking online at some of the people requesting to know, 'What do you do during your week?' all these sorts of questions that come through. So I just looked and extracted PDFs out of my Outlook and put them into a spreadsheet and I am trying to prepare a document and a look-back over the last term that I am prepared to publish so everyone can see the Committee engagements that I have attended over the course of this term so far. I challenge colleagues to do the same and publish theirs as well.

The Bailiff: Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: Thank you, ma'am.

Can I ask the President, the question has just come to me, you remember our first meeting of this term was something called the Criminal Justice (Cybercrime and Miscellaneous Amendments) (Bailiwick of Guernsey), 2025 and there were a few issues around the wording of it, and you promised that you would review those issues and come back to us. I am just asking where that got to. If it has already been notified, my apologies, it has slipped, but an update on that, please.

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: I thank Deputy Sloan for reminding me of that because that was some time ago. Yes, he is correct. There were some issues. There were some issues that needed to be ironed out. It was passed by the States. It went off to the Privy Council, it was going to be given Royal Assent but the Committee had to commence that first before it came into effect. The Committee is yet to do that because I think there is still some discussion with the industry.

There were some workarounds in the UK to satisfy industry, and I think those were proposed in Guernsey. I would have to come back and formally respond to that because I have not got the full answer available to me at this point.

The Bailiff: Last few questions. Deputy Humphreys, then Deputy Inder, then Deputy Le Brun, and then that will be it.

Deputy Humphreys.

Deputy Humphreys: Thank you, madam.

In October 2025 the President advised the Assembly that electronic tagging was a priority and officers had started scoping the work, which of course would take pressure off the prison. I know there has been some trial of the tagging. Could the President please provide an update in this regard?

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, madam. I thank Deputy Humphreys.

I did not catch all of her question, I think she said an update on where we are with tagging?

Deputy Humphreys: Tagging, yes.

Deputy Leadbeater: Yes.

This piece of work is going to be rolled up in the sentencing review. It is a disposal for the court. During COVID the prison acquired some tags and some monitoring equipment because of the COVID situation and it was considered a necessary mitigation that might need to be used. I do not think it was used, or it may have been used – Deputy Humphreys is mouthing that it was used. I am unsure about that.

I do not think it is used on a regular basis. There would be an issue with monitoring, there would be some integration with Joint Emergency Services Control Centre (JESCC) that has to happen. But, yes, this is all part of the sentencing review. We want to be able to provide these options for the court. We cannot say as a Committee what offences should carry what sentences, but as long as we can provide guidelines and framework to the courts as part of this sentencing review, and the options for community-based disposal such as tagging and other community service-related disposals.

The only reassurance I can give her is that piece of work about the tagging has not gone away, but it is part of the substantive sentencing review.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: What should worry Members in response from the President of Home Affairs, and it is not his fault, what he is doing is effectively channelling what is going wrong at operation level. What he said was that the problem with the Population Management Law (PML) is a number of officers had to go in and manually extract information. In this modern world how on earth have we, as an Assembly, or even the operational, got to a point where we are not building systems which can report immediately?

This is more something for the Assembly but I would ask, because there has to be a question at the end of this, could the President for Home Affairs actually establish from his staff at some

point – not today – how on earth we got to this point where a digital system has to be manually looked at and spent weeks and weeks of officer time trying to manually extract, was his word, out of what should be –

The Bailiff: That is your minute, Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, madam. I thank Deputy Inder for that question.

The system is 10 years old and it probably took about 10 years previous to that to procure it, so we have got an outdated system. We know that and we are fully aware of it. The system upgrade is going to be part of the recovery plan to get us back on track.

Again, if we can use AI agents to try and streamline the process, certainly for the process of Short Term Employment Permit (STEP) applications because some people need to travel and get to Guernsey, and we have got businesses that are relying on a timely turnaround of applications. The system is outdated, it is as simple as that. I cannot tell you 10 years ago exactly when that system was procured, how it was procured, what companies were involved. I do not know anything about this, but all I do know is that the feedback we get from officers is that it is very laborious trying to extract data from it.

We will be looking to address that as part of the works to stabilise the office and put a recovery plan in place. We will be looking at all the options of system upgrades, AI agents, and whatever we can do to try and modernise the process, streamline it, and make it more efficient.

The Bailiff: Final question from Deputy Le Brun.

Deputy Le Brun: Thank you, madam.

I welcome the Home Department's work on violence against women and girls, but I would like to ask that this extends to behaviour on our roads. I am increasingly hearing from local women about aggressive and intimidating behaviour from drivers, including a recent email to me, a case where a van driver allegedly used his vehicle to intimidate a woman before driving alongside to verbally abuse her, but when reported was told by the police that no action would be taken.

My concern is that these incidents are being treated purely as traffic matters, without considering the intimidation and fear caused to the person targeted. Will the Department look at this as part of its work on violence against women and girls, including whether section 4 of the Public Order Law concerning fear or provocation of violence should be considered in these cases?

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Thank you.

Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, madam.

I thank Deputy Le Brun for his question. I think I have read it before in a Rule 14 that is about to be published. What can I say really about this? I have had incidents, I reported somebody. I overtook a van just coming outside Greg Forino, coming towards the roundabout outside Jeffrey's. I was coming along on my bike and a van came past me at 40 miles per hour and nearly knocked me off my bike. I was worried sick.

Anyway, he was in the traffic at the bottom of the road when I got there alongside him so I said, 'Excuse me, you nearly knocked me off my bike' and to that he started screaming at me and says, 'I'll knock your effing sunglasses off if you carry on'. *(Laughter)* So it is not just a gender-based thing.

Road rage is road rage. If I had been a woman or a man approaching that guy, that guy was going to react in that same way.

I am answering this question via Rule 14, so I would ask Deputy Le Brun if he can wait until the receipt of the answers to his Rule 14 question.

The Bailiff: Thank you.

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

The Bailiff: We will now deal with the statement from the Committee *for* Economic Development, but we will not do any questions. We will do the statement and then go straight to the lunch adjournment.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Madam Bailiff, Economic Development published its Committee Work Plan in July, following consultation with industry bodies.

Our Work Plan focuses on the economic levers within our mandate that can have the greatest impact across our economy. We are trying to follow the 80:20 principle with 80% of our time and resources focused on eight priority areas, while retaining 20% to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities. I will briefly update Members on each of those eight priorities today.

The Committee has given in-principle approval to Brittany Ferries' schedules for this winter and summer 2027, with the final technical work being completed.

From 2nd November, our conventional Portsmouth service is set to increase from six days a week to a daily service, combining direct sailings with a new triangular route via Cherbourg. Passenger and freight capacity will be maintained and protected contractually, and the minimum service obligations will continue to be met.

The purpose is to strengthen even further the longer-term resilience and sustainability of our lifeline route, control freight costs and bring forward investment into fleet renewal.

Eighteen months into the contract with Brittany Ferries, freight costs for the highest volume bands are already 14% below the flat rate in neighbouring jurisdictions. Better use of the Islander's spare capacity should help keep costs down, while a seventh weekly rotation means daily freight, strengthening our supply chain and helping retailers reduce food waste and improve shelf life. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

Cherbourg also connects our hauliers into Brittany Ferries' wider European network, including Ireland and through its rail service to Bayonne, opening up south-west France, Spain and Portugal.

At present, close to 100% of our supply chain runs through the UK. Given pressures on food security and the wider geopolitical environment, that is not something we should take for granted. We are already in discussions with French supermarkets, and the route may also provide an export channel for Guernsey seafood, such as octopus and other produce.

For passengers, Cherbourg will be around three and a half hours away, arriving at 11 a.m., creating a direct connection to Normandy, particularly timely ahead of the Year of the Normans next year.

We have also seen a 19% growth on the Manche-Iles Express service from Dielette and we are the only route on their network to have seen growth this year.

Islands Unlimited also achieved year-on-year passenger growth until an engine failure which halted operations in August. I can confirm that the Committee's marketing support ceased when services stopped.

I have had positive discussions with the Jersey's new Minister for Sustainable Development on inter-island connectivity on two occasions now, and we have met with the Alderney Economic Development Committee to develop a framework of economic co-operation focusing on connectivity, tourism and digital opportunities.

Moving on to air connectivity. Air passenger movements are up 3% year to date, bringing us to their highest levels since COVID. The London market, which represents nearly half of all passenger movements, is up 10% year to date.

Visitor numbers are driving this growth and are at record levels since COVID. Visitor numbers grew 12% over the same period last year and first-time visitors were up 30%.

As part of our work on the Air Policy, we are working closely with the STSB, Aurigny and Ports to establish shared datasets and an independent assessment of air connectivity performance. I welcome their contributions to date.

Today, we will publish a new analysis by the Data & Analysis team examining visitor numbers by air route for the first time.

British Airways is helping contribute to over 60% of the departing visitor growth year to date. The value of the visitor spend travelling on BA between April and August is estimated to be £7 million.

The Committee continues to support Aurigny's Paris route through a subsidy, which ends in March 2027. Aurigny plans to continue operating the route in the summer season. The route has grown healthily, recording over 24,000 passenger movements since launch, although it remains predominantly used by Islanders, with visitors accounting for an average of 24% of departing passengers. We plan to start consultation on the Air Policy this quarter and bring it to the Assembly for debate in the first half of next year.

On tourism more broadly, we have seen again the strongest figures since the pandemic, with occupancy rates in hotels reaching 84% in the summer.

VisitGuernsey won the prestigious Destination Brand of the Year at the 2026 Travel Marketing Awards and placed the second best island in the UK in the Condé Nast Traveller Readers' Choice Awards.

Visitors' perceptions of Guernsey reflect the hard work of our air and sea operators, tourism industry, partners and the wider community. This is reflected in our Net Promoter Score reaching a record 77 points, up nine points in a year. But we cannot be complacent. Travel figures have been uneven with continued cost-of-living pressures and travel disruptions globally that have softened demand.

Cruise remains more volatile and susceptible to weather disruptions. However, by August, cruise visitor numbers were also up 15% higher year to date, with a healthy pipeline for next year.

Attracting cruise vessels and returning to pre-COVID levels will require significant infrastructure investment, as tender ports become less attractive. The Committee remains confident in Guernsey's cruise potential, given our location and visitor offering. We have contributed to P&R's Future Harbours scoping exercise and are keen to see it progress at pace.

The Tourism Management Board has now transitioned into the Tourism Advisory Board, chaired by Charlie Walker and Clare Crawson, with the Guernsey Hospitality Association joining its membership. Work continues on a Tourism Product Strategy and the potential for a visitor levy, led by Deputy Van Katwyk.

On trade, improved connectivity with France is central to our trade priority. The proposed Cherbourg route should be seen in that context: strengthening supply-chain resilience and opening opportunities around fresh produce and construction materials in particular.

Last week, I visited Normandy, meeting with Herve Morin, President of the Normandy Region, and Jean Morin, President of the La Manche department as well as the Port of Cherbourg and French producers and supermarkets.

More than 10 trade missions have taken place so far, facilitating exchange meetings between French and Guernsey businesses.

We have also expanded our Commonwealth engagement. In March, we hosted Lord Marland, Chairman of the Commonwealth Enterprise and Investment Council, and Deputies represented Guernsey at the Commonwealth Trade and Investment Summit in London.

Alongside P&R, External Relations and the UK Government, work continues to extend Guernsey's participation in Free Trade Agreements, including the CPTPP and Gulf Co-operation Council, and Deputy Humphreys has been very busy representing Guernsey on many occasions.

Moving on to finance. Guernsey's prosperity and the sustainability of our public services remain closely connected to the strength of financial services and the professional, digital and creative sectors around it.

The Finance Sector Growth Strategy to 2035 was published in the first quarter, providing our first unified roadmap for financial services growth. Designing a strategy is the easier part. Delivery is the harder test.

The Finance Sector Growth Forum, also chaired by Deputy Humphreys, now brings together the Committee, GFSC, Guernsey Finance and GIBA to implement its recommendations.

In the last few months, we have supported two initiatives. The Fund Foundry supports first-time and emerging fund managers to establish Guernsey-domiciled funds. More than 100 applications were received, with 20 finalists invited to Guernsey and six ultimately selected for the first cohort.

Alongside this, a pilot concierge service has been launched, providing tailored support to fund managers, founders, innovators and businesses to establish or expand in Guernsey.

The Committee has very close collaboration with the Guernsey Financial Services Commission on the development of a digital assets strategy and Guernsey Finance in how they support the delivery of the Finance Sector Growth workstreams. A number of important financial services policy letters will be coming your way very shortly.

On regulation, the review of competition and regulation law and the GCRA is nearing completion and will shortly enter its final consultation, with proposals intended for the States next year.

Working with Environment & Infrastructure, we are also progressing the market and regulatory principles for the regulation of solar and renewable energy under the Electricity Strategy.

The Committee has agreed to transition the Digital Greenhouse's activities from a Government-run model to the private or voluntary sector, working closely with the Innovate Guernsey Board. This reflects our willingness to take difficult decisions and rethink how taxpayer funding can best support our strategic priorities. I am grateful for Deputy Laine's leadership in driving this work forward.

The market response has been very encouraging. More than 10 businesses and organisations have expressed an interest in taking on the Digital Greenhouse or elements of its services. The tender process was launched last week with a timeline to appoint a new provider in Q1.

We have been championing AI adoption across the States, supporting a trial of a new training provider and piloting AI agents to assist with Committee work and Committee agendas. The six-week AI Sprint, jointly organised by Guernsey Chamber, the Innovate Guernsey Board and industry, has been a real highlight. It is one of the largest rapid upskilling initiatives, and I encourage Deputies and the wider public to take part.

Other priorities include digital identity for individuals and businesses, open banking, developing a policy position on local data infrastructure to support data sovereignty and AI-enabled services.

Following extensive negotiations, we have concluded a new 2-REG contract with SGI Guernsey. The agreement will strengthen cost-recovery protections for the States and provide greater incentives for SGI to grow the Aircraft Registry and the associated secondary financial services that go hand in hand with it.

Our eighth priority is the development of a new long-term Economic Strategy. This will provide a longer-term plan for growth, investment, productivity, workforce participation and resilience, helping Guernsey respond both to our domestic challenges and to an increasingly competitive and challenging global environment. Work will commence in full next year and will take account of the work being undertaken by the Institute of Directors ahead of its November Convention on economic growth.

Our 80:20 approach also allows us to respond to issues and opportunities beyond these core priorities. This has included working with the Institute for Screen Arts Guernsey, bringing together stakeholders and the Guernsey Retail Group to explore the future of St Peter Port, engaging with the fishing industry and beginning discussions around food security and increasing local food production.

Madam, this is a substantial programme, and we have set an ambitious pace.

We are recruiting for the first permanent Chief Officer in the States of Guernsey for the Committee, with applications closing next Monday.

From stronger connectivity and growing visitor numbers to delivery of the Finance Sector Growth Strategy, we are seeing tangible progress.

With the tax debate behind us, now is the time to look forward. Our economy faces real challenges, but there are also sound reasons for optimism. We should recognise the progress being made and concentrate on building upon it.

Madam, I welcome Members' questions.

The Bailiff: Thank you. We will adjourn for lunch now and we will start immediately with questions after the lunch adjournment.

The Assembly adjourned at 12.26 p.m.
and resumed its sitting at 2.30 p.m.

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

The Bailiff: Deputy Vermeulen is already standing and ready to ask the first question. Over to you, Deputy Vermeulen.

Deputy Vermeulen: I thank the President for her positive briefing but I must admit I have been very concerned about small businesses on the Island following the introduction of the GST, or the planned introduction. A number of small businesses – not just retail – have said, 'That is it, enough is enough. There is too much, there is inflation, electricity, fuel costs, everything is going up, the secondary pensions I have got to administer, the TRP commercial, and the minimum wage of course'.

They just feel like it is the straw that breaks the camel's back, and we have seen a 166-year-old jeweller calling it a day. So what can P&R do to shield those businesses –

The Bailiff: Wrong Committee.

Deputy Vermeulen: Well spotted. *(Laughter)* What can ED do to advise P&R to help those small businesses, which employ staff, let us face it.

The Bailiff: That is your minute, Deputy Vermeulen.

Deputy Vermeulen: Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: I think Deputy Vermeulen points to the cost of doing business especially, and probably the most relevant debate that is coming up for that is in relation to the

Budget. I can confirm that the Committee will be bringing a number of amendments to support especially the hospitality industry, if the Assembly is mindful to approve that.

It does give us an opportunity to look more widely at the costs that the States does put on businesses and they may include the different duties we charge, but also our ports and airport charge significant fees which then influence the whole of our supply chain.

