



OFFICIAL REPORT

OF THE

STATES OF DELIBERATION

OF THE

ISLAND OF GUERNSEY

HANSARD

Royal Court House, Guernsey, Wednesday, 25th February 2026

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Law Officers

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People's Deputies

C. P. A Blin	M. S. Laine
Y. Burford	M. P. Leadbeater
T. L. Bury	M. Malik
A. K. Cameron	L. J. McKenna
H. L. Camp	P. S. N. Montague
G. M. Collins	A. J. Niles
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A. Gabriel	T. M. Rylatt
J. A. B. Gollop	A. S. Sloan
S. T. Hansmann Rouxel	G. A. St Pier
M. A. J. Helyar	J. D. Strachan
N. R. Inder	L. C. Van Katwyk
B. R. Kay-Mouat	S. P. J. Vermeulen
A. Kazantseva-Miller	S. Williams

Representatives of the Island of Alderney

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

The Clerk to the States of Deliberation

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

Absent at the Evocation

Deputy L. T. Goy ; Deputy A. D. S. Matthews (*relevé à 9h 34*) ;
Deputy R. M. Humphreys (*absent de l'Île*)

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States of Deliberation

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

[THE BAILIFF *in the Chair*]

PRAYERS

The States' Greffier

EVOCAATION

CONVOCAATION

The States' Greffier: Billet d'État III and IV. 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, 25th February 2026, to consider the items listed in this Billet d'État, which has been submitted for debate, and that Billet d'État IV 2026 has also been so convened.

The Bailiff: Good morning, Members of the States.
Deputy Matthews, you have just arrived. Do you wish to be relevé?

Deputy Matthews: Yes, please, sir.

The Bailiff: We will mark you as present.
The first matter is going to be a Statement by the Vice-President of the Policy & Resources Committee, and therefore I invite Deputy St Pier to deliver a Statement on behalf of the Committee.

STATEMENTS

Rule 10(3) –

Statement by the Vice-President, Policy & Resources Committee

Deputy St Pier: Thank you, sir.

Thank you for giving permission for this Statement to be made, and I hope and allowing a little extra time to allow me to do so.

The purpose of this Statement is twofold: to advise Members of the expected financial outturn for the States for 2025; and to update Members on developments since the Committee's Statement in November on poor project management.

When Deputy Trott stood at a similar time last year to share preliminary financial results for general revenue for 2024, he had unwelcome news to give with an in-year overall deficit of nearly £31 million with significant downward adjustments to tax from banking profits.

I am very fortunate to be able to share better news. Strong receipts in 2025 have reversed that position, and I can report an overall net surplus for the year of £36 million. This is, of course, very welcome news, but I would not be doing my job properly if I do not advise Members of some of the risks with these numbers.

Before I go any further, of course, I should stress that these are only provisional 2025 financial results for general revenue. Provisional because they are subject to further adjustment in finalising the accounts and are as yet unaudited.

To ensure clarity and transparency, I will share with Members a short summary table and brief analysis. I will contain my analysis today to the material numbers and what they mean.

2025 was a good year for our revenue income lines, which are a total of £57 million above the allocated budget. A key component of that is Income Tax from banks with revenue £37 million more than budget. However, of that £37 million, £11 million relates to a voluntary disclosure from one bank, which had calculated an underpayment of tax over the preceding seven years. Consequently, that £11 million also includes a hefty interest surcharge.

A further £12 million relates to tax from 2023, which was assessed and paid in 2025. Therefore, £23 million of the £37 million in additional revenue is exceptional and it cannot be built into our baseline and relied on in future years. It is a windfall, significant for this year, but unlikely to be repeated next year or in future years, and not significantly material in the long-term financial position of the States. Fortunate though this is for 2025, it does highlight the inherent volatility in tax from corporate profits generally, and banking profits in particular, drawn from a very small number of banking taxpayers, given that there are only 21 licensed banks.

Given the reliance on banking profits – even more so with the introduction of Pillar Two – and the volatility in profits, we are working with the major banks and the GFSC to ensure we get more timely information in the future, which will, we hope, seek to avoid large historic adjustments, which has now happened two years in a row – albeit as it happens – in opposite directions. However, it is evident that the banks have themselves found accurate forecasting a challenge in an unusual period where uncertainty has been high and interest rates have shifted very quickly. With interest rates coming down, we need to expect that to be reflected in future lower banking profits.

Employees Tax Instalment (ETI) receipts, which are the best real-time indicator of economic performance, were favourable to budget by about £7 million, which is just under 2.5%. Again, at first blush a very encouraging outturn but we need to be aware that most of this variance arose in Q4, which was a bumper quarter. It is therefore likely to have been driven by a strong round of bonus payments in the financial services sector, which would be consistent with the better than expected result for that sector that year. But, again, cannot be safely assumed as part of the baseline for 2026 and beyond.

As forecast throughout the year, Document Duty receipts were strong, and the final position was receipts of £27 million compared to a budget of £16 million. This has been driven by a 27% increase in the number of local market transactions compared to the previous year, with particularly higher transaction numbers between May and October. Document duty is, of course, inherently and notoriously volatile and difficult to forecast.

Finally, in relation to income, there were strong receipts from tobacco duty at the end of the year. This does not mean our community are smoking more. Deputy Inder aside, perhaps. *(Laughter)* Tobacco imports are subject to duty on arrival. Imports are lumpy and can be influenced by the timing of duty increases. For 2025 Customs duties ended the year £3 million, or nearly 6% ahead of budget. So, in total, revenue income was just short of £716 million in total, which is 9% above budget.

Turning to expenditure. Most Committees spent within the cash limit allocated by the States. As forecast throughout the year, the Committee for Health & Social Care's expenditure exceeded its budget. The final overspend was £3.3 million, or just over 1% above budget, due to a combination of general demand pressures across the service and specific challenges relating to off Island intensive and wraparound care, which again are inherently difficult to plan and predict for.

The next highest overspend was the central Corporate Services function, which exceeded its budget by £2.6 million; £2 million of this was driven by costs in the digital and technology area following the decision to change our IT contract arrangements.

Insurance cost pressures continued in 2025 at just over £1 million more than budget. But the Policy & Resources Committee is now leading a comprehensive review of our insurance arrangements to better manage our cost and risk in this key area.

The Committee for Employment & Social Security was £1.2 million, or 1% lower than budget, due to lower income support costs than had been forecast. The expenditure was, however, broadly in line with 2024 in real terms.

Recruitment remains challenging in some services and professions. Pay costs for the year totalled £351 million, which was in line with the budget. However, this hides the fact that there were over 300 vacancies on average over the year, which equates to 6% of the workforce. Many of these vacancies have had to be covered through overtime or agency staff, particularly health and social care, which cost more than full-time employees.

All Committees had vacancies through the year with Home Affairs and Corporate Services having the most significant recruitment challenges, although both these areas did have reduced vacancies on the 2024 averages.

Finally, the allocated budget reserve was largely spent during the year; although the expenditure in relation GWP initiatives and service developments was significantly below budget. This can be attributed to the change in Government in the year.

Overall, there was a small overspend when all Committees and central reserves are taken together. This amounted to £4 million or 0.6% of the total budget.

The combination of the stronger position on income and the more limited expenditure pressures, resulted in a gross revenue surplus of £73 million, which is £53 million better than budgeted. Of course, several adjustments need to be made to this figure to arrive at the net surplus. These include accounting for the losses of the unincorporated trading entities, project spending, depreciation and interest.

The adjustments of note are as follows. Firstly, the cost of revenue expensed projects was £11 million less than anticipated. However, as this is mainly down to the timing of projects this is less of a good news story and more another manifestation of the States' challenge in managing projects; of which more later.

Secondly, 2025 was another good year in investment markets for the increase in value of the States' investment reserves with returns attributable to general revenue totalling £33.7 million. But, of course, while it feels good and gives a nice warm glow, it is of course only a snapshot of unrealised gains based on market valuations on the last day of the year. The bottom line, as I said earlier, is an overall general revenue net surplus of £36 million.

The welcome additional revenue in 2025 more than compensates for the poor performance in 2024. It is a useful contribution to our depleting reserves but does not, without wider reform, change the trajectory. The 2024 and 2025 experiences highlight that having such a high dependency on whether banks had a good or bad year is neither sensible nor sustainable, especially given that the performance of individual banks will fluctuate from one year to the next, depending on their business models and on global as well as domestic factors. That is not a basis on which to build sustainable and reliable public finances.

This Statement has been given to ensure that the States has the draft results as soon as they are available, as we have committed to keep the States informed on our financial performance throughout the year. The final numbers for 2025 will be published, following audit, on 2nd June this year.

The Committee also undertook to keep Members updated on the matters that I raised during my Statement in November; in particular the progress in respect of the investigation on the original MyGov programme.

The investigation into the original programme is detailed and complex, covering decisions made over many years across multiple roles and governance structures. It will conclude within the next six

130 to eight weeks, and every aspect is being thoroughly examined. Following this, it is intended that a further Statement will be made to the States. The preliminary anticipation is that will be in April.