I do think that is a relevant question and I do think we need to look at the Budget in light of the tax reform, the Pillar Two funding, perhaps slightly different advice, but this is a debate for another day.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: Thank you, Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

I am just going to touch on the Air Policy Framework for a moment. Could it be that part of the problem that we have as a States under the current policy framework does not adequately define the value of connectivity and what it means to the Island? If that value were more clearly recognised could it provide a basis for agreeing what level of cost or public investment in the airport and the national airline service is acceptable?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: I think that is an excellent point that Deputy Inder is making.

Being island communities, connectivity – both sea and air – is absolutely crucial to just about everything we are doing. I do think we have to look at connectivity as utility. We do own our ports, both the harbours and the airport are the entry points again for just about everything that comes into the Island. Through the fees and charges we have seen, which have been above inflation for the last few years – and this is all potentially justified because of the commercialisation drive – does put a very significant pressure on all the costs that affect pretty much all businesses and travel.

As part of the Air Policy we are very much looking at what is the value of air connectivity and all the different stakeholders that play a role, such as the airport.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Cameron.

Deputy Cameron: Thank you, Madam Bailiff; and I would like to thank the President for her update.

The President has highlighted encouraging growth in passenger numbers and tourism, which is welcome. However, at yesterday's Aurigny board presentation we heard that the airline had lost £5.7 million in the first eight months of this year. The board estimated that Heathrow competition had reduced Aurigny's profit by £2.4 million between April and August, with a further £8 million revenue impact forecast for 2027.

I recognise that Heathrow appears to be performing well, and the President recently stated that it continues to offer excellent value for money. Without asking the President to disclose commercially sensitive figures, could she confirm whether that assessment includes the financial impact on Aurigny, and whether her Committee has established a point at which the combined cost to taxpayers outweighs the benefits of the Heathrow service?

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Thank you, madam.

I think it is very important as part of the Air Policy work that we set out a more holistic vision of how we look at connectivity going forward. What we cannot do is also just design our Air Policy

around one air provider. We felt the entry of a new competitor such as a national airline like BA is extremely important for all sorts of reasons, and actually the performance for the whole economy of the entry of British Airways has been, from my opinion, beyond the expectations that we had.

It is not only driving the visitor growth but it is creating the business confidence that is crucial to support our financial sector. Yes, we are seeing an impact on Aurigny. Some of the interesting impacts we are seeing is that Aurigny has had to adjust their prices to be a bit more competitive, and perhaps that has also stimulated demand for service and this is why we are seeing passenger growth. We have to look at the whole impact of the economy. I –

The Bailiff: That is your minute and a half, Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Thank you.

There was much to welcome in the President's statement, and I thank her for it. One of the things I welcome was the revisiting of the Digital Greenhouse and potentially putting it on a more strategic footing in partnership with the private sector.

My question is whether the President is confident that the timeline set out is sufficient to ensure a smooth transition to another provider potentially, without any disproportionate impact to existing services and the existing benefits that it provides?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: We have a hard stop of a decision to exit the current building at the end of April, and so a lot of the timeline is driven by that. I think a lot of the work has been frontloaded through the expressions of interest process that we have already gone through which, as I mentioned in my update, has been extremely positive.

The tender process was officially launched last week. While I think the timeline is ambitious, we are trying to do our best to meet the timeline indicated, and I think it is looking reasonably positive so far.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: Thank you, ma'am.

One of the things I was pleased to hear in the Update Statement from Deputy Kazantseva-Miller was the referencing of visitor figures since COVID. The reason I raise this is I have been concerned for some time that if we keep comparing our figures to pre-COVID we are setting ourselves up to fail by not recognising the fundamental change that happened then, and businesses have changed how they operate, etc.

Could the President confirm, is their new approach to be anchoring those comparative data points since COVID, rather than pre-COVID?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: So 2019 was the peak year for connectivity but it was also a year of some quite interesting competitive dynamics because we had Flybe and Blue Islands competing with each other as well. If we are setting benchmarks it is important to recognise whether there are some factors around those benchmarks that might be distorting the picture.

It is still important that we do anchor our ambition in perhaps some of the historic figures. Whether we use 2019 or 2018 we will need to justify that but, yes, we need to see the world has changed, business travel has changed, there are all sorts of things. Travel is changing as we speak. This year has seen a fundamental change in travel patterns, much more last minute bookings, etc. Having benchmarks is important but whether we use them as absolute gold standard or whether we just take them as part of the work we are doing, will be the approach we take.

The Bailiff: Deputy Falla.

Deputy Falla: Thank you, madam.

Could I ask the President, in these days of fast-moving technology and other outside forces, what factors will inform the long-term Economic Strategy?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: I do not have enough time to go perhaps to some of the thinking, but when we look at the strategy we have to nest the strategy in some of the fundamentals that might not change. The fundamentals that, first of all, we are an Island economy, we have the Bailiwick of Guernsey, we have close neighbours such as France and the UK, and we are also an international sector. But then we have to nest it with what does it mean to be an open, international economy? What does it mean in terms of technological adoption, etc?

I think there are some really important wider questions around resilience, security, food security and defence, which actually are perhaps now becoming more important and were not on our agenda previously. Those are the kind of considerations we want to have going forward.

The Bailiff: Deputy Niles.

Deputy Niles: Thank you very much, madam; and thank you to the President for her useful update.

When I go around the Island I can see building everywhere. I can see house building more than we have seen in the last decade, I can see warehousing on the south side of St Sampson, Bulwer Avenue, Mont Arrivé, St Martin, Creaseys in the High Street. Would the President agree with me that the investment of tens of millions of pounds into our Island represents a new confidence in our economy?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: I want to refer to something that Deputy Inder actually often says, is that confidence is a mind trick and we need to stop talking our economy down (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) and perhaps really start recognising all the positive things that are happening, and some of them Deputy Niles has listed.

Together with that we can also mention the opening of Grande Mare, which I believe is expected for later this year, Bella Luce, and so on. Just recently in the last couple of weeks we have seen lots of positive articles from leaders in business saying that they feel that sentiment is changing and Guernsey is doing very well. Building jointly and collectively together, Members, on that confidence and really continuing the pace of reform and decisions will set us well for the rest of this political term.

The Bailiff: Deputy Rylatt.

Deputy Rylatt: Thank you, madam.

Like Deputy Kazantseva-Miller, being on ESS I have had to go through the lengthy process of mastering pronunciation of the CPTPP. *(Laughter)* Given it features in the Committee's Work Plan can the President outline what her Committee sees as the chief practical economic benefits to Guernsey of our participation in the agreement?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: We talked about being an international finance centre and so some of the possibilities that being part of the free trade agreements offers us is not just the trade in goods but also trade in services.

Given the geopolitical challenges we are seeing, being part of this kind of free trade alliance will be very important, and I know some of the work that ESS needs to complete, such as minimum wage with young people – and I know that is on the agenda for the ESS – will become important. But this is what being in the global economy means, being able to trade without barriers and frontiers, without tariffs, etc., being used and weaponised. It is essential to being an international finance centre and be able to trade globally.

The Bailiff: Deputy Blin.

Deputy Blin: Thank you, ma'am; and I thank the President of Economic Development for a very full and active statement.

One of the things that has been alluded to or spoken about was the work on the visitor levy, and I am very pleased that Deputy Van Katwyk is taking that. I would just like an assurance. This was discussed last term, can we be assured that the results or the money from the visitor levy (1) will not have GST on it as per the agglomération in France, and (2) that it will be dedicated to the development of the tourism sector exclusively.

Given the fact that we have had GST and other aspects, it is hard for industry to give further, so an assurance from the President that it will be aimed at – because it is still in planning – to ensure the direct help to the industry.

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: We were supposed to have a discussion about the progress of the visitor levy yesterday at the Committee meeting but we have had to defer it to another day. I think we absolutely have to take all of those things into account.

We are mindful that the previous resolution of the States was that the levy would be explored in lieu of the GST, so obviously the circumstances have changed. The Committee needs to take a view whether it definitely wants to still progress that work, and if it does I think it will only progress it on conditions that the investment is ringfenced for the tourism industry. That is the premise the industry will want to continue the work to be done.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: Thank you, Madam Bailiff.

We have already had some questions on connectivity and I heard a suggestion, if not a rumour – should not listen to rumours – that it is possible that the excellent connectivity we have, and I will not name the airline, to Paris, which the Economic Development Committee pioneered in the last term and has been extremely successful, taking us to a hub with more destinations than many a UK airport, may not be subsidised in the winter. It may not run in the winter but it will continue in the summer. Will the President of Economic Development link to consider whether an all-round connection to a major European hub is a significant economic and cultural benefit to us, particularly with the Victor Hugo Centre we discussed earlier?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: I think the Committee is getting better and better data as we work more closely together with STSB and Ports. As I mentioned just today, we have released data which looks at visitor figures per different route. Interestingly, Paris has been a largely domestic route, that means Guernsey people travelling on hen parties, etc.

The subsidy has been quite substantial for what we are paying, it is over £300,000 per year, so if you start looking at return on investment it is an expensive route to be subsidising largely for domestic travel. This is when compared to other incentives we have, such as with BA, is a completely different value.

We have no intention to continue with the subsidy because with route developments the intention is that the route establishes and then continues on. Aurigny does want to continue with a summer service but we are not sure that a winter service at this stage is sustainable, based on the information we have from Aurigny.

The Bailiff: Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: Apparently, madam, I have to move this way because that microphone is not working.

The Bailiff: Yes, that is fine.

Deputy Sloan: Madam, Scrutiny recently wrote to all the Committees and asked them if they had five KPIs that they could provide that they could measure their success this term against. I noticed that the Committee *for* Economic Development has yet to reply to that letter. Have you got any plans to actually publish any KPIs around the Finance Sector Development Strategy? How are we going to measure success against the Oliver Wyman report? Similarly for any KPIs for organisations such as Guernsey Finance that I asked for some KPIs in December last year?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Yes, I wanted to acknowledge, I think there was an oversight of responding back to the Scrutiny Committee's letter. It was not intentional.

In the Committee Work Plan we have set out how we will continue to monitor and respond to progress against the Work Plan as published and agreed by the Committee. In relation to specific organisations, they work under different KPI frameworks. In relation to Guernsey Finance, a new KPI framework is more or less agreed and it is a very different framework to the one we previously had.

This is all a work in progress, and I think we will be able to hopefully work with the organisation to release more of those KPIs in due course, but this is a discussion with the board of Guernsey Finance.

The Bailiff: Deputy Camp, then Deputy Ozanne.

Deputy Camp: Thank you.

I suppose the continuation of that theme; given that Guernsey Finance is coming up to its new funding round, will the Committee commit to publishing Guernsey Finance's annual report, and also measurable performance indicators showing their progress against agreed KPIs, and the value delivered for public funding? When would this be made available?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: The matter of the Guernsey Finance accounts is not really a matter for the Committee, it is ultimately a matter for the board. We have signalled that this is what we would also prefer to happen, and my understanding is that the board is open to ensuring the accounts are published from hopefully next year forward as part of their reporting accounts.

I think it is fair to expect that an update against the progress and KPIs and delivery against the Finance Sector Strategy will be published as well.

The Bailiff: Deputy Ozanne.

Deputy Ozanne: Thank you, madam. I still want to say 'ma'am', I am sorry, madam. *(Laughter)*

I thank the President for a very positive statement, as has already been said, and also I want to thank the President for taking the brave step of ensuring that British Airways could take a Heathrow route. As she has implied, it has created a competitive marketplace where the consumer has benefited, not just in lower prices but also in terms of customer satisfaction and the whole customer experience.

Will she give any undertakings in her Air Policy Framework to look at the customer satisfaction ratings between airlines and the whole customer experience from start to finish, because it is not just about reliability and punctuality?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: I mentioned that we are looking at better metrics that look at analysing air connectivity performance. Perhaps customer satisfaction could be an element we look into; I think more specifically maybe in relation to a central route and the licensing regime that we would like perhaps to see going forward. I think it needs to be a bit more explicit about what is measured, what needs to be delivered, and KPIs around that essential route performance.

Perhaps that could be one of the considerations that is also taken into account in relation to essential route licensing.

The Bailiff: That brings us to the end of 20 minutes but I will allow Deputy Inder then Deputy Gollop to ask their final questions.

Deputy Inder: This is for the Committee and, to a degree, for Scrutiny.

I accept that Scrutiny has an important role in the States of Guernsey and I actually like our current Scrutiny Committee because they are actually scrutinising. But touching on marketing and performance thereof, could I ask the President that when she considers what she can and cannot publish – even though we act in a transparent way – there is always a danger that if one publishes the marking activity and, therefore, the poor performance of, you are telling your competitors two things: what you are doing and what is and is not working.

It might be a better idea to have a private conversation – this is really the question of Scrutiny – and find a way of talking to them directly and keeping some of that out of the public domain.

A Member: Hear, hear.

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: I think Deputy Inder has pointed to the delicate balance that we have to maintain, as a Government and ultimately taxpayer-funded Committee and the grants that we are giving, between being open and transparent and make sure we have got the right political oversight, and also the balance of not giving important and competitively sensitive information.

That is the balance we have to continue working towards but I think Deputy Inder does point to the tools that Scrutiny has for more in-depth analysis. We have certainly written back to Scrutiny to

say that we would be happy for the finance sector work to be analysed in depth, and have shared a detailed finance sector report with them so that it could be subject to the scrutiny that the Scrutiny Committee may want to give it.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop, the final question.

Deputy Gollop: I think we would all collectively agree that for the most part the work the Economic Development Committee did last term in securing the ferry contract through Brittany Ferries has been successful. But due to rationalisation of Brittany's other services in the English Channel there has been an opportunity, as the President identified, to serve Cherbourg again.

Is the President and Economic Development convinced that this will be a useful service for the public? I hope so, bearing in mind there may need to be additional work with the customs and immigration authorities of Guernsey and Jersey, who I suspect are there, and France and the UK. Are the Committee clear that hopefully everybody in their cars will not have to suddenly get out in France and drive around and wait for the gendarmes to inspect them, or is it going better than that?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Well, hopefully I outlined and answered quite a few of the points that Deputy Gollop is trying to make in my speech. The Committee went ahead with making the in-principle decision because of many positive reasons that we have outlined including the supply chain. Utilising the Islander's spare capacity which will keep the costs down, it opens up the supply chain.

But we do have to take into account that we will be, for now, exiting the Common Travel Area and going through the EU. Who knows, with the EU-Brexit reset we might not be in that position in the not-so-distant future, but for now passengers travelling to the UK via Cherbourg will stay on board, and they do have to travel with passports.

There will be some changes. We do not think they are red flags, and we will continue to work to ensure any kind of changes are minimal and Guernsey gets the best out of this new arrangement going forward.

The Bailiff: Thank you.

General Update Statement – Statement by the President of the Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture

The Bailiff: I now turn to the Deputy Montague on behalf of the Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture.

Deputy Montague: Thank you very much, Madam Bailiff.

I am sorry that I am coming towards the end of these update statements. Hopefully people can keep their concentration.

Madam Bailiff, last month, the Committee published its Work Plan, setting out an ambitious policy programme for the remainder of this political term. The Plan reflects our aspirations not only for children and young people, but for the wider community across education, sport, culture and heritage.

I would encourage Members to read the plan in full, and I am sure many have, and we welcome engagement from any Member of this Assembly who shares our ambition and wishes to contribute to that work.

Among our key priorities is a review of higher education funding. We are examining both 'quick win' improvements that could be introduced to the current grant funding model for the 2027 academic year, and wider options that could be developed in the longer term.

The Committee is also exploring school meals in our primary phase, recognising the benefits for children and the challenges faced by working families. We have just begun reviewing pre-school funding arrangements and have started outlining terms of reference for the transformation of primary education, considering how changing patterns of need and learning should shape provision in the years ahead.

Members will also be aware of work underway regarding the future of Beau Sejour. Given the age and condition of the existing facility, maintaining the status quo is not a sustainable option.

Regarding the long-term home of the Sixth Form Centre, a shortlist of options has now been identified, and we will be further developing these in the coming months.

The Committee is supporting The Guernsey Institute's aspiration to attain University College status, creating new opportunities for learners, employers and the Island as a whole.

Madam Bailiff, the development of a culture strategy remains a key priority for the Committee. Guernsey already benefits from a rich and diverse cultural offer, encompassing heritage, museums, libraries, the arts, festivals, creative industries and community organisations.

Work is now underway to map the Island's cultural landscape, engage with stakeholders and identify opportunities for further development. The Committee believes a clear strategic framework will help ensure that public investment in culture, heritage and the arts is co-ordinated, aligned with wider States priorities and delivers maximum benefit.

Culture plays an important role in strengthening our Island's identity, supporting wellbeing and social cohesion, enriching community life and contributing to our visitor economy. A shared vision will provide greater clarity, co-ordination and confidence across the sector for years to come.

Moving on from our Committee Work Plan but staying with cultural matters. Since my last Update Statement we have celebrated another successful Liberation Day. The Committee would like to place on record our sincere thanks to the many individuals, charities, community groups, performers, volunteers, sponsors and public services whose hard work contributed to the success of the event. Liberation Day belongs to the whole Island, and its continued success depends upon that remarkable community effort.

Planning has already begun for Liberation Day 2027. As Members will appreciate, this is always a challenging exercise, particularly within a very constrained financial environment. Our aim is to strike the right balance between keeping the celebrations fresh, vibrant and relevant for future generations, whilst never losing sight of the profound significance of the day and the sacrifices it commemorates.

As our national day, Liberation Day means different things to different people, and it is impossible to satisfy every expectation. However, the strength of community support gives me confidence that we can continue to deliver an event that is respectful, inclusive and worthy of its place at the heart of Island life.

We are particularly grateful for the work of the Sports Commission, which continues to make a significant contribution to health, wellbeing and community life across the island. This year, more than 200 sports vouchers have been provided to families where cost would otherwise be a barrier to participation. Meanwhile, more than 50 local clubs have achieved SportsMark accreditation, reflecting high standards of safeguarding, governance and coaching.

Madam Bailiff, the Committee remains committed to being open and transparent about educational outcomes, celebrating success whilst being honest about those areas where we need to do better.

There are encouraging signs across much of the education system. Reading remains a particular strength, while improvements in mathematics are increasingly evident in primary schools and Key Stage 3; that is the ages of 11 up to 14. These gains reflect sustained investment in curriculum development, professional learning and high-quality inclusive practice, providing confidence that stronger foundations are firmly in place.

At GCSE, however, the overall picture was more mixed. Headline performance this summer, measured through attainment 8, was below 2025, and detailed analysis indicates this was driven specifically by weaker mathematics outcomes for a certain group of students. Some of the challenges facing this cohort have their roots in earlier disruption to learning and, potentially, the effects of major organisational change. Nevertheless, the results are disappointing, and we have now a clear improvement plan in place.

At post-16 our A-level outcomes improved significantly with results considerably stronger than the previous year, with both attainment and value-added measures showing substantial improvement. This is particularly encouraging given the concerns expressed during the transition to a separate and temporary Sixth Form Centre. The evidence suggests that students have been able to thrive academically.

While some GCSE subjects are a focus for improvement, evidence from younger year groups and post-16 education gives us confidence that the overall direction of travel remains positive.

Madam Bailiff, independent inspection remains an important part of driving accountability and continuous improvement across our education system. Since my last update, two further primary schools have been inspected by Ofsted, with both receiving positive reports. These outcomes reinforce the findings from the wider inspection programme and provide further confidence in the overall quality of education in Guernsey.

As reported previously, a higher proportion of our schools continue to be judged good or better than the equivalent position in England across most areas. Personal development remains a particular strength, reflecting the commitment of leaders, staff and governors to providing a well-rounded education that prepares young people for life as well as academic success.

Madam Bailiff, attendance remains a key priority for the Committee. While comparisons with England are complicated by differences in data collection, it is clear that we face similar challenges which require sustained attention.

Regular attendance is essential not only for educational achievement but also for wellbeing and safeguarding. When children are absent from school, the causes are often complex and require co-ordinated support from services, schools and families.

The Committee launched its Attendance Matters campaign ahead of the 2026-27 academic year to strengthen awareness of the importance of attendance and reinforce a simple message: improving school attendance is everyone's responsibility. We accept this is a difficult issue, but early indications are encouraging.

Madam Bailiff, I would like to highlight the success of the inaugural ResearchED Guernsey conference, taking place at the beginning of May, which brought together more than 300 educators from across the islands and beyond. The event showcased the strength of evidence-informed practice within our schools and reinforced Guernsey's growing reputation for educational improvement and professional learning.

The conference also strengthened our partnership with Jersey, building on joint leadership development programmes, including the National Professional Qualification for Executive Leadership. This collaboration is now extending into specialist areas, with our special schools working alongside Jersey colleagues to develop innovative approaches to oracy. By sharing expertise and learning from one another, both islands are enhancing educational opportunities for children and young people across the Channel Islands.

Madam, the Committee recently held its first Council of Chairs meeting, bringing together the Chairs of our Education Governance Boards to discuss with us common opportunities, achievements and challenges across all those schools and settings. This provides a valuable forum for identifying common themes across the sector.

These meetings will now take place every academic term, helping the Committee maintain effective strategic oversight of the education system, whilst preserving the clear distinction between the Committee's role and the day-to-day governance responsibilities delegated to individual Governance Boards.

All of this is underpinned by our Education Strategy, which we have recently reviewed and refreshed in light of progress made and to ensure it continues to align with our goals and ambitions. We will be launching this next iteration of our Education Strategy after the October half-term.

Madam Bailiff, as we look forward to debating the 2027 Budget, the Committee is considering a number of significant opportunities and pressures across its mandate.

One notable development has been the substantial philanthropic investment made to two of the Island's grant-aided colleges. This generous support is warmly welcomed and represents a major investment in education locally. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) It also provides an opportunity to consider the future use of approximately £2.2 million of public funding that will not be needed for grant aid.

The Committee's view is that this presents a unique opportunity to ensure that public resources are directed towards supporting children and young people, particularly those whose needs are greatest. As Members will be aware, demand for additional learning needs provision continues to increase, reflecting trends seen across many jurisdictions. More children and young people now require specialist support relating to communication, interaction, autism, social and emotional wellbeing, and other very complex needs.

While schools and services have responded positively, this growing demand is placing increasing pressure on resources. The Committee is therefore using the 2027 Budget process to make sure that we secure investment, which enables us to meet our statutory responsibilities, strengthen inclusive education and ensure that every learner is able to access the support they need to thrive and succeed.

Madam Bailiff, I am pleased to report that construction of phase one of the Les Ozouets Campus continues to progress well. The project remains on schedule, with the contractor focused on ensuring the buildings will soon be weather-tight, allowing internal works to continue over the winter. Importantly, the project remains on budget, supported by robust governance and careful control of project changes. We are on track to welcome students to the new campus at the start of the 2027 academic year.

Beyond the construction itself, this investment represents a significant commitment to Guernsey's future. The new campus will provide modern facilities that support skills development, technical education and workforce growth, helping to meet the needs of our economy while creating new opportunities for learners of all ages.

I was pleased to escort eight of my colleagues around the site earlier this week to see first-hand the scale of progress being achieved. There will be another chance to visit the site in early November, and I would encourage other Members to take up that opportunity.

Madam Bailiff, preparations for Millenium 2027, Year of the Normans, continue to gather momentum, with strong support emerging across the islands. Almost 40 projects have now been registered, involving community groups, cultural organisations and other partners from across the Bailiwick.

The programme is creating new connections both within our islands and with participating regions across Europe. Millenium 2027 presents a unique opportunity to celebrate our rich Norman heritage while raising the international profile of the Bailiwick. Alongside the cultural benefits for islanders, we hope it will attract visitors, support local businesses and strengthen our relationships with partners across Europe and beyond. I am confident it will deliver lasting cultural, community and economic benefits.

Madam Bailiff, one of the most important investments we can make is in our youngest children. I am therefore pleased to report that the Committee has endorsed the new Bailiwick Foundation Framework, which will provide a shared and locally developed scaffold for early childhood education and care across Guernsey and Alderney from birth to age five. The framework establishes a common vision for children's learning, development and wellbeing, while supporting greater consistency across early years settings and school reception classes.

The framework has been informed by international best practice but is firmly rooted in the needs, values and aspirations of our islands. It places a strong emphasis on inclusion, wellbeing, play-based

learning and the development of lifelong learning dispositions such as curiosity, resilience and independence.

Implementation will take place over the next two years, supported by professional development and quality assurance arrangements. Ultimately, this work is about ensuring every child receives the best possible start in life and arrives at school ready to learn, thrive and succeed.

Finally, Madam Bailiff, this leads me naturally to the Government Work Plan priority focused on children, young people and families. Through the political oversight group, chaired by Deputy de Sausmarez and involving representatives from ESC, HSC and ESS, Committees are working together to improve outcomes for children and families across our islands.

The programme is ambitious and long term, spanning early childhood through to young adulthood, and recognising the vital importance of children and young people to our community and future prosperity. Its purpose is to ensure that activity across Government is co-ordinated, aligned and focused on where it can have the greatest impact. The strong links with the Committee's own priorities are clear, and we are confident that this collaborative approach will deliver benefits greater than any one Committee could achieve alone.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: In Deputy Gabriel's update this morning he mentioned a desire to remove Guernsey's reliance on oil, and that is all as per the Electricity Strategy. Solar PVs is an integral part of that transition, in fact it is being done to us by resolution.

Les Ozouets Campus is moving along nicely and I am aware that some – emphasis on 'some' – solar panels are included on that roof space. Would the President commit to ensuring that the maximum use of roof space to instal the optimum amount of solar PVs across the new site?

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: Yes, I will commit to that.

The Les Ozouets Campus phase one has been designed to accommodate about 650 square metres of PV arrays, and we would estimate that will provide 25% of the electricity need of the whole of that site. When you consider some of the heavy use in terms of the construction building, I think that is very significant.

The project team is working actively with providers so we can get as close to that 650 m^2 as possible from the beginning, and the beginning is from September next year. Our aim is to get 650 m^2 on site. I will update the Assembly in my statement in February how that process is going but, as my colleagues will understand, there are issues to do with procurement, and some of those are presenting some issues, but I do not believe they are insurmountable.

The Bailiff: Deputy Vermeulen.

Deputy Vermeulen: Thank you, ma'am.

I thank the President for his comprehensive update but, seriously, given the budgetary constraints which face Education and all Committees in the 1% savings, what can be done to improve what I consider to be the number one priority in education at the moment: namely, the improvement of maths and English GCSE results?

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: Thank you, Madam Bailiff.

Yes, my colleague, Deputy Vermeulen, is absolutely right. Those are foundational subjects. For all my colleagues in Education who teach other subjects and get quite upset when their subject

appears to be marginalised, but without firm foundations in literacy and numeracy no other subject can be successful. What we need to do is start with good foundations. I think what we are seeing with some of the students who have recently gone through GCSEs is those foundations were not there.

I want to give credit to previous ESC Committees. Two Committees ago Deputy Fallaize instigated a real focus on literacy, and I think we are going to begin to see the benefits of that soon. The previous Committee under Deputy Dudley-Owen instigated a real tight focus on maths.

But what I want to say to everyone in the Assembly, through you, madam, is that education is not something you can suddenly press a button and education appears fully formed in the mind of a young child. It absolutely needs to be planned. This is why we need to treat schools carefully. They are not offices that we can suddenly move to different jurisdictions or move around; they are complex organisations with lots and lots of human interactions, often with some vulnerable young people who really value the relationships they have in those schools.

Education is not just training for these young people. We do absolutely need to get firm foundations, madam, but we do need to do it really carefully. We have to do it now and we have to do it in a very sustained way, but I absolutely endorse what Deputy Vermeulen said. Those two subjects: absolutely foundational.

The Bailiff: Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: Thank you, ma'am.

I, like many in the Assembly, am very keen to understand what is going on with our young people, what they need, how they are experiencing their younger years. To that end, I was very pleased to see the recent Wellbeing Survey, which was a joint approach with Public Health and Education, I believe. But I did understand there was a bit of furore that might have come around some confusion about age targeting or communication.

I just wondered if the President could confirm what the age targeting was and the communication process around dissemination of that survey.

Thank you, ma'am.

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: Madam, can I thank Deputy Bury for that really important question? It is a good opportunity to make some clarification.

I was also aware – I described it as a kerfuffle, I am not sure if that is the right word for an online thing, imbroglio might be another one – that there were concerns registered online. I just wanted to make it absolutely clear that I think HSC have done an amazing job with this piece of work. I want to make it crystal clear that this is not a brand new survey.

We have been doing a young people survey since the early 1990s and it has been done every three years to different year groups – every two year groups, so you get different students every three years. It has been done from the early 1990s. The last one was done in 2022. We debated in this Chamber about the Children and Young People's Plan and the need to get really clear data. Our third sector organisations absolutely need that.

I was very impressed with the letter that went out from the Director of Public Health. It is a three-page letter, absolutely precise about how things were getting on. That letter was communicated to all parents of year groups who would be taking that survey. I would say, if parents did not receive that it is very important that they make sure they are getting communications from schools. It is absolutely crucial that they are getting these emails.

They were all sent out, and what it made clear was it was a completely anonymous and confidential survey. Every single question was targeted at that particular age group. Two things I think might have caused some confusion. A PDF of the survey was made available. The PDF had all the available questions on it with brackets saying 'Year 10 and above' which of course means

students who are 14 and 15-years-old, 'Year 10 and above', 'Year 8 and above' and so forth. I think some people might not have spotted that.

When you looked at the letter from the Director of –

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague, I am afraid you have used your minute and a half.

Deputy Montague: Thank you, sorry.

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Thank you.

I would just like to ask the President if he would not mind continuing the explanation on the communications around the survey because I would like to hear the rest of it.

Thank you.

Deputy Montague: Yes, I would encourage people to look back at the letter from the Director of Public Health. There are links to the surveys as they appear to students. No student would have seen –

The Bailiff: There is no give way, Deputy Curgenven.

Deputy Montague: No student would have seen a question that was not appropriate for them.

It went through the Ethics Committee. I believe it was very well done. I do understand that the PDF might have caused some problems.

There was a further confusion. One of our schools has been running an award-winning Physical, Social, Health & Citizenship Education (PSHCE) strategy called Risk Avert with students, and there was communication about that at the same time. I think people had posted copies of that online and there had been a misunderstanding between the two.

I would encourage any parent who had concerns about this to go back to the letter from the Director of Public Health, click on the link relevant to their young person, and go through the questions. It was made crystal clear: the questions were anonymous, the survey was completely confidential, the students did not have to answer any of the questions, and any parents who wanted to withdraw their child could.

I believe it was done in a very transparent, clear, and professional manner and I take my hat off and show my respect to those colleagues in HSC who did it. It was delivered through schools but it was organised by HSC, and I think they did an amazing job.

The Bailiff: Deputy Laine.

Deputy Laine: Thank you; and I thank the President for his comprehensive update.

I have a question about the Les Ozouets Campus. Was there an oversight that ended up in a situation where the school is due to be handed over with cabling in the wall but no network equipment and nothing to support joining the rest of the network? If that was the case, have you had to descope any of the other parts of the project to be able to now instal that infrastructure?

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: I have been made aware that there were some issues, as there always are with projects of this size. However, that particular one I believe has been overcome. I will check with my officers to ensure that I am not giving false information here. I was aware there was an issue to do with connectivity, but that was overcome reasonably quickly.

As projects of this size happen, we have got officers, project managers on the ground working very hard to overcome all these issues. I will say that at the moment – I think my colleagues who visited the site over the last two days have been very impressed with how well run it has been.

The Bailiff: Deputy Ozanne.

Deputy Ozanne: Thank you.

Given that our goal is to help students reach their very full potential, and that means for some going off-Island to continue with tertiary education, I am wondering what work is being done to help those students who do not qualify for funding look at getting student grants.

We are in an unusual position where the only funding available to students is that through the state, but if for whatever reason they are not eligible for that they have no other recourse and, therefore, their future is sadly stymied. I am wondering what are the plans, and how many students that might impact over the last couple of years.

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: Thank you, madam; and can I thank Deputy Ozanne for that question and giving me the opportunity to reiterate what I skated over very briefly in my Update Statement.

We are looking for a short, quick fix to solve some of the problems without changing the policy for 2027. We are aware that there is some guidance that needs to be tightened up. But in the longer run we do need to look at more options for our young people.

I was aware of this in most of my career, madam. I have been teaching people post-16 and a lot of my conversations have been about them going off Island to go and study. I am well aware of how many families find this a very difficult time.

I cannot talk about the number of people. The issue is though that sometimes when people go through the process they present the information, if in that process you do not present the information in full it is delayed, but also sometimes the answer is no. When the answer is no that is quite an awkward thing to hear, but if you do not meet the current thresholds in terms of income then the answer might sometimes be no, and I think we have seen occasions like that. I think they have been very few.