It is understandable that, when major programmes fail, there are, rightly, calls for accountability. In the November Statement and the questions following it, on behalf of the Committee, I gave assurances that accountability would be ensured. But accountability cannot be a witch hunt and must be based on evidence. This investigation is about establishing the facts and then acting on them.

135 As the Policy & Resources Committee has already assured the community and the States, the findings will be shared and addressed. Failures in governance, judgement, or oversight will be confronted. Where individual responsibility is identified, appropriate action will be taken. Systemic issues will be corrected.

140 Our Committee understands the desire for immediate conclusions – we desire them as much as anyone else – but this has to be done properly. If we do not or if we act in haste, we risk compounding a miserable situation and exposing the public purse to further costs.

145 However, I can reassure that changes are already underway now to support stronger controls. Sir, while many of the following comments pertain to the Chief Executive and his leadership and management of the Civil Service rather than the mandate of the Committee per se, they remain, I believe, pertinent to this Statement given it is P&R that sets the Chief Executive's objectives and the President who line manages him. I should also make clear that the Committee endorse and approve the Chief Executive's actions and decisions.

150 The Chief Executive and his team are reviewing – and where needed revising – how Senior Responsible Officers are appointed to major programmes. Too often, regardless of the scale or complexity of a project, those duties have been combined with demanding operational roles, a model that is simply not sustainable or effective for high risk, high-value projects.

155 Major programmes require focused leadership, with Senior Responsible Officers who have the time, the authority, the capability and capacity to ensure effective delivery.

The Policy & Resources Committee has also proposed, and agreed with the Chief Executive, to strengthen the Portfolio Oversight Board with appropriate external expertise. Experience in information technology shows how specialist advice and challenge improves oversight, and also improves assurance and decision-making. Major capital and transformation programmes similarly require deeper expertise.

160 The Island has considerable local talent with this experience that wants to volunteer to help their community. This is now an opportunity to draw on it for the benefit of the whole programme portfolio. The process of recruiting that talent is beginning and this should also be taken as an open invitation for those with appropriate experience to get in touch or, indeed, for Members to suggest candidates.

165 This is about reinforcing internal capability and upskilling it with the benefit of others' experience. Our responsibility is to ensure the right capability, experience and challenge are in the right place so major programmes are delivered effectively.

170 One of the Chief Executive's clearest findings from his extensive work to date is evidence of a structural misalignment between the Civil Service leadership and political objectives, most visibly in how accountability operates through Principal Committees. The lines between political mandate and executive delivery are not as clear as they must be.

175 Principal Committees hold the democratic mandate: they set policy, determine priorities and are publicly accountable for any outcomes. Yet senior leadership structures do not always mirror this. Some senior officers work across multiple Committees' remits or are aligned in ways that do not reflect where the political accountability sits.

The Chief Executive notes three risks from this misalignment: Committees may feel they lack a single senior officer clearly accountable for their priorities; officers may face competing demands across different mandates; and staff may be uncertain about where ultimate accountability lies.

180 He has therefore concluded that the simplest and most effective change is to return to a model where there is much stronger officer alignment to the Principal Committees. This is not about

recreating the past, but restoring a straightforward principle: one Principal Committee, one Accountable Officer.

185 This realignment will not be a disruptive restructure. It will be introduced gradually so that roles can be adjusted carefully, delivery remains stable, and the organisation avoids unnecessary upheaval. The intention is steady alignment, not instability.

Separately, a further lesson from reviewing major transformation programmes is that when initiatives drift, we must intervene much earlier and more decisively.

190 Too often, the instinct has been to persist, believing that more time, funding or adjustment will resolve issues. But experience shows that drift rarely corrects itself.

The original MyGov programme began with strong ambition, but as complexity grew, optimism replaced evidence. Perseverance was assumed to be a strategy, rather than pausing to reassess and, if necessary, reset. There is a difference between resilience and a reluctance to confront reality. In that spirit, the Chief Executive has, with P&R's agreement, temporarily paused the digitisation programme that succeeded MyGov, including the launch of the new gov.gg website. This is not due to a repeat of earlier failures; the current programme has delivered more substantive progress than its predecessors. The pause is not a judgement on effort, nor is it a sign of failure.

200 However, activity is not the same as clarity of outcomes. Before continuing, we must be able to define precisely the benefits the programme will deliver, how they will be measured, and the full financial commitment required.

The test is straightforward: will it improve access to services, reduce failure demand, enhance the public's experience, lower costs over time, and build public trust? At present, the link between investment and measurable community benefit is not clear enough. Over the coming months, we will take stock, confirm intended outcomes, assess costs, and set a proper sequencing plan. Only with a robust case – clear in both value and affordability – will we move forward again. I should emphasize, we will not hesitate to take similar action, if required.

210 I want to turn now to the Revenue Service. A detailed assessment has been completed by the Director of Revenue Service Operations, appointed in November 2025. It has been shared with the Chief Executive and his leadership team and will come to the Policy & Resources Committee next week. I understand that the analysis is candid, and the position is stark.

The decade-long Revenue Service Transformation Programme was formally closed in May last year after £24 million of investment. While new core systems were delivered, some functionality is still incomplete, several integrations remain unresolved, and essential processes continue to rely on manual workarounds. The scale of the current challenge is evident in the backlog.

215 However, the Chief Executive and his team are confident that the new Director is setting out a credible, pragmatic route back to stability: fixing fundamentals, restoring timely processing, and rebuilding confidence with taxpayers and professional advisers. Of course this will take time, but with clarity, consistency and support, it is achievable.

220 Finally, it is acknowledged that there is a time and place for specialist contractors and consultants; their experience can be valuable for technical challenges or independent insight. Even, of course, an organisation the size of the States cannot permanently employ specialists for the infrequent times their expertise may be needed. However, through the 2026 Budget and his personal objectives, the Chief Executive was tasked with reviewing and reducing spending by £4 million this year. This is not just a financial exercise, but one of discipline and accountability. He remains confident of achieving this target, principally focusing on consultancy spend.

225 All new requests for consultancy or contractor support are now reviewed by the senior leadership team and will require the Chief Executive's approval. There will be no automatic renewals or passive extensions.

230 Much greater transparency is also being recommended by the Chief Executive. It is his intention to publish details of all consultancy engagements later this year, detailing where consultants are used, why they are engaged, what they deliver, their cost and the value that they add.

High levels of consultancy use have not only financial implications but cultural and capability impacts too. When an external resource becomes the default to complex problems, opportunities

235 of course for our own staff to develop lead major work and build institutional knowledge are eroded or lost. Capability cannot grow if it is being continually outsourced.

We, as we know, have talented public servants. A resilient Civil Service requires investing in their technical skills, leadership ability and confidence to take on complex delivery. That means creating space for teams to lead, strengthening development and succession planning, and being deliberate and purposeful when external support is genuinely needed. Consultants should transfer knowledge and not retain it.

240 Sir, thank you for your patience, and to reiterate my closing comments from November, the Chief Executive is committed to this reform and the Policy & Resources Committee is committed to the openness and transparency needed to rebuild trust. The Committee will keep the States of Deliberation informed through its General Statements and, as necessary, with your consent,
245 additional Statements such as this one. In the meantime, of course, I will attempt to answer any questions Members may have.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Thank you.

250 Members of the States, it is now an opportunity to ask questions of the Vice-President within the context of the Statement. Not generally, but just within the context of the Statement.

Deputy Van Katwyk.

Deputy Van Katwyk: Thank you, sir; and thank you to Policy & Resources for the update.

255 I am just wondering if they can give any indication of the £350 million paid costs, the 300 vacancies, 6% of the workforce, is there any expectation over the next year or two that artificial intelligence can help take those vacancies down? Or are we just expecting artificial intelligence to add value within the workforce that we already have?

Thank you.

260

The Bailiff: Deputy St Pier.

Deputy St Pier: It is a very good question, and one that I am probably not best placed or in a position to give the most coherent answer on my feet right now.

265 What I would say is, of course, many of the vacancies do exist within the health and social care area, which may be one which is, if you like, more hands-on and therefore an area which is less capable of benefiting, at least in the short term, from the developments in AI.

But, clearly, the pace of the progression of AI and its impact on all organisations, including our own, has to be a key priority for every Member of this Assembly.

270

The Bailiff: Deputy Vermeulen.

Deputy Vermeulen: Thank you, sir.

275 I thank the Vice-President for his update of the who, what, when, why and where, but just on the revenue service, can he just give a bit of greater detail of when it is going to be anticipated to be fixed and back up to speed?

The Bailiff: Deputy St Pier.

280 **Deputy St Pier:** I cannot give any specific timeline or timeframe. I think ultimately the question of when is of personal interest to every taxpayer because they want to know when they are going to receive their next assessment or their refund, and of course, by definition, that will vary from taxpayer to taxpayer. Clearly, as I indicated, the assessment has been undertaken by the Director of Revenue Service Operations. That is due to the come to the Policy & Resources Committee next
285 week, so I would hope that the Committee would be in a better position to provide an update

following that. I am happy to give an undertaking that we will give some kind of written briefing perhaps to Members once we are in a better position to do so.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

290

Deputy Inder: It does not look like Deputy St Pier is enjoying this, and neither am I, but how can the taxpayer in reality really trust that with the same people in place who are likely responsible for the £42 million losses on the MyGov that the message of stronger controls are in any way credible?