We had a lot to do and we are going to cut it into two tranches. One is the quick fix for next year. We have got officers who last month have been looking at that current policy to see how they can make it work, and our bigger piece of work is to look at what the future needs to be for funding our students going to higher education.

The Bailiff: Deputy Blin and then Alderney Representative Snowdon.

Deputy Blin: Thank you, ma'am.

Yesterday I attended probably one of the best of the AI Sprint presentations at the GTA on the subject of humans, AI, and the workplace. There was a talk on important questions, how we are preparing our young people through education in a world increasingly shaped by AI.

Of particular interest was the potential impact of AI on independent thinking, problem solving and critical judgement;– all essential skills developed through education. At the same time, as a parent I have been made aware due to the changing situation with my son about opportunities for qualifications in A-levels, some limitations on those areas.

Given the extraordinary pace of change could the President explain how AI is being integrated into our education system, both as a learning tool and within the wider curriculum, and what plans exist to ensure our educational pathways are evolving to prepare young people for an increasingly AI-driven future?

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: Madam, can I thank Deputy Blin for that fascinating question.

It is an extremely important area. I would answer it in two specific ways. I mentioned in my Update Statement about a ResearchED conference we held in May and there was an awful lot of very good work being done on AI in education, and we had experts from around the world coming to talk to our leaders. We have a very high level of information about some of the problems that is throwing up.

More broadly, it is changing the educational landscape, particularly to do with exams. We realise now that a lot of universities will not be doing any coursework anymore and so we need to look at assessment differently. But I am going to say what I said 12 months ago – 13 months ago, because my Update Statement was in September I believe – we need to be really careful not just for our young people but for ourselves, how we use AI. I said back then 'Whatever does the thinking does the learning' and that has not changed.

We need to be incredibly careful about that. We need to teach young people how to use AI. I remember very clearly ChatGPT came online as a tester in October 2022, here we are just four years later and the growth has been phenomenal. We absolutely cannot think, 'I am interested in AI, we know what is going on'. Our schools are working very hard to make sure that students know how to use it. But, crucially, what we have also seen is a lot of high-attaining education establishments are moving back away from using screens and going back to far more discussion and debate –

The Bailiff: That is your one and a half minutes, as interesting as it was.

Deputy Montague: Sorry, I talk too much.

The Bailiff: Alderney Representative Snowdon.

Alderney Representative Snowdon: Thank you very much; and thank you to the President for the update.

Following concerns raised by pupils earlier this year at St Anne's School, would the President be able to confirm that things are a lot more stable and positive? I look forward to any other updates from St Anne's School that you could add.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: Thank you very much to Alderney Representative Snowdon.

A very interesting question. I was very privileged to meet with some of his colleagues online in Alderney discussing the skills and education work they are doing there. We are very pleased with how things have settled down in St Anne's School in Alderney. As you know, we have a new principal working there and they are really enjoying their role.

We are giving as much support to that school as we can, and we are aware of how difficult things have been just a few weeks ago. We really do think about all our colleagues working there and all the young people in that school who were badly affected.

We believe the school is on a much better footing now. There is far more stability in the workforce and we hope to see some significant improvements. We are committed to supporting St Anne's School.

The Bailiff: Deputy Rylatt, then Deputy Oswald.

Deputy Rylatt: Thank you, madam. I thank the President for his update.

With the unsustainability of St James as a cultural venue continuing to require a long-term solution, and given the Committee's long-standing grant, would the President support, in principle, whether its use as a venue for meetings of the States of Deliberation and as parliamentary space for Members could form part of a more sustainable long-term operating model for the venue?

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: Thank you very much for that fascinating question.

Yes, I have been of the view since I took on this role – and have had so many meetings with the people who run St James – what an amazing opportunity it is. It is an amazing building, and I think that we should be open minded. We should not be so stuck in our ways that we are not willing to investigate some synergies in our Island.

It relates to so many errors of mandate. We have to be open-minded. The fundamental word in terms of education law is our job as a Committee is to deliver efficient education. That relates to every area of our mandate, including culture. If we can be really efficient by looking at how we use that building, I am absolutely open to that idea.

The Bailiff: Deputy Oswald.

Deputy Oswald: Thank you, madam.

I would like to ask Deputy Montague to return to the answer he was submitting about three questions ago about the movement previously from blackboard and chalk to electronics and now back to blackboard and chalk again, as recently highlighted in the national press.

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: Sorry, could I ask Deputy Oswald to repeat the question?

Deputy Oswald: About three answers ago you came to the end of your time limit on basically – I think there is a term for electronic teaching aids, and the switch away from that to a more traditional use of the previous aids that we were more familiar with in the past. I would like to hear the rest of that answer, please.

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: Thank you very much. I have wiped that part of my brain since that answer. *(Laughter)*

Deputy Oswald: Sorry, I hoped to get in straight away.

Deputy Montague: No, I am joking.

What I will say, madam, is that it is my belief that we have evolved over hundreds of thousands of years, we are African primates, and we are designed to be in communication with each other, looking at each other's faces, understanding visual cues, being in proximity and understanding what it is to be a human being related to other human beings. My fear is no matter what screens can do to improve learning, we must remember that an over emphasis on that we are losing out on some of the other fundamental things that it takes to be a human being.

When we talk about those dopamine hits, the interaction you get with your fellow human beings is one of the most rewarding you can get, but it comes at a high price. It is a much cheaper dopamine hit to be playing Candy Crush *(Laughter)* or whatever.

I guess I am saying it is the same with education. We need to remind ourselves that we are human beings, we are not machines. Machines are machines. We are organic machines and we need

to understand those limitations and understand that we have got to get that education right because if we do not we will see a build-up of the types of problems that I think we have been seeing over the past 10 years.

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: From a housing perspective, ensuring we have the right skills, apprenticeships, and pipeline of workforce that can meet the demands of the construction and built sector is extremely important. We know that in Jersey the Highlands College runs the design, engineering and construction level 3 course, which looks really interesting in introducing, effectively, those skills at an early age.

Does the President believe we are doing enough and would he commit to working more closely with the Committee *for* Housing to ensure we have got the right education and skills training to meet the demands of the construction sector?

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: Thank you; and can I thank Deputy Kazantseva-Miller for that fascinating question.

I absolutely do agree, and I think that the new opening of Les Ozouets Campus gives us a really good opportunity to focus on the apprenticeships and the vocational and technical qualifications we can provide.

I have done some work with colleagues from there about apprenticeships over the last couple of weeks, and I think there is more we can do. The difficulty we get all the time is one of scale. It is very hard to set up some of these courses when the numbers are so limited. But in the modern age there are certainly ways around that, but the Les Ozouets Campus certainly gives us the opportunity to rethink and reinvestigate how we do that. I will say, since I have about 30 seconds left, that on our tour just yesterday there were three apprentices working on Les Ozouets Campus who are being taught at The Guernsey Institute (TGI) at the moment, and several more of the workforce were alumni of TGI, so we are definitely, in those trades, getting an awful lot of value added, but I do think there is still more to be done.

The Bailiff: Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: Thank you, ma'am.

I refer to the increasing complex needs that Deputy Montague mentioned in his speech alongside the Attendance Matters campaign. Attendance mattering can be quite – I do not want to use the word, but I am going to have to – triggering for those that have children with additional needs who struggle to get to school. It is not school refusal; it is a difficulty for whatever reason in getting into the environment that school provides. So using the words that Deputy Montague did, that it is everybody's responsibility, could I ask, alongside that Attendance Matters, is there more underpinning it in terms of support and resources available for those students with additional needs, rather than just a direction you need to come to school?

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: Can I thank Deputy Bury for that really important question.

When I was first briefed on the Attendance Matters campaign in August of this year, I was very keen to ensure that the way it was presented was one of support. All the material that I reviewed that went on the Education website, and all the links that were sent to parents, came from a place of understanding that every child is different, and they all have very different reasons, if they are

struggling with attendance at school, they are often very different causes. I was satisfied that the information that was given out was supportive.

The working group was formed by schools, working with the children that they know, and behind every absence figure is a child with their own reason for finding school difficult. So the focus we have has been on understanding them as an individual. That is quite intensive. Last year, we invested in the resources to get three family support officers into our secondary sector, and the feedback over that first year was they have worked very well working with some of those families whose children are struggling to get to school.

We are asking for funding for another three to support our primary sector, and we think it is that kind of resource, targeted with really clear KPIs to make sure that they are adding value for money, but it is crucial. It does not matter what we think about how these needs have arisen. We deal with the needs as they are presented. We have to support every single child. So we have things in place; we are asking for extra support.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: That is 20 minutes, but if there are still a few questions left to be asked, I am willing to go on a bit longer. So I will say Deputy Ozanne, Alderney Representative Hill, and then Deputy Strachan, and then we will close the questions.

Thank you, Deputy Ozanne.

Deputy Ozanne: Thank you, Madam Bailiff.

Our libraries are a wealth, not just of information and books, but of our cultural heritage, and both the Priaulx and the Guille-Allès have had quite substantial problems with their buildings of late and have relied, I know, on ESC for grants. I am just wondering whether the President could give us any reassurance about the nature of those buildings and whether they have the funds they need to be watertight, windtight, and fit for purpose over the next five years, please.

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: Thank you, madam.

Can I thank Deputy Ozanne for that really important question, bearing in mind that we have, over the past 15 months, had very many conversations in Committee about both the Priaulx and the Guille-Allès. We are in no doubt as to the value that libraries provide, not least what I was saying about screen time, getting students out of their house, particularly when students are coming up to the time for revising for exams. I have a daughter who found the Guille-Allès absolutely invaluable to that revision process. They are really important resources, and they do need investment. We are keeping a very close eye on how to do that in the most efficient and effective way possible.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Alderney Representative Hill.

Alderney Representative Hill: Thank you, ma'am.

As was pointed out by Deputy Ozanne about the costs of higher education and grants, and also from the President of Economic Development about new transport links between Guernsey and Cherbourg, at a recent summit in Normandy, the Vice-Chancellor of Caen University indicated that he was willing to allow Bailiwick students to study at the French national rate, which is €165 a year, as opposed to £9,000 a year on the UK system.

How could this opportunity be progressed?

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: Thank you very much, madam; and thank you to Alderney Representative Hill for that question.

We have a memorandum of understanding with Caen University that we do need to revisit, because attempts have been made, but they have not been very successful in the past, about making our students in Guernsey aware of that amazing opportunity, and it is an amazing opportunity. So we have looked at that in Education, and we are going to be doing more for that. Alderney Representative Hill and I have had this conversation a couple of times, and we are both, I suppose, Francophiles, and we would love to maximise the opportunity of young people to go and study in France.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Strachan.

Deputy Strachan: Thank you, madam.

I wanted to just follow up on a piece you mentioned on the framework for ages birth through age five, I assume it is an early years type of framework. Could I ask the President to just explain a little bit more how this is going to work. It sounds very interesting, but is this solely for institutional settings, or how will this be available?

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: So it is called the Bailiwick Foundation Framework (BFF), and it has already received an awful lot of interest from other jurisdictions in the British-Irish Council. It is very forward-looking. It is designed currently for use from those early years' providers up to reception, and it is to get that consistency and alignment. We have seen some young people arriving at reception classes at our primary schools not ready to be at school, and so it is an ability to have a framework that encompasses those years. At the moment, this is currently focused on early years' providers and reception classes.

Thank you.

General Update Statement – Statement by the President of the Overseas Aid & Development Commission

The Bailiff: Thank you.

Now the statement from the Overseas Aid & Development Commission by Deputy Strachan.

Deputy Strachan: Thank you, madam.

It has been two years since the Commission last had the opportunity to provide an update to the Assembly. I first wish to place on record my sincere thanks to our volunteer commissioners. They receive no remuneration, yet dedicate considerable time and expertise to ensuring that the Bailiwick's international development funding is used effectively, responsibly, and transparently. Their commitment helps deliver life-changing and, in some cases, life-saving support to some of the world's poorest communities.

I would also like to thank the Assembly for its unanimous support in appointing three new commissioners earlier this year. As well as having oversight of the Commission as a whole, the commissioners scrutinise over 230 grant applications each year. Only around one-third of applications receive support. Commissioners assist in these difficult decisions, ensuring that the selected projects are the highest quality, most sustainable, and provide long-lasting impact.

Equally important is the Commission's commitment to safeguarding public funds. Through extensive due diligence and ongoing monitoring, the Commission seeks to ensure that every pound allocated reaches its intended purpose and is protected from misuse.

There have been significant changes in the international aid sector over the last two years, as international development charities face unprecedented challenges following substantial reductions in aid budgets, including cuts to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and UK official development assistance. The resulting programme closures, staffing reductions, and increasing competition for funding have had a devastating impact on vulnerable communities. Millions of people now face reduced access to nutrition, clean water, sanitation, healthcare, education, and humanitarian assistance.

Against that backdrop, Guernsey's contribution matters more than ever. While our contribution may be modest compared with larger nations, its impact is significant. The Commission focuses on areas where the need is greatest, and relatively small investments can achieve transformational results. The primary reason cited for reductions in UK aid spending was the need to increase defence expenditure, a challenge that Guernsey does not face directly.

However, even after UK aid reductions, Guernsey's spending on international development, as a proportion of our GDP, remains lower than that of the UK. This serves as a reminder that there remains scope for us to strengthen our contribution to the world's most vulnerable communities.

Madam, the Commission's work is guided by a clear principle, to direct limited resources to achieve the greatest impact. For that reason, the Commission places particular emphasis on supporting countries within the lowest quartile of the United Nations Human Development Index (UNHDI). This measure assesses development through indicators, including health, education, and income. By focusing on countries at the bottom of the UNHDI, the Commission seeks to ensure that the funding reaches those facing the greatest level of poverty and disadvantage.

This policy often requires difficult decisions. When considering applications for emergency relief awards, the Commission must consider where its assistance can add the greatest value, and where alternative aid may already be available. For example, this year the Commission awarded a £50,000 grant emergency relief award to the charity Medair to support its Ebola response in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The funding enabled the purchase of personal protective equipment for health workers and volunteers, helping to contain the outbreak and save lives. The DRC is ranked 171st out of 193 countries on the UNHDI, placing it within the poorest countries in the world.

By contrast, the Commission did not contribute to the devastating Venezuelan earthquake response, not because the need was any less significant, rather Venezuela ranks considerably higher on the UNHDI, and the response attracted substantial international support. While a difficult decision, the Commission has a responsibility to target resources where Guernsey's contribution can make the most difference.

The Commission's main focus is on single-year and multi-year sustainable projects, which account for 86% of our budget. One example is a single-year project undertaken by the charity Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) International to provide boreholes, pumps, and washing stations at 11 schools in Malawi. This will benefit 25,000 people for the next five years alone. The project also includes hygiene training and support for school vegetable gardens. The total cost was £60,000 or £2.40 per beneficiary. Installing water and hygiene facilities at schools is not just about providing essential services, the extended impact is improved health, higher overall school attendance, greater gender equality, leading to better educational outcomes.

Our final category of grants is community partnerships, which provide an opportunity for local groups raising money for projects or emergencies in developing countries to apply for matched funding from the Commission. These awards help strengthen local public engagement with international development by supporting those most in need.

Madam, the Commission also continues to improve the way it works. Since becoming President, I have been keen to strengthen our focus on demonstrating our impact. Each year, the Commission supports around 70 to 80 development projects and emergency responses across multiple countries and sectors, making overall impact hard to demonstrate. For that reason, we are collecting and

analysing more impact data and publishing this information within our annual reports and public communications. The Commission now measures all projects against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. These goals are a universal call to action to end poverty, improve health and education, promote equality, and protect the environment.

Alongside this, we are introducing direct impact indicators across our portfolio. These include measures such as the number of healthcare facilities supported, water supply systems installed, and individuals benefiting from education. These statistics will improve accountability, ensuring Islanders can clearly see the positive impact their contribution is making to the world's poorest communities. Islanders can have confidence the public resources are delivering meaningful and lasting results.

The Commission has also embraced innovation and efficiency in its own operations. We recently successfully introduced a new online grant management system, a more efficient process for assessing increasing numbers of applications and monitoring projects became necessary. Importantly, this improvement has allowed the Commission to maintain a high standard of service and oversight without requiring additional staffing resources.

As part of our effort to support the resolution to reduce costs for the 2027 Budget, the Commission proposed that the 2026 base figure is reduced by 1% prior to applying inflation and the States' direction for overseas aid giving to reach 0.2% of GDP by 2030.

Madam, another significant achievement during this period has been the agreement to expand the States of Guernsey's Development Impact Fund through a proposal agreed by the Policy & Resources Committee. Impact investing seeks to generate positive social and environmental outcomes alongside financial returns. The expansion of the fund from approximately £750,000 to around £7 million over the coming years will significantly increase the States' ability to contribute to international development objectives without requiring additional taxpayer funding. This growth will be achieved through the reallocation of assets, of investments within the States' general investment portfolio, thereby delivering sustainable solutions to global challenges while continuing to manage public funds responsibly. The initiative also reflects Guernsey's growing reputation as a centre for responsible and sustainable finance.

The Commission also continues to have responsibility for promoting fair trade alongside the volunteer-led Fairtrade Guernsey Steering Group. I am proud that 2026 marks Guernsey's 20th anniversary as a fair trade Island.

Madam, many of the crises the Commission responds to are driven by conflict, instability, and displacement. Add to these the growing impacts of climate change, environmental degradation, disease, and natural disasters. While Guernsey cannot solve these problems alone, we can decide how we respond to them. We can choose to support practical solutions that save lives, create opportunity, and build resilience through careful stewardship of public funds, rigorous assessment of need, a clear focus on the world's poorest communities, and an increasing emphasis on measurable impact. The Overseas Aid & Development Commission shows that even a small jurisdiction can make a meaningful contribution to addressing global challenges.

I therefore commend the work of the Commission to the Assembly and thank Members for their continued support.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: I will give it a go. I have always thought Overseas Aid is very important but does not always get the scrutiny or the interest in the update, so I am going to try.

I note from Deputy Strachan's update, and I am really genuinely happy to be corrected here, she said that her Commission had moved away from diving straight into what was the Venezuelan emergency of last year. I have often thought that almost far too much money piled from world contributions fires too quickly into these big events and most of it gets lost.

So, is effectively what the President is saying that they are – as miserable as these big events are – looking at the events that have less profile as a contribution?

The Bailiff: That is your minute, Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: That is the question.

The Bailiff: Deputy Strachan.

Deputy Strachan: I thank Deputy Inder for that question.

There are a couple of pieces in there. One is that, when we do the emergency relief grant awards, we take every measure not to make sure it gets lost in the system. So, for example, one of the grants this year went to ShelterBox, so we know that that is X-number of pods that will be bought that will go to those disaster areas that will support those communities recovering that have lost, in this case it was Nepal, have lost housing and buildings.

The issue about which countries to look for is less high profile, then it does tend to be those in the lower quartile of the UNHDI that do attract the least attention, and so that aligns with the policies that we have in terms of who we are giving the funds to.

The Bailiff: Deputy Van Katwyk.

Deputy Van Katwyk: Thank you, ma'am; and I thank the President and her team for all their hard work and appreciate what they are doing around the world.

I also appreciate the fact that the President has worked to strengthen the impact data and roll that up into the annual reports. But would she agree with me that there is more work to be done, especially in these constrained fiscal climates that we are in, to help bring the Guernsey people along on that journey, particularly when I look at the Google search results, the top five gov.gg links are all broken for Overseas Aid, so there is still more work to be done. Would the President agree?

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Strachan.

Deputy Strachan: Thank you.

Certainly send me those links that are broken, I will look into those. But indeed there is always more work that can be done. Interestingly, we do not have our own communication channel, so we go through the central gov.gg social media, but we try various ways to let people know what we are doing. The annual report is a very comprehensive report. We do have events through the year. We have an event coming up with the UNICEF where we will be shouting about the work that we are doing in partnership with UNICEF.

So there is always more work to do on that, and I would agree that hopefully focusing on that impact also allows people to understand what is done and we do not have the risk of people thinking that it does just get lost in the ether, because there are very concrete proposals that are being supported and we do have evidence of the positive impact we are making.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Ozanne and then Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Ozanne: Thank you.

I also want to echo my thanks for all the hard work the Commission does. It is doing so in a context where many of the large countries like the US and UK have cut their budgets by eye-watering amounts, £6.5 billion I believe the Foreign Office cut a couple of months ago, which is devastating programmes across the world.

But these programmes are already set up. They already have impact measurements in place and I am just wondering what, if any, work we are doing with the UK Foreign Office to see if there are

programmes that we could pick up, which are now without funders, which have already got their impacts processes in place, they have people on the ground in place, what they do not have is funding, and we could step into that gap.

The Bailiff: Deputy Strachan.

Deputy Strachan: So, I would make the point that, while we do give funds through UK charities and then their in-country partners, those UK charities tend to be on the smaller size because they are doing smaller projects that often are too small for USAID. So we tend to be giving alongside foundations, private donations, other countries, sometimes alongside Jersey, rather than alongside UK aid. Those smaller charities who are doing that £50,000 project, that £70,000 project, tend then not to have the staff on the ground that can collect a lot of that data which would give us that really rich impact data.

So we have to balance between demanding those charities provide us data without creating a lot more work for them, which they do not have the resources to do.

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Madam, I have raised this previously and the comparison to how Jersey Overseas Aid undertakes their development programme. Instead of being a more generalist, small donor along larger donors, they take a specialist approach and they try to link their aid programmes back to the skills and expertise that Jersey has. So, for example, one of their big programmes is linking the Jersey cow and the dairy and setting up farming programmes in Africa, etc. Another area is financial inclusion, as again as a finance sector.

Could the President perhaps outline whether a strategic review of the approach of Guernsey Overseas Aid has been undertaken and whether Guernsey could take a similar approach, which connects us more into the skills and expertise that we have, so that there is perhaps a bigger multiplier effect overall for what we do?

The Bailiff: Deputy Strachan.

Deputy Strachan: Thank you for that question.

It is a live discussion that we have within the Commission. We meet once a month and it is important to put into context what we are working with versus what Jersey work with. Jersey have a budget which is almost four times the size of Guernsey Overseas Aid. They have a much larger staff, which then can run those larger programmes.

With a limited staff, there is limited scope for what we can do, but we are definitely working on that, both on the skills side in terms of what we can contribute, as well as on whether we would look to having those thematic approach that Jersey does. So Jersey does run in a different way.

I would also highlight that, with the agricultural programme that they are working on, I just was having a conversation over lunch, that they also have a very active agricultural group within Jersey that can support that. So it is a system approach, and there are several moving pieces we would need to put into place to make that work.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, madam; and I thank the President for her update.

On the run-up to the Tax Reform debate, there was an amendment that was lodged to curb the amount of spending on overseas aid that did not get debated in the end. But there was social media traffic that came off the back of that amendment and the same people saying no to overseas aid are the same people saying stop the boats, no to migration.

Does the President agree with me that the two are related because overseas aid goes to mitigate a lot of the reasons why these people migrate in the first place, and I just thought it was quite perverse that the same groups of people sitting on both of these, commenting on both of these issues, could not see the bigger picture that overseas aid is there to try to mitigate these things in the first place?

The Bailiff: Deputy Strachan.

Deputy Strachan: Thank you for the question, Deputy Leadbeater.

I have to say I am not very active on social media so I did not see that traffic, but I can well imagine that it is very easy to start looking at money that is going over there and conflating some different issues and opinions.

I will say that the budget that we have is, I alluded to it earlier, as a percentage of our GDP much smaller than our neighbours, certainly Jersey and UK, and so we as a jurisdiction need to understand that this is a reflection of our values and it is a reflection of how we want to be seen in the world.

There are also practical sides of why we want to continue the budget that we have and continue the resolution to get to 0.2% of GDP by 2030. That is that, when our finance sector go out, particularly I have already had discussions with Guernsey Finance, when they are speaking to colleagues that are going to South Africa, they really value the fact that we are active in Africa and are supporting that continent. So there are many prongs to it than I have to go over in 90 seconds.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: There was something called the Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO), I do not know if it still exists, but effectively somewhere in either the 1940s or 1950s, started in Britain, sent professionals over to help some of these countries. In the Guernsey context, we send a lot of cash. Given that we have a lot of retired professionals in Guernsey, would the Commission consider trying to lock into that in some way and sending some of those retired professionals to assist in some of the areas of maybe doctors, building, all that kind of stuff?

As you get people involved, Guernsey folk who are professionals, even maybe some of the younger ones, probably a hell of a world of issues with those. Certainly some of the older people that could spend a little bit more time assisting that money and telling the story of where the investment is going. Something I think.

The Bailiff: Deputy Strachan.

Deputy Strachan: Thank you.

I would love to take this opportunity to echo a little bit of what you are saying and to say there are a lot of retired and indeed working professionals in Guernsey who do volunteer on a regular basis and certainly that applies to many of our commissioners.

We are already doing that and they are walking ambassadors who are active overseas. The idea of exporting our skills, as it were, is something we have discussed a lot in the Commission and it is one of those nuanced arguments that, if you send somebody overseas for just a short period of time, the cost of travel, the cost of training and getting that person ready to do that work, is probably not worth paying that money to an in-country accountant and having them support that work. So it is a balance and there is, in the aid sector, a move toward not doing that so much anymore.

The Bailiff: Deputy Van Katwyk.

Deputy Van Katwyk: Ma'am, I rise briefly just to put my apologies on record to Deputy Strachan and her Overseas Aid team. The whole gov.gg website is down at the moment, so I was wrong on that point.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: I do not think that was a question, but okay.

Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: One issue that has been raised quite a bit in Guernsey, applying potentially locally in other Islands, but also is an Overseas Aid & Development issue, is the issues to do with alleged slavery. Does the Overseas Aid & Development Commission actively support charities or organisations that are working to alleviate or preferably eliminate slavery, and there is something that we could input into?

The Bailiff: Deputy Strachan.

Deputy Strachan: Thank you, Deputy Gollop, for that fascinating question.

It is something that we are very mindful of and, in fact, I would say that one of the commissioners that you kindly unanimously voted in is a world expert in that topic.

I would say that we are very reactive to the applications that come in to us. We do not go out marketing ourselves in any particular topic, a bit what Deputy Kazantseva-Miller was talking about. We are reactive, people come in, and we do get occasional applications and we do support those on occasion. We have one that is active in the poll right now working with that very issue.

The Bailiff: Deputy Laine.

Deputy Laine: Madam, just a quick one, nothing to do with the subject. But as Deputy Van Katwyk –

The Bailiff: Is it about the IT?

Deputy Laine: Yes.

The Bailiff: Can I just have Alderney Representative Hill, if it was a relevant question, then I will come to you, Deputy Laine, because I know there are IT issues?

Yes, Alderney Representative Hill.

Alderney Representative Hill: Thank you, ma'am.

To invest in the future of overseas aid for greater giving onwards amongst the youth, given Victor Hugo's international values, would it not be a wise investment now to put some of these funds into the new centre to create a greater understanding of the need for international aid?

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Strachan.

Deputy Strachan: Thank you very much.

Representative Hill certainly highlights one of the amazing and important parts of the upcoming, being-built-soon Victor Hugo Centre, and it is that nuance that he brings to all these issues which makes him so fascinating as a topic to celebrate.

We have a specific mandate right now, which is acting under a 2019 policy that was done after a strategic review. We can certainly look at different ways to approach that and to support those

efforts, because they are very important, but for now we are acting under the existing mandate and that does not include part of what we are mandated to do.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: It has already come up a couple of times with different questions from Deputy Inder and others, but I would like to ask, will the Overseas Aid & Development Commission, bearing in mind its excellent commissioners are all volunteers and experts in their field, will they reconsider ways in which, not necessarily through the States' Civil Service, but as a Commission, they could organise medium-term secondments of skilled Guernsey people, not necessarily retired, in order that that would be a new avenue whereby they could give aid through skills of people, maybe through online skills even, rather than just necessarily funding charities?

The Bailiff: Deputy Strachan.

Deputy Strachan: Thank you for that question, Deputy Gollop.

It is a very live discussion that we have within the Commission how we do support that skills transfer. We do have a skills budget that we are not spending right now, it continues to be reallocated to our emergency relief awards, because those are increasing year on year. But it definitely is the way to do it, to do it in a medium term as opposed to very short-term secondments, however those are very expensive.

So certainly we have had proposals from UK charities that run schemes where we would effectively pay the salary of somebody for two years, they would hopefully then get a position within that organisation, but that would be very difficult for the budget that we have right now. But certainly if there is a desire from the Assembly to expand that effort, we can certainly look at increasing the budget to allow us to do that.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: If there are no more questions, I will ask Deputy Laine to update us on the IT situation.

Deputy Laine: Yes, thank you, ma'am.

I only rise as Deputy Van Katwyk referenced the gov.gg website being down, and I would not want listeners to think there was a reliability issue with the States' website, at least not on this occasion. But now there is an international security issue that is happening at the moment and governments, for instance, in Finland as an example, as a safety measure have taken down their websites. The operational team within Digital & Technology (D&T) have made the same decision in Guernsey and they will be putting a patch in place and restoring services. But it is a precaution to protect us from bad actors hacking in and doing great damage, so it is an orderly shutdown rather than a failure.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Thank you very much, Deputy Laine. What that means, Members, is that when we come to a vote, we may need to go old style. But we will find out when we get there.

Questions for Oral Answer

COMMITTEE *FOR THE* ENVIRONMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Repercussions of recent public bus schedule changes and restructuring

The Bailiff: Anyway, we now go back to questions.
Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: Thank you very much, Madam President, for giving me the answer.
My questions were long delayed and then they looked like they may have been cancelled altogether, a bit like the buses. So we are going back on to the buses, as it were. But they will be useful for Members and the wider public to know they are being asked, even though they are behind the schedule a little bit.
My first question is, will the Environment & Infrastructure Committee be reviewing feedback, customer complaints, and key performance indicators about the repercussions of recent public bus schedule changes and restructuring?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Thank you, madam.
I would like to preface my reply with a caveat that this reply, as per the Rules, was written four weeks ago, and so may be irrelevant or superseded by events.
The Committee has delegated authority to Traffic and Highway Services to monitor the service provided by Stagecoach against the contractual requirements. The recent customer feedback is being followed up as part of and in addition to the routine monitoring and reporting.
There are established regular contractual monitoring meetings in place with Stagecoach at which service performance, customer feedback, and agreed KPIs are reviewed and discussed. Following these discussions and after direct scrutiny from the Committee, it understands that Stagecoach has already begun implementing new processes and is actively recruiting to provide greater levels of resilience and improved service reliability, which may have led to the complaints.
The Committee receives regular updates on the performance and monitoring of the bus service provider. Where contractual standards are not met, the Committee will consider and apply the remedies available under the contract where appropriate. The recent timetable changes were developed and implemented in partnership with Stagecoach and stakeholders. These changes needed to be introduced alongside revisions to the dedicated school bus services as both elements were considered together as part of the wider network review.
Given the scale of the review and that the network had not been comprehensively examined for some time, a period of adjustment was always anticipated. However, unfortunately, this has fallen at a time where there have been some operational challenges beyond the control of both the States, the Committee and Stagecoach, which has compounded the impact.

The Bailiff: Is this a supplementary question, Deputy Gollop?

Deputy Gollop: Yes, please, thank you.
I know a person at a public meeting with a legal background made the observation that, with the benefit of hindsight, changing the schedule at the same time as the end of August and the beginning of the school term was perhaps the wrong date. Would the Committee accept that or argue that the problems were likely to happen anyway?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Thank you.

The changes needed to be introduced alongside the revisions to the dedicated school bus services, both elements run together on an integrated network. You cannot make changes to the scheduled service without impacting the school bus service, and that is a very fragile environment as well. Everyone using the school bus service has to get there at a specific time, as do the scheduled bus services. You cannot necessarily change one without impacting the other negatively.

The Bailiff: Is that another supplementary question, Deputy Gollop?

Deputy Gollop: It is encouraging to hear that the Committee is meeting with Stagecoach, as are the Bus Users Group, and efforts are being made. But will efforts be also made to ensure that an accurate monitor of lost or cancelled journeys over the past two to three months are made and that would be used for both future reference and potentially a reduction of the grant if that proves to be the best solution?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Yes, there has been some internal work by staff at Traffic and Highways to double and triple check the data that is coming back to us on the reporting to ensure its accuracy, and that will continue going forward.

The Bailiff: Deputy Hansmann Rouxel.

Deputy Hansmann Rouxel: Thank you, madam.

Just to ask, in terms of the management of the contract, there is Traffic and Highways looking after it, however, could the President explain whether there is any oversight over Stagecoach's employment on Island, since I know that they have let a few key members go in helping previously under CT Plus run the local side of the local management of the contract?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: I think I understood the question.