295

The Bailiff: Deputy St Pier.

300

Deputy St Pier: Again, I think all I can do at this point is reiterate and repeat some of the key messages from my Statement, which is in terms of individual accountability the Chief Executive and the Committee are determined that where appropriate that is ensured. However, it must be undertaken in the right order, in the right way, with the right evidence, if the States is not to be exposed to potential further cost.

305

In terms of the confidence question, again repeating comments in the Statement, changes are already being made around the governance and, in particular, has indicated the intention to build and strengthen the external input into the Political Oversight Board. It is not just a question of continuing to do what has always been done with the same people, and hopefully that gives Deputy Inder some reassurance. He and others will simply have to bear with us.

310

The Bailiff: Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: Thank you, sir.

315

My question follows on nicely. Would the Vice-President agree with me that while accountability is exceptionally important, so is striking the balance between not creating a blame culture, because a blame culture arguably exacerbates people being afraid to speak up when they see things going wrong or they make a mistake.

The Bailiff: Deputy St Pier.

320

Deputy St Pier: Yes, I would absolutely endorse that. I think there is that balance to be struck.

325

There is a second balance to be struck, which is the devotion of resources to looking back and establishing what went wrong, and looking forward to prevent and alter the direction of travel. This is a conversation which the Committee had indeed only with Deputy Laine at our Committee meeting yesterday in the context of IT. When things go wrong there is a huge temptation – and quite rightly – to ascertain what went wrong, but we cannot do that at the expense of making sure that we have got the right building blocks in place for the future. That is a second balance that needs to be taken into account.

But reverting to the question from Deputy Bury, I would absolutely agree that we need to ensure that people do feel confident in speaking out.

330

The Bailiff: Deputy Niles.

335

Deputy Niles: Sir, without wishing to hinder the progression of the conversation in relation to accountability, may I go back and ask a question in relation to the fiscal update, especially in relation to the £11 million that was paid as a voluntary tax contribution from one bank who had underpaid for seven years? Can you explain with a little bit more granularity how it becomes a voluntary payment when there has been a defined underpayment? Is there a penalty attached?

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy St Pier.

340

Deputy St Pier: Thank you, sir; and thank you to Deputy Niles for the question.

I apologise because I must have failed to provide sufficient clarity in the Statement. It is not a voluntary payment, it is a voluntary disclosure for an underpayment. In other words, the taxpayer has themselves identified that there has been a problem in their past returns, they have submitted and made that aware, and, as I indicated, there is a significant interest cost as a result. I am not in a position to advise because I simply do not have the information on whether there was a penalty. But given it was a voluntary disclosure, I personally, from my own experience, would not expect there to be a penalty, but the interest charge would of course be appropriate.

350

The Bailiff: Deputy Cameron.

Deputy Cameron: Thank you, sir; and I thank Deputy St Pier for his update.

Given that shortcomings in expertise and delivery have clearly been an issue in the past, and noting the reference to external IT experts volunteering to assist, are States' IT employees now formally assessed to ensure they have the appropriate technical expertise and programme management experience required to manage major digital projects?

355

The Bailiff: Deputy St Pier.

360

Deputy St Pier: Yes, I am not sure I am in a position – I think I probably need to defer that question and revert with a better informed answer in writing within the given time. Clearly the IT team following the change last year has changed its shape substantially. A significant number of new people have come in. How all of that is shaking down and is being performance managed in the way that underpins Deputy Cameron's question; I am not in a position to advise today. I think it is probably best that I revert. Obviously we will capture the question and deal with it accordingly.

365

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Deputy St Pier has given a very good analysis about how the fluctuation in the banking profits especially provides for a significant fluctuation in terms of the public finances and income. Exactly the same happens with the volatility of the GDP figures because they are highly dependent on the volatility of the corporate banking sector. In 2023 the -2% figure was very much driven by the performance of just one or two entities.

370

Would the Vice-President agree that perhaps the way we report GDP figures should strip out the banking operating profits figure so that we can actually see perhaps their health and how the real economy or the rest of the economy is doing?

375

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy St Pier.

380

Deputy St Pier: It is a very interesting observation from Deputy Kazantseva-Miller, and I cannot disagree on the impact of the volatility of the banks on the GDP numbers. I would also add that, of course, corporate profits generally are more volatile than other sources of income but it is more exacerbated in the context of a small number of banking operators.

385

In relation to whether it would be better to present additional information by stripping out the banking numbers from GDP, again I am not in a position today to either agree or disagree with that question because I simply do not understand the implications of doing so, or indeed how feasible and easy it is to do so. I would imagine that Deputy Sloan and others may be in a position to advise

390 on this better than me that it may be feasible. So again I think it is something perhaps to take away.
I am grateful to Deputy Kazantseva-Miller for the suggestion.

The Bailiff: Deputy Sloan.

395 **Deputy Sloan:** Thank you; and may I thank the Vice-President at Resources for his Statement
this month.

He has spoilt us for choice for question areas this month. I rather feel that I am glad I brought
my present for him this morning, which I shall pass along in a moment.

400 But choose one question I must. It was refreshing to hear him admit that the previous set up
Government changes were quite significantly flawed. Can he reassure us that the changes proposed
will not lead to an increased headcount in Civil Service numbers or an increased wage bill through
grade inflation of new posts?

The Bailiff: Deputy St Pier.

405 **Deputy St Pier:** Again Deputy Sloan raises a very valid question, that further reorganisation does
not simply push up the cost and size of the organisation. I think the Committee will take
considerable reassurance from the Chief Executive's approach and his motivations. In particular – as
indicated in the Statement – the intention is that this is done in a measured way where suitable
opportunities will be taken rather than in a big bang, which of course was the last reorganisation
410 undertaken by the Chief Executive's predecessor, but one was a bigger change which caused more
disruption.

I think the more measured approach will hopefully seek to deliver better control in the way that
Deputy Sloan's question implies.

415 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Helyar.

Deputy Helyar: Thank you, sir.

420 I thank the Vice-President for his update. Unfortunately it is depressingly familiar. Five years ago
I started to try and correct the drift in revenue services and to 'lean into it' using his own expression.
One of the things a business does in the real world when it is struggling is to accelerate its cashflow.
You shorten your credit terms and you ask people to pay you faster. One of the difficulties I think
we are all finding in the GST debate is that the public are saying, 'You are just not collecting the tax
you are due at the moment so why on earth would we pay you any more?'

425 I think it would be very helpful to Members present if we knew how much tax has not been
collected before we get to the next part of the debate over the next few days, and I wonder if the
Vice-President could obtain that figure.

The Bailiff: Deputy St Pier.

430 **Deputy St Pier:** I note the question and will endeavour to ascertain the information.

The Bailiff: Deputy Ozanne.

Deputy Ozanne: Thank you, sir.

435 In a similar vein, I am very pleased to hear about a surplus, over £50 million, albeit £11 million
of that is down to one bank. The question in my mind is how many other adverse institutions may
not have paid, or indeed individuals, as Deputy Helyar has just set out. I wonder, how confident are
we in our financial projections, given that there is such market volatility, given that there are such
individuals who can sway our balance sheet almost overnight, and how when we are facing a surplus
440 of over £50 million we are being told that we are in deficit?

The Bailiff: Deputy St Pier.

445 **Deputy St Pier:** I think we have to come back to the starting point that of course a significant part of our revenue sources are, first of all, quite diverse, and very easily ascertainable. Document duty is driven by transactions. We talked about import duties, tobacco duty and so on. Of course over 70% of our revenue base comes from personal income, largely driven through ETI and social security, which is a system that of course is well-established with quarterly payments, deductions largely by employers.

450 So I think the core of our revenue base is very solid, and we have a high degree of confidence around the numbers there. But, as I indicated in the statement in response to questions already, there is a very real challenge when we have a significant – relative to our total revenue – reliance on a small number of taxpayers, in this case the banks, whose profits are inherently volatile. When combined with miscalculation last year and again this year, that is, if you like, the perfect storm. But
455 I think that we should not treat 21 taxpayers as being a proxy for the other 32,000.

The Bailiff: This is going to be the last question, and it is Deputy Collins.

Deputy Collins: Thank you, sir.

460 To end on a good note, would the Vice-President agree with me higher Document Duty receipts is a good sign that we are starting to turn the corner on the housing crisis?

The Bailiff: Deputy St Pier.

465 **Deputy St Pier:** Yes, I would love to be able to agree with Deputy Collins unreservedly. I think the only questioner I have been able to do that with so far is with Deputy Bury.

Of course, as ever with things in the housing market it is always a little bit complex. Clearly increased activity generally speaking would be seen as showing improved health in the market. However, of course, if it is on the other hand driven by excess demand, which simply pushes up house prices, then that is less healthy.
470

As it happens, I think that has probably not been the case in 2025 but I would not wish to be complacent. I think the reality is the transactions and the Document Duty rising from it is one indicator in a proxy for the health of the market, but the reality is – as I think every Member of this Assembly knows – that until we actually get an increased supply out of the ground that our housing market remains extremely fragile across all the different types of housing that are required.
475

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

The Bailiff: I just want to make it clear that I am not going to extend any of the periods of questioning that is available because of the amount of business that you potentially have this meeting. We will turn next to the Statement from the President of the Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture, and I invite Deputy Montague to deliver that please.
480

Deputy Montague: Sir, it is my privilege to provide this update, my second since becoming President of the Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture.