Traffic and Highways does oversee employment of Stagecoach staff. If I have interpreted that correctly, and that is the question, then that is not done. The employment situation is a matter for Stagecoach. However, the licensing of drivers is done by Traffic and Highways and they are required, which is a not a requirement in the UK, to have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), which is a safeguarding check. So that is done as part of issuing the public service vehicle licence to drive the vehicle. But physical employment by Stagecoach is down to Stagecoach. It is their terms and conditions and the drivers and staff are employed by Stagecoach, and not Traffic and Highways.

The Bailiff: Supplementary question by Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: Thank you, ma'am.

I got a yes/no answer this morning from Deputy Gabriel, which was very good, thank you very much. But this one is not so much so.

In terms of the quality and the value for money in terms of the criteria that Stagecoach were chosen on, looking at the reviewing of the KPIs and bus schedules and restructuring, and being somebody who has waited an hour for a bus and it has not turned up, and a bus route has changed and I cannot get to where I want to and I am having to take a taxi, could he explain to us in writing, if necessary, what variations in service qualities and value for money have occurred compared to what was expected at the time of the signing of the contract?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: The answer to that one I cannot give him in 90 seconds, so I will commit to responding in writing. But what I can say is that Stagecoach were selected by the previous E&I Committee, which myself and Deputy Cameron have followed through and are on this Committee, and that it was a robust and rigorous and lengthy tender process. The scoring and the face-to-face interviews, in my view, the correct provider was chosen.

Cancellation of scheduled bus journeys at short notice

The Bailiff: No more supplementary questions. In that case, Deputy Gollop, your second question.

Deputy Gollop: Will Environment & Infrastructure seek to ensure the bus contractor does not cancel at short notice scheduled bus journeys, especially with young people, when young people or vulnerable people are involved?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Again, the same caveat applies to this answer, in that it is four weeks old.

The Committee recognises the significant impact that cancelled bus journeys can have, particularly for young people travelling to and from school, vulnerable passengers, and those who rely on bus services to get to work or time-sensitive appointments.

While it is inevitable that any bus network provider will occasionally need to cancel services due to unforeseen operational circumstances, the scale of these disruptions and the way they are communicated are of critical importance. The Committee has made it very clear to the bus provider that every effort should be made to minimise cancellations and maintain the reliability of the network.

To support this, the provider has been supplied with a list of scheduled services that are particularly important for school travel and has been asked to prioritise these services wherever possible should cancellations become unavoidable. The Committee is also aware that the provider is introducing enhanced operational processes designed to improve the communication of service disruptions. This includes ensuring that passengers are informed at the earliest opportunity, particularly for morning services relied upon for journeys to school and for work. Early communication is essential to allow passengers and families sufficient time to make alternative travel arrangements and minimise disruption to their daily activities.

The Bailiff: Is this a supplementary question, Deputy Gollop?

Deputy Gollop: Yes. My first supplementary is the app has been a good development and it was a good development when Tower Transit CT Plus had it, and Stagecoach have adapted it and it is useful. But there are numerous bus trips that are not featured on it that are happening. So there is a technical issue.

But my question is, should the Committee really put more resources into ensuring that the app does not make mistakes and is particularly good at informing the customer, the passenger, or their parents or friends, that the bus is delayed or cancelled?

That question came up earlier after the statement, so will the Committee work with Stagecoach to get the app better so that you will have clarity when times are cancelled or delayed or changed?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: The beauty of an app is that it works on data and that data is captured, but also relies on human input. Stagecoach have identified, through working with Traffic and Highways officers, because Traffic and Highways are responsible for the back of the app and the physical interface. The front of the app is where the data being put in is Stagecoach's responsibility.

Where an outbound service turns into an inbound, perhaps the driver has been concentrating on more customer service than putting the bus's location into the app or changing into that new service. But I have been reassured as early as lunchtime today that there are management controls in place that the drivers are inputting the correct information into the bus tracker system, which then uploads on to the app. So app visibility should improve.

The Bailiff: Any more supplementary questions in relation to question 2?

Then question 3 please, Deputy Gollop. Sorry, you say you do have another supplementary? Okay, second supplementary question.

Deputy Gollop: My second supplementary is, I know things are moving on and I am impressed that the Committee are really looking at this and working with the provider. But my point is, in answer, the answer says this includes ensuring that passengers are informed at the earliest opportunity. Now, particularly for morning services, could that mean that the Committee *for the* Environment & Infrastructure finds a way of manning the bus terminus or kiosk or shop to ensure that its opening hours preferably include the morning and early evening, even in the winter?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: The shop opening hours are based on a contractual arrangement and are not 24/7, and not even 12 hours of opening hours, and currently do not cover the morning or evening peaks.

Through our discussions, we have discussed the difficulties that have been had in communications and the physical manning of the shop, phone lines, updating apps, and updating relevant communications, including Facebook and Stagecoach's page on there. There are moves afoot, which are still fluid, around how to improve that communication.

But, again, as early as lunchtime today I was reassured that Stagecoach is the right provider for this Island, are addressing the problems, are acutely aware of them, which have occurred, which some of them have been outside of their control, but are now well within their control, and increased communication will happen.

It may not be the shop opening up all the time; I am not going to hold them to fortune that they have to open it from eight in the morning until six at night. It would be great if they could do that, but they are not contractually obliged to do that. There are other communications methods available, which we are hoping to progress with them.

Mechanical and technical resources available to ensure breakdowns are limited

The Bailiff: Question 3 then, Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: Two supplementaries to this. Will the Committee *for the* Environment & Infrastructure ensure that mechanical and technical resources are made available to the bus operator to ensure breakdowns are limited and destination digital displays are shown and accurate at all times?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: The bus provider is required to maintain the States-owned vehicles in accordance with the requirements set out in the contract, which includes a defined maintenance programme.

It has been confirmed that, although there remains a vacancy within its engineering team, the maintenance schedule is being adhered to and recent service cancellations have not been the result of the insufficient vehicle availability. An advantage of using an established operator is that Stagecoach has been able to supplement the local team with members from other regions.

Inevitably, mechanical issues can occur, given the nature of our road network, together with the relatively short distances and lower speeds involved, diesel fuel buses can occasionally enter limp mode and need to be replaced during service by an alternative vehicle.

In response. Stagecoach have introduced an additional level of maintenance to reduce the number of these occurrences. While the Committee recognises the inconvenience this causes passengers, it is a known limitation of Euro VI diesel fuel vehicles and reinforces the importance of the longer-term transition to electric or other alternative fuel buses, which also supports the Island's net-zero ambitions.

In relation to the route displays, the provider has advised that some units are experiencing faults due to their age, the effects of weather exposure, and the salty air environment. Faults are repaired or units replaced wherever possible. Where an immediate repair is not feasible, particularly during peak operating periods, the provider has been asked to ensure that the route number is clearly displayed in the front window so passengers can readily identify the service.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop, your first supplementary question.

Deputy Gollop: I feel guilty getting Deputy Gabriel to stand up because of his arm. But I am old enough to remember when Guernsey buses used to have a card in the front that was stained with tobacco and they used to change, it was a number card, was not even a destination blind.

But these blinds are not linen blinds, they are liquid crystal. But I was advised at a meeting with a Stagecoach representative that, although Stagecoach have to maintain the buses in good order, which I am sure they do, this was not part of their contract, but it is something the States of Guernsey are responsible for.

Given that, will E&I be ensuring that the problem whereby buses cannot display anything because it is technically not working can be resolved as soon as possible?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Yes. As early as Monday this week in a Committee meeting, the Committee agreed the advanced purchase of more hardware. So Deputy Gollop is correct, the States of Guernsey are responsible for the asset, the assets are the buses, they are called destination blinds, but to you and me it is the electronic readout on the front and the sides. We are responsible for that piece of kit. It is extra to the chassis of the vehicle and, as with many things, it is a complex piece of kit, which is electronically controlled. Electronics do not like salty air and, yes, they have been failing due to their age, a bit like me and my shoulder.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop, your second supplementary question.

Deputy Gollop: Many years ago I was a small shareholder in Stagecoach. I am not now. It has always had an international brand reputation as a success story. I therefore ask, will Environment & Infrastructure be working with the company, or even alone, in trying to source some good quality, relatively new, second-hand vehicles, electric or otherwise, that could be drafted in? Because the maintenance issues outlined and the technical problem of the buses breaking down, at one point at least one was doing that every day a few weeks ago, has caused problems. So, can new, not

necessarily brand new vehicles, but second-hand vehicles be leased from Stagecoach or the general market or purchased on the second-hand market to alleviate the current issues, because the States own the vehicles rather than the company?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Thank you, Deputy Gollop.

I do not want to draw attention to any observance issues that you may or may not have. But since approximately September last year, Stagecoach has been leasing two vehicles to the States of Guernsey and they have been running around providing a service for us. So his suggestion is taken on board and we have been doing it, and it proves that Stagecoach is the right operator for the Island, has flexibility, strength and depth, and have been able to respond by not only providing extra vehicles but staff at all levels, including short-term driver contracts as well. You would not get that with someone based in Australia.

The Bailiff: Deputy Blin.

Deputy Blin: Thank you, ma'am.

I have listened very carefully to the questions posed by Deputy Gollop to the President of E&I and I am getting this growing feeling that, as far as the contract is concerned, everything ticks boxes. But, as Deputy Gabriel knows, I have been in communication with a lot of the staff for a number of months and I have been, with Deputy Gabriel's support, sharing information as we went along.

We have talked about the shop, we have talked about the websites and information, etc., and what I can say is that they have removed, after they had reached a certain point of time, they let go the marketing manager, they let go some of the staff, and so there is one thing saying the contract is fulfilled, and that is very important to the States of Guernsey, but what I have perceived and I have picked up from a number of individuals is that there is another side to life, it is the people side, that is the –

The Bailiff: Deputy Blin, that is your minute, and you have not yet asked a question.

Deputy Blin: To ask if he agrees that there is the other side beyond just the contract.

Thank you, ma'am. Sorry, ma'am.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel, that does not necessarily relate to question 3, but if you can.

Deputy Gabriel: I would like to build on that because I recognise eventually what Deputy Blin was getting to.

There is a different side certainly and, yes, part of our meeting today was to get to the understanding around what Stagecoach is doing and how their values, which are transferring to Guernsey, can be implemented about running a professional customer service and transport system for an Island, which has its difficulties, and definitely differences, certainly employment bases in running the Island. But I recognise that, yes, that they are working hard to, not just fulfil the contract, but to run the service for the people of Guernsey.

The Bailiff: Deputy Sloan, supplementary question number one.

Deputy Sloan: Yes, madam.

I do not know, through you, if Deputy Gabriel had the same experience when I was little, but I used to be at the bus station waiting for the bus to come and the driver would be doing that with his hand like that and the sign, and you would be excited or not whether the sign was your stop or not, whether it was going to be your bus, and the excitement or the disappointment when it was

not. But that hankers back to a lot simpler times and I was wondering if Deputy Gabriel agrees with me, does he hanker after those simpler times when a digital destination display was not a complex piece of kit?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Looking back, it is always easier, hindsight is a wonderful thing and nostalgia is a great place to live in. However, manual options are not necessarily available when you are running a fleet of buses with all the modern safety equipment that are built into and on to them. So I am not entirely sure what the question was entirely, but should we be going back to manual operations on buses? That is an alternative when electronics fail, yes. As far as I have been told by Stagecoach, this is getting down into the operational weeds again, but if there is an electronic failure, the drivers have been issued with cards which they can put in their window.

COMMITTEE *FOR* ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Contribution of the Digital Greenhouse to the business and digital community and enterprise development

The Bailiff: If there are no more supplementary questions, we will turn to Deputy Gollop's questions to the President of Economic Development.

Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: Well, we go from digital bus displays to the Digital Greenhouse, and again there has been a lag time of at least four weeks since they were asked, but it is still a very important issue, and I will have supplementaries to the brief answers that are given.

Would the Committee *for* Economic Development acknowledge that the Digital Greenhouse over the past decade has contributed significantly to the business and digital community and enterprise development?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Madam, the Committee *for* Economic Development fully acknowledges the contribution the Digital Greenhouse has made since 2016, supporting startups and entrepreneurs, developing digital and business skills, connecting businesses with mentors and investors, and providing a focal point for Guernsey's innovation community. The Committee's objective is to build on that legacy and enable even more businesses to start, grow and innovate.

The Bailiff: Is this a supplementary question, Deputy Gollop?

Deputy Gollop: Yes. I am a little bit out of my depth with the artificial intelligence areas of life, but I have signed up to an app where, on a monthly basis, a group meets in the shed, so-called, of the Digital Greenhouse, that discusses artificial intelligence. That has been successful and has led on to other things. So my point is, does the Committee hope that there will be a focal point for AI, just like the excellent skills breakout, six weeks at the moment?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: AI is a technology that cannot be centralised and the action on adoption of AI is not a responsibility of one entity. So the example of how the AI Sprint came about

shows the power of different stakeholders working together, and I would like to see more of that. Once we have a future entity that takes over the Digital Greenhouse services, I am sure they will be doing programmes and skills on AI. But I really want to see that AI adoption to be elsewhere in the community and not centralised and focused in one entity and organisation.

The Bailiff: Is this another supplementary question, Deputy Gollop?

Deputy Gollop: The response rightly talked about the support for startups, entrepreneurs, and digital and business skills. But, in recent years, the number of seminars, workshops, presentations, skills at the Greenhouse during the working week has diminished a bit. There have been boot camps, whereas the space for people who want an office facility has grown. Does the Committee wish to see both elements continue, a space for people to meet and work, but also a place for, as they said, business innovation?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: The key reason the level of activity diminished in the last two years was because the funding under the previous Agilisys contract, which was providing SMART Guernsey funding, was withdrawn two years ago. That is really a direct reason why some of the activity levels have diminished.

Yes, going forward, we would like to see a core set of essential services that continue to be provided. We think it is important that a physical space still remains as part of that provision of the services. But, in terms of general rental of desk spaces that is available for general community, that is not considered to be part of the core services that we will continue to be funding.

The Bailiff: Any more supplementary questions?
Deputy Camp.

Deputy Camp: Given that Deputy Gollop's initial question asked about significant contribution to business, digital community, etc., could the President for Economic Development please explain the metrics the Committee has used in addressing that question?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: The Digital Greenhouse has developed a number of different progress reports over the years of operation. It is important to note that its focus had changed and it also received the Startup Guernsey funding. We have recently released responses through a FOI request, which provides some further information, and I encourage Deputy Camp to look into those responses, as I do not have enough time right now to provide the information.

The Bailiff: Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: Speaking on those figures, I read the FOI, as everyone did I am sure. The Digital Greenhouse received £3.9 million net of funding and, according to the report, supported 46 jobs and generated £294,000 in Income Tax and social security contributions, according to the report, according to the FOI request.

My question is, given that is the Future Guernsey fund, and we have a fund coming up in the 2027 Budget to support growth, for £3.9 million, what is the return you would be expecting going forward in terms of initiatives? Well, presumably more than 46 jobs and £294,000 in tax.

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: The figures Deputy Sloan references were undertaken by a survey of the recent impacts of programmes. That is not the impact over the lifetime of the Digital Greenhouse over the 10 years. I encourage him perhaps to look at the tender documents and how we approach a return on investment going forward. That is something that continues to be in development.

It is obviously very difficult sometimes to say, when you fund an activity and the employment and tax generated for it that could be directly attributed to that activity, there will be many factors that contribute to the success of businesses. So we always need to be careful exactly what metrics are being measured, but the tender document outlines really those essential services and KPIs we are looking for.

The Bailiff: Second supplementary question from Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: Yes, my apologies, madam.

I was only referring to the FOI question response that you had directed Deputy Camp to review, so that is what I was looking at. I appreciate the tender document, if that is available to share, I would love to see it. But in terms of a £4 million investment, what sort of returns in terms of jobs, have you got an idea of scope in terms of jobs and tax you would be looking to be able to achieve with that support?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: We do not have that figure because there were different metrics used during different periods of time. But, as I have mentioned, there has been different progress reports and, yes, reporting throughout that period. But it is not possible to come up with just one figure, and I know Deputy Sloan is always keen to have just one figure, because the outcomes are more complex than just having one figure in place.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Any more supplementary questions?

Contribution of the Digital Greenhouse to be safeguarded

The Bailiff: In that case, Deputy Gollop, would you pose your second question?

Deputy Gollop: Thank you, and I have supplementaries on this.

Thank you to the Committee *for* Economic Development for their reply. They have already touched on part of the second question.