485 Sir, today the Committee publishes the fourth Education Strategy Annual Report, bridging the work of our predecessors and this new Committee. It highlights progress across all phases of education and support services in 2025 and transparently reports key data, including inspection outcomes for all 20 settings, academic results and pupil attendance.

Progress has been made in safeguarding, inclusion, curriculum development, infrastructure and leadership, thus reflecting our commitment to high-quality, equitable education. Progress against Strategy commitments has been agreed with senior leaders and reviewed by headteachers, principals and the Education Strategy Network. As we refine the Strategy we will strengthen how progress is measured. The report also sets clear improvement priorities for 2026.

Sir, improving school attendance remains a key priority embedded across all settings. Our expectation is clear: every learner should achieve at least 95% attendance. High attendance is essential to attainment from early primary through to years 11 and 13. Raising attendance requires a whole-system approach involving schools, families and wider services, as barriers are often complex. Persistent absence triggers targeted support, but regular attendance is everyone's responsibility.

Primary and special schools have made strong progress towards the 95% target and broadly align with national comparisons. Evidence-based strategies are being deployed in secondary schools, supported by cross-Committee collaboration. Progress is closely monitored system-wide by Education governance boards at setting level.

As we move on to Education governance, following consultation with the Chairs of those boards and with the P&R Committee, regulations relating to specific functions delegated to governance boards have recently been made. We have also consulted with the States of Alderney about extending the new governance arrangements to St Anne's School, and legislation to support this change is at the final drafting stage. The first Education Governance Handbooks for schools, the Sixth Form Centre and The Guernsey Institute have been produced.

Sir, the impact of smartphone use on children and young people continues to raise international, national and local concern. A survey of secondary and special school teachers last October confirmed there is no educational need for smartphones in school, and our current policies reflect this. We want our schools to be smartphone-free environments, but any further changes must be carefully considered and evidence-based.

Next month an independent survey led by the University of the West of England will gather views from students, parents and staff across Guernsey and Alderney, including the Grant Aided Colleges, informing future policy alongside Public Health guidance and World Health Organisation evidence on early brain development.

Sir, although the Committee's spend against its 2025 budget is still being finalised, we fully expect to be within budget. We are already anticipating the 2027 budget process, and we are part-way through a series of meetings with our various grant recipients to ensure we are aware of their needs and aspirations and can take these into account, recognising the excellent work that is delivered on our behalf via commissioned services, and strategic partnerships.

Sir, the people working in these organisations deserve all our gratitude and I would like to place on record our sincere thanks to them all at: St James, the Priaux and Guille Allès Libraries and the various Commissions, the Language, Arts, Sports, Youth and Health Improvement Commissions for their dedication and hard work to support many elements of our mandate.

Through you, sir, I wish to signal an early consideration for the 2027 budget. As in the UK, we are seeing a marked rise in children with complex needs, particularly in communication, interaction and neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism, often alongside social, emotional and mental health challenges. Demand for specialist placements and intensive, bespoke support is increasing, and we must not let these learners down.

Since the 2021 SEND Review, that is Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, strong progress has been made. The Additional Learning Needs Code of Practice has strengthened identification and support through closer collaboration across Education, Health & Social Care. Schools are embedding inclusive practice, supported by Additional Learning Need Co-ordinators and targeted roles, alongside multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

However, rising complexity brings financial pressure. We must balance sustained investment and early intervention with responsible, efficient use of public funds to ensure support remains effective and sustainable.

540 Moving now to the G8, which represents Guernsey's business and third sector community, it has
formally backed The Guernsey Institute's new Adult Skills Strategy, underlining its importance. The
Strategy sets a clear framework to strengthen workforce capability, improve inclusion and prepare
islanders for future jobs. G8's 'Voice of Guernsey' Business Survey identified ongoing skills gaps,
545 highlighting that a skilled, adaptable and resilient workforce is critical to long-term economic
success. The Adult Skills Strategy responds directly by placing lifelong learning at the centre of
Guernsey's social and economic future.

G8 has also established a new Adult Skills Board to provide strategic oversight, working with
Government, employers and training providers to align provision with industry needs and ensure
investment delivers real impact.

550 The Committee will host its first ResearchED Conference on 2nd May, joining a global network
dedicated to bridging educational research and classroom practice. The event will bring together
researchers, teachers and other professionals working with young people to share evidence-
informed approaches, challenge misconceptions and strengthen research literacy.

555 The day features keynote speeches and more than 30 practical workshops led by leading UK
specialists and educators from Guernsey and Jersey. Topics include maths, English, leadership,
digital and AI, pastoral care, and high-quality inclusive practice; and, sir, Members are warmly invited
to attend as guests of the Committee.

Independent inspection of our education settings is vital in holding us to account and ensuring
560 transparency for our community. The first cycle of no-notice Ofsted inspections has concluded,
providing crucial external validation of our education system's strengths and, importantly, areas for
development. Findings show the system is in robust health. In almost all areas, a higher proportion
of our primary and secondary schools are judged 'good' or better compared with England. All
settings were graded good or better for leadership, behaviour and early years provision. Personal
development is a particular strength, with many primary schools achieving the top grade of
565 'excellent' and secondary schools were in line with England.

Two schools were graded as 'requiring improvement' in specific aspects of teaching, and
targeted support is underway. The second four-year inspection cycle has begun and it will include
the Sixth Form Centre as a standalone institution for the first time.

570 The Joyous Childhood events that we have demonstrate our integrated Early Years approach
across education, health, social care and family support. Getting the early years right is crucial, as
early development shapes lifelong outcomes. The September conference brought together over
150 practitioners, strengthening professional inclusive practice and improving quality, as reflected
in inspections and parent feedback. A more recent family event in January welcomed more than
600 children and parents, and work continues to provide clear, accessible guidance through a single
575 online hub.

The Initial Teacher Training programme means we are growing teaching talent locally to replace
those retiring after many years of dedicated service. In primary we are continuing to see a reduction
in pupil registrations for the reception year, and manage this by reducing the number of reception
classes to ensure an effective and efficient use of resources. We are strengthening the connection
580 between pre-schools and primary schools to ensure our reception staff know and can support the
children starting school each September.

Thanks to funds redirected from Family Allowance some years ago, all States' primary pupils,
including those in Alderney, benefit from a comprehensive cultural enrichment programme, recently
enhanced to maximise local resources and value for money.

585 Alongside established activities such as Water Confidence, the Art for Guernsey Renoir project,
La Société Nature education and the Maths Roadshow, new additions include The Music of Nature
workshops, visits to the Dairy and local farms, the Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition at
Candie Museum – which I went to the other day and is excellent – mock jury experiences at the
Royal Court, and author visits with story sacks for every class.

590 Sir, the move from primary to secondary school can be challenging for some children. Following
feedback in 2025, we now have bespoke Enhanced Visits for more vulnerable children and a more

consistent Universal Visit Programme, to ensure all children are well prepared for the move and can settle quickly into secondary school.

595 Following staff reorganisation within the Secondary School Partnership, the integration of staff from the Guernsey Training Agency, the Institute of Health & Social Care Studies and the College of Further Education into The Guernsey Institute is progressing well. Initial consultation on the new staffing structure is complete, and digital integration is underway to support an efficient operating model.

600 Construction of phase 1 at Les Ozouets Campus is advancing, with the main building's steel frame in place and the apprentices' block underway. Despite recent poor weather, our contractor, Rok Limited, advises that timelines remain on track for a summer 2027 opening, and the project forecasts delivery within budget.

605 Sir, Members will recall that phase 1 at Les Ozouets included foundations for the Sixth Form Centre. The Committee has informed Policy & Resources of its intention to remove this element from Phase 1.

The reasons fall under three headings: risk, timing and construction methodology. First, having one contractor install foundations that may later be built on by another introduces unnecessary risk. Second, phase 2 timelines would leave foundations exposed to the elements for longer than is advisable, creating further risk. Third, the originally envisaged foundation methodology has since
610 been revised. Together, these factors make delaying installation the prudent course of action.

The Beau Sejour celebrates its 50th anniversary this December. It generated an estimated minimum social value of £1.4 million in 2025. A sustainability review is underway, with conclusions expected by quarter 2 2026. Extensive consultation confirms the Centre's clear purpose: to be a trusted, welcoming and inclusive hub at the heart of Island life, supporting wellbeing, connection
615 and community across generations. This means providing safe, affordable and accessible spaces, enabling people to be active, stay connected and look after their health as part of everyday life.

Delivering this vision requires a joined-up, cross-Government approach focused on integrated, customer-centred services. However, ageing facilities mean rising maintenance costs, and continuing as we are is not sustainable. The Committee is therefore exploring all options to secure
620 a financially sustainable solution for the future.

2027 marks the 1,000th anniversary of William the Conqueror's birth and the launch of Millennium: the European Year of the Normans, celebrating Norman influence across Europe. For Guernsey, this is a valuable opportunity to celebrate our heritage and our deep Norman roots.

625 The Normans shaped the political, legal and cultural landscape of medieval Europe, and their legacy remains central to our Island identity. This anniversary is not only about reflection, but about strengthening modern links with Normandy and other regions in France, while realising cultural and tourism benefits.

Guernsey is planning a wide-ranging programme, with 39 local projects already submitted for European recognition.

630 9th May 2026 marks the 81st anniversary of Guernsey's liberation. While milestone years feature expanded programmes, 'every year is special' and this year will centre on St Peter Port. The budget is already largely committed to essential logistics, and sponsorship is being sought. Planned activities include a seafront road race, parade, church service and cavalcade display; family events at Crown Pier; food, music and stalls at Albert Pier; a free event at Castle Cornet; fireworks; and an island-wide cavalcade. Community hampers will also be provided, ensuring an inclusive and
635 respectful commemoration.

640 Sir, the Committee is determined to ensure we give sufficient time and energy to all areas of our Mandate, and we have committed to produce a culture, leisure and heritage strategy to provide a clear and shared vision for how we celebrate, protect and sustainably develop our unique cultural and historic assets. We are in the process of reinvigorating our relationships with the many commissions and organisations who we support through grant funding, to ensure we operate cohesively to a set of common aims and objectives.

645 Finally, sir, along with some of my Committee colleagues, I was privileged to visit St Martin's Primary School for the local launch of the National Year of Reading. We are indeed, through our schools, encouraging young people to keep on reading for pleasure, but may I finish by taking this opportunity to encourage us all to reignite our love of reading a good book.

Thank you.

650 **The Bailiff:** There is now an opportunity to ask questions within the mandate of the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture.

Deputy Van Katwyk.

Deputy Van Katwyk: Thank you, sir.

655 Thank you to Deputy Montague and to all of Education, Sport & Culture for their hard work on what sounds like lots of great initiatives.

I am just wondering if there are any plans to introduce some initiatives for parents of SEND children, that is Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, to help the parents outside of school hours. I am thinking small group trips to museums, small sports teams, that sort of thing. I have some experience in this, and with my work in Economic Development I would be happy to offer my help if it is needed.

660 Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

665 **Deputy Montague:** Sir, can I thank Deputy Van Katwyk for his offer of help.

There is an awful lot of stuff already going on, but of course we can do more. First, I would like to just make a specific mention of early years from 0 to 4, before young people enter the education system. There is clearly some work to be done there, working across Health & Social Care, Education, and ESS to ensure that no youngster falls behind at that crucial early stage.

670 But going beyond that, I would like to draw your attention to the amazing work that the Sports Commission are doing with some very vulnerable young people. Just this week I have met with the Commission and heard of some amazing work that they do. We are very grateful for the work they do and the support they receive from members of the public in terms of financial support.

675 **The Bailiff:** Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Thank you, sir.

680 I would like to thank the President of the Committee for a very comprehensive update and join him in thanking the people who are educating our children. I do put my personal apologies to anyone who is teaching any of mine who might be a handful.

685 But on that subject, I think there was a lot to welcome in his update. He made it clear that the Ofsted inspections are of great value. I just wondered, in the UK it is not just the schools but also the local authorities who are inspected and I wondered if that was something that the Committee has considered might be beneficial in the Guernsey context as well, the Education office side of things.

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: May I thank Deputy de Sausmarez for that intriguing question.

690 Many years ago, as a rather annoying union rep, I campaigned vigorously for the Education Department to be inspected. Back then it was not Ofsted, it was a validated self-inspection. I campaigned vigorously for that so I suppose really I should take up – we have discussed this as a Committee and we have reflected on how best to approach that, and we will take that forward and look into it.

695 Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Camp.

Deputy Camp: Thank you.

700 Culture gets rather a footnote in every ESC update. In particular, community arts, which are taking a battering of high costs and a cost-of-living crisis really reducing support for them across our community. Having seen initiatives between St James and Brittany Ferries, which make it cheaper for external acts to book theatres, what is ESC doing to support its many wonderful homegrown groups?

705

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: Can I thank Deputy Camp for that excellent question?

710 With an Update Statement it is always tricky about what you include and what you do not include, and sometimes it is worth talking to colleagues and saying, 'Please would you ask a question on this?' I did not ask Deputy Camp to ask a question, but I am so glad she did. I actually wanted to mention the great work that Brittany Ferries are doing.

715 Referring to Education, Sport & Culture's work with its providers, we have been meeting with the Arts Commission, with St James, and with a range of cultural providers to see what support we can offer. I think it is crucial that as an Island we do not forget that the arts and culture is not a nice to have. It is absolutely essential to the health and wellbeing of many people. Deputy Camp and I were speaking the other day about the values of singing in a choir, and for some people that occasion to go out and rehearse with their choir once a week and perform a couple of times a year is so important for people's mental and physical health.

720 We will take a commitment to do as much as we can to ensure that spaces are made available at good value for all those community activities.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

725 **Deputy Gollop:** I thank Deputy Montague. He referred to Liberation Day and what a great event venue Castle Cornet can be. I do not think I am eligible for one of the hampers, but never mind.

730 My question though is it has been raised to me again that the nautical museum, the maritime museum, which is one of the highlights of our offering for a Discovery Pass holder, it was often used not just for locals but VIP events, the museum still needs replenishment. Is it making the cut for priorities and minor capital funding, because it fell off the back of the last States, I think?

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: Sir, can I truly thank Deputy Gollop for an amazing question?

735 When I first took over this role we did investigate that maritime museum issue as a Committee. We are aware that plans were made but funding had not come forward. It is a work that has been sidelined for the moment; it is not in the pipeline. But when we think about our identity – and just a couple of things; recently we had some people over from Costa Rica who were making the link to Captain Le Lacheur. For me when I first read the stories of the Anson voyage, the most amazing real world situation of derring-do on the high seas, interception a Spanish gold galleon, setting out from Acapulco across to the Philippines. Absolutely amazing story. We really do need to celebrate these and we do need to find a space for that.

740 The thing about museums though is the modern technology, people have quite high expectations of what good museums look like, and any of us who have had the benefit to travel to places and seeing what really good contemporary museums look like know that you need to keep

pace with technology. We have got so many good stories to tell, we will do our very best as a Committee to try to find the funding to get that maritime museum back on track.

The Bailiff: Alderney Representative Snowdon.

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Alderney Representative Snowdon: Thank you to Education for the very informative update. It was very useful.

755

Could I just ask, I believe St Anne's School is going through a recruitment process for a headmaster. When will there be an announcement about the successful headteacher being appointed?

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

760

Deputy Montague: There is very little I can say about this. We are still in the process. We are hoping to run some interviews in the next month or so.

765

Recruitment to education is difficult. We are drawing from a relatively small pool of people, and we love our Islands. We go to Alderney and think, 'Who would not want to live here?' But sadly there are some people in the world who do not want to live there and so we do need to get our recruitment right, we need to work very hard. Can I please, through you, sir, confirm to the Representative from Alderney, the Education, Sport & Culture Committee are taking that recruitment process very seriously indeed?

The Bailiff: Deputy Rochester.

770

Deputy Rochester: Thank you, sir.

775

Deputy Montague mentioned the importance of SEND, skills for the future, and the need to support students with emotional and mental support. I know we have all seen a number of headlines from the UK as a result of the SEND review the Government has performed, which has really highlighted for us the phenomenal financial burden for meeting the needs of those students in a scenario where SEND is a bolt-on to mainstream education.

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As a parent of two children that are diagnosed with ADHD I know that the high-quality educational support that they will receive is beneficial not only to them but to all students. Those interventions make education more accessible, more enjoyable, and more fulfilling. So I struggle with the idea that our mainstream students would not benefit from that same support.

To conclude, I would ask Deputy Montague – recognising a huge burden of work that the Committee and staff are carrying – whether it is time to radically rethink the education system and provide an education system that is better –

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The Bailiff: The time for asking a question is up so that was the question.

Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: Sir, can I thank Deputy Rochester for that once again incredibly intriguing question.

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In answer, I do not think it is time for us to do that because I think we are already doing that. When we have looked at what the Labour Government in the United Kingdom in England is attempting to roll out in terms of its new policy, it has actually been pre-empted by what we are already doing on the Island with a high-quality inclusive practice. This was a new training programme to enable all our teachers to have a universal provision in every classroom that is accessible to everyone, no matter what their need.

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I think the Education Department attempted to roll this programme out too quickly and we have had to slow it down, but the feedback we are getting from people in the classrooms is that this

programme is working. We have to be aware of the rising numbers of youngsters who have those needs, but we also need to be really cautious about labelling and diagnosis. In Education we start with the student first and we look at what do they need, and we are trying to enable our incredibly hardworking teachers and support staff to treat every individual as an individual, to know that young person and to teach them in a way that fits where they are coming from and their capabilities.

So in answer to the question, I do not think we need a radical rethink. I think Guernsey is ahead of the game in this, as we are in one or two areas fortunately across Education.

805 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: Thank you, sir.