Would the Committee ensure that the past 40 years of Enterprise Agency advice, startup support, and new business development training and signposting will not be lost during any Digital Greenhouse closure or transition or privatisation, with all of the potential lost opportunities for young entrepreneurs and the wider economy?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Madam, the essential enterprise support functions are not being abandoned. The Committee's intention is that support for new and expanding businesses should continue and be enhanced with core services supported where necessary through grant funding and appropriate oversight.

The forthcoming process will seek high-quality provision of startup advice, mentoring, training, signposting, and access to wider expertise and investment networks. The Committee has already received exceptionally strong interest for the provision of services from a variety of organisations and individuals. The future provider and operating model have not yet been selected, so this assurance relates to continuity of those essential services, rather than committing today to a particular organisation, grant, or premises.

The Bailiff: Supplementary question from Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: My first one is, a number of years ago, a previous Economic Development Board, two terms ago, decided to let go of the Startup Guernsey, which was itself a reconstruction of the Enterprise Agency, and decided a more efficient way was integrating its function within the Digital Greenhouse.

Now, I am not a party to the useful discussions the Committee are clearly having, but will this startup advice and entrepreneurial support be available in the transition, or will it then be hived off and separately supported by Economic Development, like it used to be in the Commerce and Employment era?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Advice to businesses and startups forms part of the core essential services that we would like to continue funding, so yes, that support will be continued to be provided.

The Bailiff: Second supplementary question, Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: My final question has been alluded to by Deputy Sloan's perceptive points in that we are shortly going to be debating a budget that Deputy Parkinson has outlined has potentially, if approved, £15 million for enterprise and entrepreneurs.

Can some of that money not be usefully redirected to some structure, if not necessarily the current Digital Greenhouse, that provides not only startup advice and support and work camps and presentations and skills, but also office space for the smaller one-man or one-woman business, so that they can get started and meet and network and create the kind of cappuccino community that Digital wanted to be?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Deputy Gollop, I wanted to mention it is important that Government knows its place and knows when it needs to step in to correct market failures or vacuum in the industry and market. The industry has evolved significantly from when the first time the Digital Greenhouse was established. There was a lack of this type of co-working space, however the market has evolved. There are many more private-sector providers that are providing the types of facilities that Deputy Gollop is talking about. So we would rather those facilities are provided by the community and industry, but we are open to suggestions from the community.

I know Deputy Le Brun is interested in support of facilities for small traders, etc. We are always open to discuss opportunities but that is not currently within the scope of what we are looking at as a replacement for Digital Greenhouse services.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder, supplementary question number one.

Deputy Inder: I am probably setting myself up here, and it is largely philosophical. Having started three businesses myself, at no point did we ever need Government involvement at all. We

had good ideas, we just got on with it, took the risks and hoped at the end of the first year we had made some money and no bank was knocking on our door. Just philosophically, what has changed that Government needs to get so involved in startups?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller, it probably goes beyond the answer to the original question, but you are very welcome to enter the philosophical debate.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: I am very glad to answer this question, because what we are doing is exactly that, is exiting Government service provision, because we think private sector and community sector are much better positioned to provide those services. But some of that provision may still require some funding but we, as Government and as civil servants, do not want to be running those services.

The Bailiff: Thank you.

That brings us to the end of the second question time of today's meeting.

LEGISLATION FOR APPROVAL

COMMITTEE *FOR* EMPLOYMENT & SOCIAL SECURITY

5. Long-term Care Insurance (Amendment) (Guernsey) Law, 2026 – Debate commenced

Article 5.

The States are asked to decide:

Whether they are of the opinion to approve the draft Projet de Loi entitled "The Long-term Care Insurance (Amendment) (Guernsey) Law, 2026", and to authorise the Bailiff to present a most humble petition to His Majesty praying for His Royal Sanction thereto.

The Bailiff: States' Greffier.

The States' Greffier: Article 5, Committee *for* Employment & Social Security, Long-term Care Insurance (Amendment) (Guernsey) Law, 2026.

The Bailiff: Deputy Bury.

The Bury: Thank you, ma'am.

As this is legislation, I do not propose to go into all of the history that has got us to this point, as I think that Members should be fairly familiar with that by now. However, if there are questions that arise in debate, I will be happy to deal with them in my summing up.

Members will be aware this legislation is a product of the previously agreed States' decisions made in February 2025. The policy letter was titled, perhaps not snappily, *The Need to Stabilise the Private Care Home Market and Incentivise Growth to Meet Demand*, and was a response to the SLAWS work last term not progressing to where anyone would have hoped. It was proposed by the ESS Committee at the time as an interim responsible course of action to attempt to give some stability to the care home market and hopefully promote the much-needed capacity increase.

The Law in front of Members today, if approved, will bring into effect, upon commencement, two resolutions of the States. These were (1) the introduction of a user care cost contribution for care costs, and a change from a five-year residency requirement to a 20-year requirement to receive long-term care benefit.

So a bit more detail on each of those. The user care cost contribution, as has been established through previous actuarial work, the Long-Term Care Insurance Fund is depleting and action needs to be taken to rectify that. To help with this and to mitigate some decisions that have already been enacted in order to help stabilise the care home market, the former Committee proposed, and the States agreed, to introduce a user contribution towards the costs of receiving residential long-term care. This is different from, and in addition to, the co-payment, which goes towards living and accommodation costs.

This is a change of approach as costs of receiving residential long-term care have previously been met by benefits paid from the fund as soon as a person begins receiving residential long-term care, provided that they are eligible, which is comparably a very generous approach. Paying the user care contribution would be a condition of entitlement to receive long-term care benefit, meaning that anyone who is liable to make the payment must do so before they can receive the benefit.

So, in practice, the implementation of the contribution would mean that, for individuals, there would be a waiting period to receive the benefit, after which long-term care benefit would be paid as normal, provided that the person is eligible. Within that waiting period, the individual will be liable to contribute up to £10,000 depending on their financial circumstances. To determine those circumstances, a financial assessment will be carried out. Under this legislation, the entire capital value of a person's principal private residence will be excluded from the financial assessment, but the value of most of the person's other capital assets and weekly income will be included.

The States agreed that the maximum contribution should be £10,000. A person would only be liable to pay this amount towards their care if they had capital assets of £25,000 and over, or if their weekly income exceeded the income threshold of £465.28 in July 2026 terms.

Any person who has capital assets of less than £15,000, and whose income is below the income threshold, would not be required to make any contribution and, if eligible, would begin receiving the benefit as soon as they enter residential long-term care. Individuals who have capital assets of between £15,000 and £24,999.99 would be required to make a reduced contribution unless their income is more than the weekly income threshold. To put the contribution into context, at 2027 rates, the full £10,000 will cover somewhere between seven to 12 weeks of care, depending on the level of need.

So the second change is the residency requirement. Access to the scheme is currently based on residency criteria as opposed to contributions criteria. However, just as an aside, as part of the SLAWS 2 work, and now that the fund has been open for a period of time, moving to a contributions-based scheme will be explored. But current residency requirements to receive care benefit is five years continuous residence in Guernsey or Alderney at any time, including or in addition to one year immediately prior to requiring care.

The former Committee proposed an increase in the residency requirement to 10 years aggregate residency in Guernsey or Alderney as an adult since 1st January 2003, along with significant transitional arrangements. There are some nuances to that formula and special exemptions, but I will not go into the details of those in the interest of time, and they only apply in very specific circumstances. But following a successful amendment, the States agreed that the residency conditions should be 20 years aggregate residency, so that is what is contained within the legislation, again with the relative nuances, exemptions, and significant transitional arrangements.

Members will be aware that there has been an amendment lodged to the former Committee's original Proposition of 10 years. So, at this juncture, as I have now laid out the facts of what is in front of us today, and the amendment is really a simple number change, perhaps we should move on to that and I will endeavour to answer any questions on the substantive matter in my summing up.

Thank you ma'am.

The Bailiff: Thank you.

Amendment 1:

To insert, immediately after the words 'His Royal Sanction thereto", the words ", subject to the following:"
"In section 1 –
in subsection (2)(c), for "20 years", substitute "10 years",
in subsection (3), for "38 years of age", substitute "28 years of age" and for "20 years", substitute "10 years"".

The Bailiff: Deputy Ozanne, would you like the States' Greffier to read your amendment?

Deputy Ozanne: Yes, please, ma'am.

Ma'am the amended amendment, do you want me to explain that there was a slight typo which you have allowed through the slip rule?

The Bailiff: Yes, you can, but do you want the States' Greffier to read it?

Deputy Ozanne: Yes.

The Bailiff: Yes, let him do that first and then you explain what you are going to say.

The States' Greffier read out Amendment 1.

The Bailiff: Deputy Ozanne.

Deputy Ozanne: Thank you, ma'am.

Just to explain, Members, if I may, through you, madam?

The Bailiff: Yes.

Deputy Ozanne: There is a very slight typo, which I believe Madam Bailiff has very kindly allowed, to (c) in that first point, should read (2)(a)(c), and we can only apologise for that slight inconsistency. But the sense of the amendment remains very much the same, we just were not pointing to the right piece of legislation.

As Deputy Gabriel has just reminded us, hindsight is indeed a wonderful thing, and it is true that sometimes we do not have all the facts when we make a key decision. That is why one of the benefits of our legislative system is that, when we realise that certain policy decisions we have made in good faith are not likely to deliver what we hope they might, we do have an opportunity at the final stage to amend the proposed legislation and address those problems, which is what we are trying to do here.

That is why, with the support of the majority of my colleagues on ESS, I have brought this amendment today, and it is why I am pleased to say it is being strongly seconded by the current President of Health & Social Care. It is true his predecessor held a differing view, however, with the benefit of hindsight, we now know that there are unintended consequences of that decision made by the previous States in February 2023. Indeed, by many Members in the Chamber here, which were not perhaps fully known or appreciated at the time.

It also gives this States a chance to consider these matters themselves. I do appreciate that it is unusual to revisit a decision that was made only 20 months ago, but legislation should never be beyond reconsideration if there is truly a genuine opportunity to improve it before it takes full effect. For the benefit of newer Members, Employment & Social Security originally proposed, as Deputy Bury has just explained, increasing the qualifying residency period from five continuous years to 10 aggregate years as an adult, from the beginning of January 2003. The Assembly instead adopted an amendment brought by Deputy Brouard, then President of Health & Social Care, and seconded by Deputy Cameron, increasing that period from 10 to 20 years.

Today, a majority of our Committee *for* Employment & Social Security members continue to believe that 10 years strikes the right balance. I am also pleased that the President of Health & Social Care has concluded that restoring the original recommendation would better support the delivery of our health and care services, and Members will hear his reasons shortly.

Although I was not a Member of this Assembly when this matter was debated, I have aimed to approach this with an open mind. I have read the original policy letter, the *Hansard* of the debate, and supporting evidence carefully, and I have asked myself one simple question. Knowing what we now understand about the wider implications of this policy, would we still choose 20 years? My conclusion is that we should not, and three reasons why. The first is one of principle, the second concerns the likely impact on our health and care system, and the third is financial.

Let me begin with the principle. When I read last year's debate, what struck me most was not how much Members disagreed, but how much they agreed. Everyone wanted a sustainable, long-term care scheme, everyone wanted to protect taxpayers, and everyone recognised that the current five-year qualifying period should be lengthened. It was too short. Everyone also agreed that there should be no change to the second residency requirement, which is that a person must have lived in Guernsey or Alderney for at least 12 months in the immediate period prior to requiring long-term care.

The disagreement was therefore never about the principle; it was always about where the line should be drawn. Should it be 10 years or should it be 20? The then Committee *for* Employment & Social Security did not arrive at 10 years by accident or a compromise. It followed careful policy development, actuarial advice, and detailed consideration of the available evidence. Ten years represents a substantial period of residence. It reflects a genuine and meaningful connection with Guernsey, one built through living here, working here, contributing here, and making this Island your home. At the same time it preserves the integrity and sustainability of a long-term care scheme. I continue to believe that was and remains the right balance.

The second reason for supporting this amendment is the wider impact on our health and care system. Members should attach particular weight to the fact that the President of Health & Social Care is seconding this amendment. As President, he has responsibility for our health and care system and has reflected carefully on the wider implications of the 20-year qualification. Members will hear shortly why he believes restoring the original 10-year recommendation would better support the delivery of those services.

The reason is frankly quite straightforward. Health & Social Care does not operate in separate compartments. It is one obviously of an interconnected system. Pressure in one part inevitably creates pressure elsewhere and, if people cannot access appropriate long-term care when they need it, they remain in hospital for longer than necessary. That affects our hospital capacity, which is at capacity. It affects planned treatment, it affects emergency admissions, and it places additional strain on patients, families, and staff alike. Those pressures already exist.

The question before us is whether we should introduce a policy that is likely to add to them when there is a credible alternative that better balances the competing demands on the system. That to me is the law of unintended consequences.

My third reason is financial. Last year's debate understandably concentrated on the savings to the Long-Term Care Insurance Fund itself. Those savings are real, but they are not the whole picture. Given our current focus on general revenue and the need to realise savings there, we are all much more acutely aware of how the 20-year qualification interacts with income support and general revenue. Around 70% to 75% of those who lose entitlement to long-term care benefit are still expected to require financial assistance through income support. The need for care does not disappear. The public cost does not disappear either. It simply moves from one public fund to another.

Good financial management is not simply about asking how much one fund, such as the Long-Term Care Fund, saves. It is about considering the overall cost to general reserves too. It is about understanding where those costs fall and about recognising that savings achieved in one budget may create pressures elsewhere.

There is another important point and that is of timing. Under the current 20-year qualification, the full financial savings take around 15 years to be fully realised. Restoring the 10-year qualification achieves the intended position sooner, although savings accrue at the same rate.

Madam, there is a final point, and this debate is not about whether the Assembly made the wrong decision 20 months ago; Members acted in good faith on the evidence before them. There is no criticism in that. The question here today, however, is different. It is whether, with a fuller understanding of the wider implications of this policy, we have an opportunity to improve it before those consequences become a reality, and I believe we can do that.

The question is therefore not whether last year's Assembly made the wrong decision, it is whether this Assembly can make a better one. This amendment does not weaken the Long-Term Care Scheme. Indeed, I would argue it strengthens it, as it will particularly help those who chose, as I did, to return to the Island to care for their elderly relatives in their homes, so relieving the pressure on the care system.

I should also add that it strengthens us as an Island, as it ensures we have a competitive position versus Jersey, who have a 10-year continuous policy. Most importantly, it significantly reduces the cost to general revenue to the tune of £1.5 million per annum, while also maintaining a saving overall to the States of Guernsey.

For those reasons, madam, I respectfully ask Members to support this amendment.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Do you formally second that amendment, Deputy Oswald?

Deputy Oswald: I do, madam.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: I will go first; I will try to set a tone. Do not worry, it is all okay.

Deputy Ozanne's argument, and I genuinely did listen, around the majority of it seems to be around the majority of the Committee supports it, tick. Deputy Oswald has seconded it. She is usually pretty good at laying out her arguments and in this case I simply do not think she has made the argument convincingly. I was entirely unclear what the wider impacts were, and I generally was waiting. But fairness, Members, is largely dependent on which window you are looking out of.

Guernsey's long-term health care system is built on a general principle of mutual contribution and commitment to the Island over time, and time is important. Someone who has lived, worked, paid taxes, contributed to the Island for 20 years has demonstrated a significantly greater long-term commitment than someone who has only been resident for 10 years. Reducing the qualification period from 20 years to 10 risks that principle and creating a situation where newer arrivals gain access to the same benefits despite having made substantially fewer years of contribution.

I believe, and these are my politics, that is significant. We simply cannot be an open door where you can come here for 10 years, previously a lot lower, and just effectively act like health tourists getting into what is a very good health system. That is what unfair looks like.

Now, there is also a question of fairness between these generations, individuals who move to Guernsey later in life, and it is also worth mentioning, Members, long-term care does not necessarily mean older. There are quite a few people between 40 and 50 years old with dementia in long-term care. So do not always think long-term care is about older people. Your need or requirement for long-term care can happen a lot earlier in life. Those who move to the Island at 50 years old are statistically close to the point which long-term care is needed, and it is more likely to arise. They have moved to the Island at 50, paid nothing into the Island, and under Deputy Ozanne's proposals, and Deputy Oswald's proposals, within 10 years they could access long-term care. Now, two things, I do not wish it on them accessing long-term care, and equally I do not wish it on the taxpayer.

While these individuals may make a valuable contribution after arriving, they do not all do. Some people come here at 50 to retire, that is a fact. The Island does not benefit from their earlier decades

of work, taxation, volunteering, family raising, and wider community participation. What is fair about that?