810 Again my question follows on quite nicely. I was very pleased to hear the President say in relation to students that have complex needs, additional learning needs, SEND, social, emotional and mental health (SEMH). We cannot let them down. However, tying that with something else that was mentioned in terms of 95% attendance, can I take reassurance that that is being looked at holistically, and that for some students what they need is not to attend 95% of the time in order to manage whatever physical or mental challenges they may be facing.

815 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: Sir, thank you very much to Deputy Bury for yet another intriguing and supremely important question.

820 Staff working in education absolutely put the child at the centre of every interaction that they have, and what is so important is to know those young people. There are young people for whom putting that pressure on to attendance, constantly focusing on that metric is problematic. There are other young people who need to be reminded, and parents who do need to be reminded and supported in that.

825 Teaching is an incredibly hard job. Our support staff do an amazing job in trying to deal with those families and those young people, and I would like to reassure you that the education system as a whole, what we hear time and again, is our professionals put the student at the centre and try to deal with them as an individual and look at exactly what they need.

830 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Rylatt.

Deputy Rylatt: Thank you, sir.

835 Several years ago, like many other students, I was fortunate enough to benefit from a States' grant towards my university tuition. At that time the scheme did not include a requirement or an incentive for recipients to return to the Island, having completed their studies. Obviously, given the ongoing need to attract young people back to the Island, has the Committee had the chance to consider how the grant scheme might be used more effectively to support that objective while still enabling students to acquire skills and experience elsewhere?

840 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: Sir, can I thank Deputy Rylatt for that question? Very close to my own heart. My daughter is about to go off to university in September.

845 We have not started that process yet. We have begun the initial investigation, but that is definitely something we need to look at. There are people of a certain age for whom it was much easier to go to university than the youngsters who are currently going through the system. We need to think about our investment as an Island in our young people and see them not as a commodity but as an individual about their lifelong learning, but we need to remember we do have a

850 demographic crisis heading our way, and we do need to do everything we can to encourage young people to return to their Island if they do go away.

That is something we are factoring into those conversations, but that is a much bigger picture. I mentioned six months ago in an answer after my Update Statement about the squeezed middle. We have loads of parents who would love for their students to go away to train or to study at university who are struggling to do so. We have not fully started that process yet; it is in the pipeline.

855 Thank you very much to Deputy Rylatt.

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, sir.

860 I want to ask about sport, and more specifically potential opportunities for sports tourism. I wondered if the Committee were interested in talking maybe with Economic Development and seeing what opportunities could be out there. When we do big international or national sporting events we do them really well; Powerboat Week back in the 1980s, Island Games, and most recently the Guernsey Rally. We fall behind a bit to our neighbours in Jersey with the Supertri League and stuff like that. I just wondered if there is any appetite from ESC to work with ED and to see what opportunities we could help support and facilitate.

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

870 **Deputy Montague:** Sir, can I thank Deputy Leadbeater for that interesting question?

I have already met several times with the President of Economic Development and we have already started to reach out particularly to France. We are tying it in with 2025; we are trying to build those connections. In two weeks' time we have people coming over from the Bureau in Caen that represents us, which are setting up some links.

875 It is a really important part; I think there is an awful lot of value that can be brought to the Island by that connection. I do envy Jersey's slightly closer proximity but, I will say again, Brittany Ferries are doing an amazing job for us and we are working very well with them. We do need to build those links and I think there is great value in that.

I have spoken to people at the Sports Commission as well to see not only through schools if we can build those links, but also through every sporting club. Every sporting club on the Island, if they want to build those links, they need to work with us through the sporting part of our mandate to work with Brittany Ferries to ensure that happens. But I absolutely support your idea there. If we look at the latest rally, those events are so valuable to Guernsey and we need more of them more often.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Thank you, sir, and I thank the President for his update and I will try and make my question intriguing to him too (*Laughter*) and maybe even his Committee.

890 In his Statement he referred to the Liberation Day celebrations, and specifically my ears pricked up when I heard that fireworks are planned. While fireworks are a very enjoyable aspect for some people, for others they are not; who own livestock or even have PTSD.

Last year on the 80th celebration the previous Committee used some drones. Will he commit to investigating drone use instead of firework use for Liberation Day?

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The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: Sir, through you can I thank Deputy Gabriel for that rather mundane question? (*Laughter*)

900 Joking aside, we had a discussion in Committee just recently. When I saw that fireworks were planned, again we raised this issue. Deputy Cameron is our representative on that Committee; I think there is still an expectation and an appetite for those. But we are investigating in the future some other opportunities, not only with drones but also with a light show projected onto Castle Cornet, with music to go along with it. That is something we are looking at.

905 I do not know Deputy Gabriel's personal opinion – I am not a great fan of fireworks myself – but we have to provide what the public want, and we cannot be seen to be downgrading the celebration of that day, which celebrates our liberation from occupation but also is part of our Island culture now. But we are looking to opportunities in the future. There are many places around the world that do incredible *son et lumière* and we are looking at that.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Ozanne.

Deputy Ozanne: Thank you, sir; and I thank the President for his update.

915 I understand that retention of our education teaching staff, particularly in our secondary schools, has been an issue where we have seen multiple teachers having to teach maths and English. I am wondering if that is improving and whether the President feels that the cost of living and housing crisis is playing a part in that retention problem.

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

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Deputy Montague: Sir, I do not have the data to suggest yet whether housing and cost of living factors in. What I do know is that as we have come out of a very turbulent period in our States' secondary education, we have far greater stability of staff at the moment. In a sense, we only press the reset button on 1st September 2025, so it is a little bit early to tell, but a couple of years ago we had quite significant numbers of agency and supply staff working in our secondary schools. We had a revolving door for some young people. We heard stories of youngsters going through their GCSE courses and having just so many different staff during that time.

925 I said in response to an earlier question that what really matters in education is knowing the young people in front of you, to help them with their learning, and that is why stability of staffing is so important. But, as I say, we have only recently pressed that reset button. At the moment we have far fewer agency staff in our schools and we are beginning to see a far more settled education environment from the ages of 11 to 16.

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

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Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Sir, I am delighted to hear of the progress being made in terms of building the sporting links. Equally, we have talked about the importance of building more cultural and perhaps linguistic links. I know we have got the Year of the Normans coming up, but outside of that, and linking perhaps also to the question of Deputy Rochester about our relationship with the continent and especially our neighbours, with Brittany, Normandy and wider France becoming increasingly important for us politically and economically.

940 What is the Education Committee thinking and doing in relation to ensuring our young people have the skills to engage with the continent; whether it is from the linguistic perspective or having that confidence to have the wider international outlook?

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The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

Deputy Montague: Can I thank Deputy Kazantseva-Miller for her question? It is very close to my heart, having led the International Baccalaureate Programme for several years at the Sixth Form Centre.

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Internationalmindedness is absolutely crucial. As I say, obviously in 2027 we have 39 projects making links for the Norman millennium. Our schools are working very hard to solve the perennial English-speaking problem about speaking a foreign language. We have had a new development in the way we teach modern foreign languages in our secondary schools, and it does seem to be having some success. It is still in the early stages.

Language is something that is essential, and we know that speaking a second language is very valuable, even in terms of long-term impact on prevention of things like dementia. We know that is valuable and we are supporting the teachers of modern foreign languages in our schools to make those subjects as accessible as possible to young people.

With regard to those cultural links, so much of this is about transport links, not only through Brittany Ferries but also whatever other link we can get directly due east to Cherbourg Peninsula. The more we can get young people going to France and just having that first experience is so valuable. Obviously there are cost implications; we have some families with very limited funds for those things, so there is a lot of work being done. It is a high priority for everyone working in education because we all recognise how valuable that is.

**General Update –
Statement by the President of the States’ Assembly & Constitution Committee**

The Bailiff: I am afraid the time for questions has expired and we will move on to the next Rule 10(4) Statement, which comes from the President of the States’ Assembly & Constitution Committee, and I invite Deputy Hansmann Rouxel to deliver that please.

Deputy Hansmann Rouxel: Thank you, sir.

The States’ Assembly & Constitution Committee holds responsibility for the framework within which this Assembly operates – our electoral system, our Rules of Procedure, standards of conduct, and the broader constitutional architecture that underpins our work – not the substance of policy, but the structures, standards and systems that enable the policy to be debated and determined effectively. It is about ensuring that the machinery of parliamentary democracy functions transparently, efficiently, and in a manner that commands public confidence. It is in that context that I provide this statement to the Committee’s work.

One of the first tasks of the Committee related to the general election. It was gratifying that the CPA Election Observation Mission confirmed that the election was a successful democratic exercise and that Guernsey’s legal framework for elections complies with international standards. As Members will have seen from the Mission’s report, alongside the Committee’s commentary, there were very few new areas identified for attention.

One concern was a lack of engagement from younger voters, which the Committee will be reviewing in conjunction with other stakeholders, including the Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture. Lower engagement among younger people is by no means unique to Guernsey; nevertheless, we believe there are measures which could increase participation. The timing of the election during a period when 16 to 18-year-olds are revising for exams, as well as the burden of reviewing over 80 candidates, have both been raised as factors. This will form part of our broader work on election participation.

Staying with elections, the previous Scrutiny Management Committee carried out a full review of Island-wide voting. With the benefit of a further Island-wide election having taken place, this Committee will now build on that work. We intend to gather clear comparative data and undertake further engagement in order to make informed, evidence-based suggestions for any improvements to the process of electing Deputies. It is important that any future refinements are grounded in robust analysis rather than anecdote.

1000 In addition, the Committee intends to examine the feasibility of establishing an independent oversight body for elections in Guernsey. The move to Island-wide voting, and the consequent shift in responsibility for matters such as polling stations and vote counting, means that Government has inevitably become more involved in the delivery of elections. While the two Island-wide elections have been extremely well-organised, there is no permanent repository of election-related advice, nor is there any formal complaints procedure. These are areas we will continue to explore in parallel with the aforementioned electoral system workstream.

1005 As Members are aware, there is also before the Assembly a Policy Letter and draft legislation to enable a by-election to be held in April to fill the current vacancy in our numbers.

1010 Turning to the development programme for Members, the Committee is continuing to roll out a programme of ongoing learning and support. A dedicated learning portal has now been established, enabling Deputies to access training materials and induction content at their own pace. This provides flexibility, continuity and better value for money, and ensures that all materials remain accessible throughout the term rather than being confined to initial induction.

1015 Training for Deputies as mental health first aiders has recently been updated, and the Committee will seek to establish whether there is appetite for a further Deputy to undertake this training. The wellbeing of Members is important, and development provision remains under constant review to ensure it is relevant, proportionate and represents good value.

1020 Following the resignation of the Commissioner for Standards in November, the Committee acted swiftly to appoint Mr Andrew Ozanne OBE to fulfil the functions of the Commissioner on an interim basis. Mr Ozanne brings extensive experience in adjudication and complaints handling, together with an excellent working knowledge of how the States operates. This appointment has ensured continuity and stability in this important role.

1025 During his tenure, the Committee is undertaking a root and branch review of the Code of Conduct for States' Members, including consultation and consideration of how the framework can best support high standards while remaining clear and workable.

1030 A further significant strand of work is the progression of the Latimer House requête. Two workshops have been held with Members, and following feedback the working party continues to explore how the directions of the requête can best enable the States of Deliberation to function more effectively. The focus is strongly on pragmatic changes which assist Deputies in fulfilling their duties and serving the public more effectively.

1035 In addition, the Committee is under resolution from the Machinery of Government requête to examine the number of Deputies. That work will require careful consideration of representation, workload and the long-term sustainability of our parliamentary structures. The workstream will include a full consultation with Deputies.

1040 The Committee also continues to address concerns regarding the broadcast quality of States' meetings. We are working with the Royal Court to resolve hardware issues and to explore how the system can be improved, including consideration of the feasibility of visual broadcasting. Accessible, clear and reliable broadcasting is essential to transparency and public engagement.

1045 In relation to the Rules of Procedure, the Committee intends to adopt an evolutionary rather than revolutionary approach. We will bring forward targeted, practical refinements as improvements are identified, rather than wholesale changes which often result in protracted and complex debate. The Rules belong to the Assembly as a whole, and Members are encouraged to submit any suggestions they have for amendments to the rules with their rationale for such changes.

1050 Finally, the Committee continues to take a forensic approach to the handover document from the previous term. We are pruning workstreams that do not demonstrate measurable benefit and will bring forward proposals to rescind or amend extant resolutions where appropriate. Our aim is to focus effort where it adds value and to ensure that officer resource is directed toward meaningful outcomes.

1055 The Committee maintains an open door for any issues arising within its mandate and will continually seek pragmatic ways of supporting the States of Deliberation to work better and smarter in delivering for the public.

I thank Members for their attention and am happy to take any questions.

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The Bailiff: There is now an opportunity to ask questions in the context of the mandate of the States' Assembly & Constitution Committee.

Deputy Vermeulen.

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Deputy Vermeulen: Thank you, sir.

I thank the Deputy for her update and I just wondered about elections. Obviously we have gone for an Island-wide election in Guernsey, and she produced the paper recently about a by-election.

At the time I said I do not think there is going to be any need for a by-election and then we have had all sorts of hell break loose in the States, and it is possibly that we might need three more Deputies. Is the Deputy conscious that a by-election for just one person might be a mistake in these current troubling times?

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The Bailiff: Deputy Hansmann Rouxel.

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Deputy Hansmann Rouxel: The Reform Law is very clear that the States is constituted of 38 Deputies and therefore, when a vacancy becomes available, a by-election is held to fulfil that democratic process. So therefore a by-election is held.

The Bailiff: Deputy Camp.

1070

Deputy Camp: Thank you.

I fully recognise that Committees must operate within an element of confidentiality, however in a small jurisdiction where public trust is paramount, do we consider that the current drafting of the Rules of Procedure provide adequate clarity to avoid inconsistent interpretation and to maintain an appropriate balance between what may be perceived as secrecy, confidentiality and transparency, and is there scope for refinement?

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The Bailiff: Deputy Hansmann Rouxel.

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Deputy Hansmann Rouxel: I thank Deputy Camp for her question.

There is of course a concern among Members, and particularly at the start of term, where Members are bedding in, and this is something that SACC is conscious of. Having examined the rules themselves on several occasions, it is not necessary that the rules need changing, but the guidance around those rules, and this is something that the Committee has looked into to provide for all Committees so that there is consistency in the application of those rules.

1085

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: Sorry, I pressed a draft, not button. Thank you for the update, Deputy Hansmann Rouxel.

1090

In 2018, by referendum, the people of this Island decided that all Deputies will be elected on one single day in one single district. There have been two successful elections since then and I asked the same question of the previous President of SACC. Under Deputy Hansmann Rouxel's leadership, is the sanctity of that decision of the referendum, is it safe under her leadership?

1095

The Bailiff: Deputy Hansmann Rouxel.

Deputy Hansmann Rouxel: I thank Deputy Inder for his question.

As the previous President of SACC, and he is right to point out that the decision was made under a requête. That is why there is a question to be asked whether, if any changes are to be made, that

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is not a requête, a referendum, whether any changes would be made to our electoral system. If we are to make those changes, we need to have a referendum.

1105 However, at the moment we are gathering the information and people's experience of what are the positives of Island-wide voting, is it working for everybody, and whether we do need to make changes or make it more accessible in certain ways. That piece of work is exactly what we are doing, rather than having a fixed outcome in mind and designing things around that outcome.

The Bailiff: Deputy de Sausmarez.

1110 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** Thank you, sir.

Will the Committee consider the introduction potentially of regulation perhaps around the potential disclosure or limitation of political fundraising or revenue raising and expenditure, not just in the campaign period ahead of an election, but while Deputies are in office?

1115 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Hansmann Rouxel.

1120 **Deputy Hansmann Rouxel:** That is certainly something that the Committee has on its radar. There are a number of concerns that were raised during the process of the previous run-up to the election, but that is certainly something that, as political parties and political influence bodies are more established on the Island, that we need to have more robust rules around that and transparency around who is funding and what is being funded.

The Bailiff: Deputy Curgenvén.

1125 **Deputy Curgenvén:** Thank you, sir; and thank you to the President for her update.

Just a quick one, do you have an update on any progress towards televised debates for the States?

Thank you.

1130 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Hansmann Rouxel.

Deputy Hansmann Rouxel: I thank Deputy Curgenvén.

This is a part of the mandate which is very close to Deputy Rylatt's heart, and he has taken the lead on that and is investigating the feasibility of how that would take place.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Thank you, sir; and I thank the President for her update.

1140 We have a Deputies Code of Conduct. Is there scope to include in an election period, be it a by-election or a general election, a Code of Conduct for potential candidates?

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Hansmann Rouxel.

1145 **Deputy Hansmann Rouxel:** This is something that we did consider when we looked at the report from the election observers. One of the issues is that, who would oversee that Code of Conduct? Who would you complain to? That brings us to having an electoral body that would oversee that. At that point, looking at whether it is feasible to have a Code of Conduct and who would look at it would be something that we could explore. However, until we have done that first piece of work and established whether we can pragmatically create a permanent electoral body that
1150 would oversee those issues, we cannot follow through on that work.

The Bailiff: Deputy Rochester.

1155 **Deputy Rochester:** I thank the President for her update.

I would just set forward that the World Economic Forum believes that increased female representation in Parliament results in enhanced GDP growth and workforce representation. Academic research shows that increased female participation results in better long-term decision-making for our community. The business community here and beyond our shores actively participate in equal representation to ensure performance benefits.

1160 So, would she agree that in the run-up to the by-election, this Parliament has an obligation to actively, visibly support and encourage the equal participation of women in the States' Assembly to ensure these positive outcomes?

1165 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Hansmann Rouxel.

Deputy Hansmann Rouxel: I would certainly agree with Deputy Rochester that a more diverse Assembly creates better outcomes, and there is ample evidence across the board that increased numbers of diversity in the Assembly certainly does create that, and we should be doing our utmost to encourage that.

1170 For the by-election, because the time is short, we do not have a plan. However, before the next election, we will, as part of our preparations for the next election, be actively doing that. That is not to say that we will do nothing. We are working with Comms to ensure that, once the by-election legislation is agreed, that there is a programme to encourage participation.