Those who have spent more or most of all their adult lives in Guernsey have helped sustain this community through their younger and middle years, before drawing upon support in later life. Retaining a longer residency qualification helps preserve that principle, that entitlement should reflect a substantial and enduring contribution to the Island community, rather than simply a period of residence immediately preceding potential need.

Members, Madam Bailiff, what is fair about adding more pressure to beds and care to those who have not contributed to the Island at the same rate or period as others? I am generally surprised that Deputy Oswald has supported this. He must know that we are in a bed crisis; he must know that. So why is it fair that someone who has been here 10 years can move to the Island over a 10-year period, get a bed before someone who has been working here 20 years in their life. What is fair, what is equitable about that?

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Oswald.

Deputy Oswald: Thank you, madam.

I hope to answer Deputy Inder's queries about why I should be supporting this. I would point out that, although I am seconding it personally, it has the support of the majority of my Committee. We do face a bed crisis and this is the reason why I am standing up today, but bed crisis is not just in long-term care provision in the community, but it is in the Princess Elizabeth Hospital, and I will explain the reasons for that subsequently.

I am happy to second Deputy Ozanne's amendment to return the requirement for the minimum period of residency since 2003 for access to the Long-Term Care Fund from the 20 years proposed and accepted following successful amendments submitted by my predecessor, the then Deputy Brouard, to the original position outlined by the then Deputy Peter Roffey and the Committee *for* Employment & Social Security, that is 10 years.

I have consulted *Hansard* and read the ensuing debate from some 16 months ago several times. I find myself in a situation where I cannot agree with my distinguished predecessor, despite having discussed the issue with him. The arguments played out back then were well put on both sides, but the proponents won the day. I will not replay those arguments today but need to say, as ably stated by Deputy Ozanne, that although all except a significant qualifying period should be required before accessing what is by comparison with other jurisdictions a general scheme, the bar set by the Brouard-Cameron amendment is too high.

A 10-year qualification period will overall have a relatively minor impact on the funding of the scheme, both financially in terms of extra support provision, and the life expectancy of the fund as a whole. But to my mind, fiscal findings are not enough to justify lengthening the longevity qualification period. The view then was however that in some way the lesser figure of 10 years qualification was, as just outlined by Deputy Inder, unfair to the local taxpayer. My major issue with the original decision to switch from a 10-year qualifying period to a 20-year one was that there was no consideration of unintended consequences.

My arguments will be based on pertinent and undeniable facts facing us on the HSC Committee regarding access to long-term residential, particularly Elderly Mental Infirmity (EMI) and/or bed-based care. For the sake of clarity EMI, refers to the provision of elderly mental infirmity, principally dementia-related care. Current projections show that more provision will be required by 2030 at a time when the provision of such supply could shrink with potential withdrawal of suppliers from the market.

A specific concern is that the need for such beds is moving away from relatively simple residential based care to an increasing requirement for long-stay nursing and/or EMI care based provision. There are vacancies for residential and/or nursing needs accommodation at this moment on Island, but complex care, particularly with EMI provision where the demand is greatest, is difficult to access.

The aims of the SLAWS initiatives are manyfold. These include allowing eligible Guernsey residents to access long-term care at a cost, which albeit is still high when considering the compulsory co-payment element and any top-up rates, is subsidised from the public purse to a level not including top-up fees of between 67% and 77% of costs. To incentivise more care home providers to enter the local Guernsey market to provide the extra care beds that we will need, as well as making up for any shortfall in provision relating to providers leaving the market, and more specifically from our point of view, to enable clients admitted to the PEH who remain inpatients, despite the fact that they are medically fit for discharge, to move on to more suitable placement.

These clients will not go away, however long they have been on the Island, they will need care. Essentially, this preserves services and allows patients, albeit never an easy journey, to move from the acute care setting into a long-term care setting. All potential preventable delays, such as inability to access a long-term care fund, need to be avoided, certainly now and increasingly in the future.

Delayed discharge from care arises mainly because of a lack of appropriate placements in the community, whether home-based care packages or because of residential care and/or complex needs, including EMI placements. Review of home-based care is an outstanding States' decision from previous SLAWS debates and will be addressed as part of the proposals next year in the so-called SLAWS 2.

This past winter, however, at one point, 34 clients were still in hospital as a result of delayed discharge from care. The longest delay recorded this year so far has been 250 days. Delayed discharge from care is no longer only a winter issue. This summer, in August, at one point, 31 service users at the PEH were in this category; effectively the capacity of one of our medical wards.

Although clients may require admission to long-term care direct from home, the requirements of this group is generally at the lower end of the complexity spectrum with residential care often sufficing. The main feeder to long-term care provision at the higher end of complexity provision is through the acute sector based at the Princess Elizabeth Hospital. Failure to move on results in delayed discharge from care.

Let me be absolutely clear on this. My support for this amendment principally relates to the need to allow free flow of patients through our acute sector, as possible, into care more appropriate to many clients' long-term needs. While these limitations, as Deputy Inder pointed out, apply to all residents of Guernsey, actuarial analysis indicates that 75% of those who will not be able to access the Long-Term Care Fund, i.e. falling outside the qualifying period, will need help to fund care through separate application to ESS. At best, this will lead to a bureaucratic delay to moving on. At worst, they will remain in hospital while HSC tries to sort out where they go. Demographic change alone indicates that these numbers will rise year on year.

ESS actuarial figures indicate keeping the Brouard amendment in place would mean that, at some point, and it is difficult to estimate, that a further 50 permanent residents seeking long-term care funding support will be ineligible because of residency requirements. By definition, as they are seeking support through the Long-Term Care Fund, these residents would be in need of residential or complex care. Data from the United States indicates the likelihood of dementia in this cohort is very high, between 47% and 56% at age 75, and at age 85, which is a waterfall mark for those seeking care, this figure approaches 85%.

The development of dementia precipitates the need to seek care, so for our projected 50 residents at some point ineligible for Long-Term Care Fund, but seeking care, at least half, and potentially by the age of 85, the vast majority will need care at the high end of the spectrum. Extending the length of longevity to access to the long-term care scheme would at best further bureaucratise the process. At worst, these clients will remain inappropriately placed in an acute bed whilst HSC tries to sort out their long-term care provision.

In summary, I find the extension of the qualification period for access for Long-Term Care Fund to be discriminatory on various levels and at variance with the eligibility criteria for access to similar schemes on our neighbouring Islands. But the key factor for me are the unforeseen consequences that this move will undoubtedly have on further increasing costs and resource requirements for the HSC as a whole. These arguments were not aired during the original debate. As the then

Deputy Brouard said at the time, there is no science behind it. It being the Proposition that he supported essentially on fairness grounds at the time.

I have outlined the medical and scientific evidence that now indeed puts a science into the argument but not on the side of a 20-year qualification period.

I thank you, madam, and urge fellow Members to support this amendment.

The Bailiff: Deputy Cameron.

Deputy Cameron: Thank you, ma'am.

I thought I had better speak on this because I did second the amendment last time. Former Deputy Brouard and I proposed 20 years instead of the original 10 years. That amendment passed by 27 votes to 11. The legislation before us implements that decision, this amendment would replace the agreed 20-year requirement with 10 years.

Of course, the previous Assembly's decision is not carved in stone, but before changing it we should understand whether the alternative is better. I have been in contact with Deputy Oswald and the Senior Strategic Policy Officer and appreciate their helpful responses. The amendment's explanatory note raises concerns about the consequences for acute hospital capacity. I take those concerns seriously. My late mother waited months in hospital for a suitable care home bed. My parents' own contributions towards their care regularly exceeded £7,000 a month, exhausting their lifetime savings within two or three years. I understand how much it matters to find suitable care and to know how that care will be paid for.

However, we need to distinguish between finding a suitable bed, especially a specialist dementia care bed, and arranging the funding. Reducing the residency requirement may help patients access an available bed, but it cannot resolve a shortage of suitable specialist beds. We need to understand how much delay is attributable to each one.

One figure discussed in my correspondence with Deputy Oswald was the estimate of 50 additional people affected by retaining the 20-year requirement. The Senior Strategic Policy Officer has clarified that this means 50 fewer permanent care benefit recipients in 2045 under a 20-year requirement than under 10 years. It is a projection of benefit eligibility rather than a forecast of hospital delays.

Individual cases could arise much sooner; however HSC has not estimated how many additional funding-related hospital delays there might be, how long they would last, or their cost. One argument for this amendment is that separate income support applications would delay patients leaving hospital. Could starting those applications earlier prevent those delays, before reducing the residency requirement from 20 to 10 years? I would like to understand whether improving the funding process could address that concern.

The financial table in the amendment also deserves attention. Compared with 10 years, retaining 20 years is projected eventually to save the fund £2 million more annually. Additional income support expenditure would absorb £1.5 million, leaving a net States' saving of £500,000 a year in 2025 terms. £500,000 may look modest in a Government spreadsheet, but I suspect most of us would be over the moon to find that saving in our Committee budgets. I recognise that that amendment would shorten the transition from 15 years to five, delivering its small savings sooner. Additional hospital costs could also reduce the eventual advantage of retaining 20 years. We therefore need to compare both options over the same period, including those potential costs.

Finally the explanatory note that 10 years would align us with Jersey and reduce a competitive disadvantage. The headline number would match but the rules would differ. Jersey requires 10 continuous years, whereas this amendment proposes 10 years in aggregate since 2003. Jersey also recognises qualifying residents before 2003. That does not settle the competitiveness question either way. We need to understand the effect on attracting and retaining people alongside the public services they may need.

I respect the concerns behind this amendment but also we have a responsibility to protect the sustainability of the fund. (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) I would prefer us to improve the funding

arrangements and assess the additional risk before giving up the longer requirement and its projected saving.

For those reasons, I do not support this amendment.

The Bailiff: Deputy Dorrity.

Deputy Dorrity: Thank you, madam.

Madam, like Deputy Inder and my friend Andrew, sorry, I am struggling with this amendment. I find that I am not convinced by the financial argument being made by the proposer. The amendment would cut the qualifying period from 20 years to 10 years and the figures presented suggest that this would reduce the eventual saving to the States of Guernsey by a comparatively small amount initially.

But it appears that what we lose on the long-term care swings, we save on the income support roundabout, or is it the other way around. It might be suggested that the chief reason given for reducing the qualifying criteria is to use funds paid on behalf of Islanders into the Long-Term Care Insurance pot over their working life to supplement Income Support costs. A LTC Fund, which I expect will itself come under pressure in the not too distant future, as claimant numbers inevitably rise.

The fundamental question is about the LTC Fund itself and whether it is reasonable to expect somebody to have made a substantial contribution to the Long-Term Care Insurance system before becoming entitled to benefits from that fund. The last Assembly established that a 20-year qualifying period achieved this. In my opinion, that is not an unreasonable expectation for a benefit of this nature and potential cost.

Reducing that period to just 10 years risks creating an entirely different incentive. Who are we looking to benefit from this proposed change? Not, I would suggest, Islanders who have been contributing to the fund since its inception. We should take care that we do not inadvertently make Guernsey an attractive low-cost retirement destination for people who have spent much of their working lives elsewhere but who can establish sufficient residency here as they near their retirement to access publicly-funded long-term care.

I do not agree that the eventual costs will mirror the financial estimates presented in the explanatory note. I am sure that the calculations are necessarily based on assumptions about demographics, future patterns of residency, healthcare costs, and the behaviour of individuals. Things we cannot know with any certainty. The one thing we can be reasonably certain of is that long-term care will rise going forward. Our population is ageing, like many neighbours across Europe, and the demand for care is increasing. So I struggle to understand how reducing the qualifying period from 20 to just 10 years can ever be a cost-saving measure.

It is far more likely that, if approved, the financial consequences of this decision will increase over time, placing further stress on the fund. We are already facing significant pressures on public expenditure and difficult choices about how we fund essential services. This is not the time to be reducing the contribution period that people are expected to make before qualifying for publicly supported long-term care through the fund without very compelling evidence that the fund can sustain it now and into the future.

The 20-year requirement provides a clearer link between contribution and potential cost, protects the sustainability of the LTC Fund and reduces the risk of Guernsey becoming a retirement destination for people who have not fully contributed to the fund that will finance their long-term care.

For those reasons, madam, I believe we should retain the 20-year qualifying period and ask the Assembly to reject this amendment.

Thank you, madam.

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Thank you, madam.

I am going to try to set out where some of the confusion might be arising. It is a complicated thing, I have to say I am a bit rusty on it myself, whereas I was once very well-versed in it, having been a Member of ESS. But there is a central confusion that seems to have arisen in some of the contributions to debate so far, in that it sounds as though people are confusing eligibility for funding from the Long-Term Care Fund with eligibility for a care bed. That is not the case; that is fundamentally not the case.

If people are eligible to live in the Island and they need long-term care, they will get a bed. But as Deputy Oswald has said, they are likely to have to spend a lot longer in hospital before they can get a bed because, in all likelihood, they will only be able to access a States' rate bed, for which there is a longer waiting time for them, basically.

So it is estimated that about three-quarters of everyone that needs long-term care would need financial support. So, if that support is coming from the Long-Term Care Fund, great. But, if it is not, then that funding is going to be provided from general revenue in the form of income support. So we, taxpayers, will be paying directly for their care, it is just that the fund will not be paying. So it has a greater impact on general revenue because they will have access to that care bed, they will spend longer in the PEH waiting for that care bed, and that will be paid for out of general revenue. Then, when they are in that care bed, the taxpayer will be paying rather than the fund.

So that is the core confusion that people have slightly missed the nuance of, and I hope I have been able to clarify that. We must not confuse eligibility for the fund with eligibility for a care bed. So I hope that is the clarity that people need, and that is the reason – I give way to Deputy Inder.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: I do not think the last four speakers are confused; me being one of them. So there is no confusion, because even in the back of the appendix though, it shows you the difference between 20 years versus five years and 10 years versus five years, there is a £500,000 saving coming from the 20 years to the 10 years.

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: There is a greater impact on general revenue under the original legislation compared with the amendment, for the reasons that I have outlined. So it does have a greater impact on general revenue. So there is still an impact, there is still a cost impact, and it is just about where it is funded from.

It is also worth saying that the vast majority of people who are currently in long-term care have not contributed much, if anything, to the Long-Term Care Fund, because of course it was only established in 2003. Now, obviously that will change as time goes on, but I just did want to clarify, for anyone to whom it might not have been obvious, that this is not about eligibility for care beds, it is simply a question of how they are funded, because about 75% of all recipients of long-term care are estimated to need financial support, it has that particular impact.

So I will be supporting this amendment.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Matthews.

Deputy Matthews: Thank you, madam.

Madam, when this amendment was previously presented, or the version of it, I supported the Deputy Brouard and Cameron amendment, and I have not changed my view, madam.

I, of course, fully respect the views of my President, Deputy Oswald, who from a practical point of view is looking at the immediate way that the system operates and presenting that the 10-year

wait might offer the lesser of two evils in terms of how to clear delayed discharges within our current rules.

But the amendment is really based on, and Deputy Cameron expressed that very well in his speech, this should not really be about bed availability. This is a question about funding and whether or not somebody should be eligible to receive funding. There is a little bit of a danger to some extent that, when looking at these things, there is an over-reliance on projections. If you look through the policy, there are an awful lot of graphs of actuarial projections about what will happen based on a set of assumptions over 20 or 30 years and it does not necessarily consider that a policy will have an influence on behaviour.

Now, the amendment here talks about that we would put ourselves at a competitive disadvantage with Jersey, and as Deputy Dorrity said, competitive in what sense? What are we trying to compete on? The reality is that the way that we project ourselves to the outside world in terms of people relocating here, we cannot compete with the bright lights of London and Manchester for young people to relocate here. We are just not in that space. However, we are a very attractive place to move here to retire. If we are trying to compete with Jersey, we might not get what we want to wish for. That is an important factor that we need to consider.

Deputy de Sausmarez did mention this effect that we have where a patient can currently find themselves stuck in acute care and not able to find a States' rate bed. There is currently not a mechanism for us to do that commonsense cost-up upgrade where we would say, on the States' expense, we will pay for an upgrade to save us money from the acute. That is a deficiency in the current system, which we could look to try to resolve.

But the principle is, and it is very simple, that we would make ourselves overly attractive by applying a 10-year rate. So, for that reason, I will not be supporting this amendment. I would like to keep the 20-year period.

Thank you, madam.

The Bailiff: Thank you. That nicely brings us to the end of today's meeting. Thank you very much, everybody. States' Greffier, would you close the meeting?

The Assembly adjourned at 5.27 p.m.