1175 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Oswald.

Deputy Oswald: Thank you, sir.

1180 Does Deputy Hansmann Rouxel consider it part of SACC's remit to consider approaching other relevant Committees with a proposal to help those in full-time employment and considering standing for election to the States, for help, particularly in consideration of some relaxation of residential qualifications or licensing to allow them to fulfil their democratic duties if elected?

The Bailiff: Deputy Hansmann Rouxel.

1185 **Deputy Hansmann Rouxel:** If I understand the question correctly, I do not believe that would form part of our structure, other than looking at policies that enable Deputies to work better. For instance, when looking at increasing numbers of female representation and younger, more active members of the electorate to stand for Deputies, the States looked at more family-friendly policies, so changing States' dates – not during school holidays – and therefore encouraging parents or enabling parents to better fulfil their role.

1190 In terms of the legislation around participation, the rules of population management sit underneath Home Affairs and it may be something that SACC can look at and clarify to members of the public before —

1195 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Hansmann Rouxel, the time for reply has passed.
Deputy Sloan.

1200 **Deputy Sloan:** Thank you, sir; and may I thank the President of SACC for her informative statements.

I have a quick question. She mentioned youth engagement being low during the election. I have heard you mention it before, and I have been puzzled, like Deputy Montague has just there, in that statement. I appreciate that probably registration was probably low, but can she confirm that active participation, i.e. turnout, was low? If she cannot, could she just confirm when, because we have got

1205 the electoral roll, the turnout information is produced and published so we can all understand the differential turnout among demographics, different demographics?

The Bailiff: Deputy Hansmann Rouxel.

1210 **Deputy Hansmann Rouxel:** I thank Deputy Sloan for his question.

Off the top of my head, I do not have the turnout data. But, yes, he is right. There was a lower uptake of registration, and I believe that I will have to get back to him to confirm that turnout was also impacted by lower numbers than in previous years, but that was across the board. There was a dip in turnout and, yes, that is something that we can look to publish.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, sir.

1220 I had a question come in to me this morning and the only person that can answer it is the President of the States' Assembly & Constitution Committee.

When will they be addressing the dire parliament website that costs £120,000, supposed to be the chief resource for the public to inform themselves of what is happening? Pages need to be shut down before others can be opened. No live link, which has not been available for months now. So much more. Nobody can view things easily anymore, let alone listen. When will this be sorted?

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The Bailiff: Deputy Hansmann Rouxel.

1230 **Deputy Hansmann Rouxel:** It is an area close to my heart, as I do like to research things and have found the transition to the new website, it is a very small team of one who is responsible for upgrading and a lot of the migration of the data from the old website to the new. There are teething problems, we are aware, and I understand his frustration, or the asker of the question's frustration, and it is something that we are working actively to amend.

In terms of the live stream, that is an ongoing issue with resource and setting up the live stream in order to make it run effectively.

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The Bailiff: Alderney Representative Hill.

Alderney Representative Hill: Thank you, sir.

1240 I would like to ask the President of SACC, given that sometimes the two Alderney Representatives have issues in getting to debates, this last time there was a serious concern that we were going to be able to be here today, would you consider allowing us to have electronic voting which we can vote from our Island?

The Bailiff: Deputy Hansmann Rouxel.

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Deputy Hansmann Rouxel: Alderney Representative Hill raises an important issue and, again with any decision to look at proxy voting, it is something to be considered. In light of there being currently issues with transportation, it might be something that SACC could look at and bring to the Assembly if transportation problems persist for the Alderney Representatives.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

1255 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Sir, in the previous term, members of SACC were involved in the Machinery of Government workstream together, I believe, with members of P&R from memory. That workstream did not really go anywhere, unfortunately, but I believe we still have resolutions

outstanding in terms of looking at Machinery of Government, not the electoral system in terms of the number of Deputies, etc.

1260 Is the Committee planning, is there anything in their work plan, to be looking at the Machinery of Government, or anything in the wider States' GWP that we have approved, which was obviously very high level, that they are aware about, that is touching on the Machinery of Government changes, rather than just the electoral side of things, the number of Deputies?

The Bailiff: Deputy Hansmann Rouxel.

1265 **Deputy Hansmann Rouxel:** Thank you; I thank Deputy Kazantseva-Miller for her question.

It is a relevant one because, as she will be aware, looking at Machinery of Government is incredibly complex, and what tends to happen is it becomes a lot of navel-gazing and talking about things. So as part of our effectively looking at the workstream and identifying the workload and understanding of how the States, as it is currently constituted, operates, if out of that work relevant workstreams come, then we can start to build a picture.

1270 I think there is always a danger of looking at things as, 'Oh, I believe this is the best solution'. We need to acknowledge how our current system operates, and that piece of work is part of the work that we are looking at, how many Deputies makes up the right number. So, if that makes sense, there will be a correlation, but we are doing it from the bottom up, rather than a top-down approach and thinking what is the best system in other places. How do we work, and what is the best structure that we currently have, and how can we improve it?

General Update – Statement by the President of the Transport Licensing Authority

1280 **The Bailiff:** As there are no further questions to the President, we will move on to the final of the Rule 10(4) Update Statements today, and it has come from the Transport Licensing Authority. So, Deputy Gollop, as President, what do you want to say about the business of the Transport Licensing Authority?

Deputy Gollop: Thank you very much, and I will largely stick to the script.

1285 I am pleased to provide my first Update Statement on behalf of the States' Transport Licensing Authority, although I have done updates before in the previous term. Over recent years, prior presidents of the Authority have been somewhat challenged to provide an update of activities undertaken over the prior months.

1290 As Members will be aware, the Committee *for* Economic Development is the political lead for air route licensing policy. The role of the Transport Licensing Authority is restricted to the consideration of air route licence applications, and to monitor the activities of licence holders to ensure that their licence conditions are complied with.

1295 Since the introduction of the pseudo open skies policy in 2018, the Transport Licensing Authority's role has diminished. In terms of new licences, its remit is restricted to the consideration of applications for air transport licences for air routes designated as essential lifeline routes only. Indeed, prior to November last year, the Authority had not considered any air transport licence applications since 2021.

1300 In November, the Committee *for* Economic Development designated the Jersey-Guernsey route as essential to take effect from 15th January 2026. This followed the collapse of Blue Islands in November 2025. Other routes previously designated as essential include London Gatwick, Southampton, and Alderney. The demise of Blue Islands has generated significant activity for the Authority over recent weeks.

1305 The Authority has considered five applications for air route licences on both Southampton and Jersey routes, and delivered either provisional or final decisions on all of these at pace. This was achieved through substantial effort, and I would like to thank Deputy Collins, Deputy Jayne Ozanne OBE, Deputy Inder, and Alderney Representative Hill, as well as officers, for their significant time commitments over the Christmas and New Year period. We narrowly escaped a New Year's Eve Committee meeting, and indeed we did over 100 hours, we believe.

1310 It was taken so that decisions were made and shared with the applicants as quickly as possible. Certainly on these lifeline routes, it is fundamental to both the operators and to members of the public, which is why the Authority gave the airlines as early a decision as possible.

1315 The Authority made the decision to grant a licence, GTB161, to Airline Aurigny, to operate a passenger and cargo service between Guernsey and Jersey. This complements the licence Aurigny already held for operating between Guernsey and Southampton. Members may not be aware that, in granting a licence, the Authority is at liberty to impose certain conditions, such as the number of minimum rotations per day. In writing to set out these conditions, we have chosen to flag to licence holders that we are keen to monitor customer satisfaction with their services, and have highlighted the fact that we will be paying close attention to this going forward.

1320 In recent weeks, the Authority also granted licence GTB164 to West Atlantic UK to operate a cargo-only service between Guernsey and Jersey. The Authority also considered two applications from the airline Loganair to operate passenger and cargo services between Guernsey and Southampton and Guernsey and Jersey, respectively. However, evidence had been submitted that these routes cannot sustain competition, and that competition on the route is not deemed to be in the best interests of Islanders over the long term. Loganair subsequently chose to withdraw its applications, so final decisions were never made in respect to these two applications.

1325 I have been approached by Members of this Assembly, and indeed by members of the public, either showing their support for the recent decisions of the Authority, or indeed challenging these. While I cannot talk about the applications in detail, I must stress that the Authority carries out semi-judicial functions, rather than purely political ones. Where Members of a political Committee may choose their approach to decision-making, by contrast the Authority must follow the dictates of the law, which contains very clearly defined criteria to be taken into account, and information to be assessed when considering whether to approve or reject an air transport licence application.

1330 The Authority must review submitted information as part of its formal consideration process, and must discount anecdotal comments, media stories, or unsubstantiated claims. Ultimately, the Authority's decision-making is driven by the requirements set out in the Air Transport Licensing (Guernsey) Law 1995, and also the Air Transport Policy status agreed by the States in 2018, and indeed updated.

1340 In reaching its decisions, the Authority considered a wide array of submitted information and representations received as part of a public consultation process. This included representations from the Committee for Economic Development and the Policy & Resources Committee, both of which hold relevant policy-making mandates. Over 100 representations were submitted to the Authority in total, and I would again like to express my thanks to both Members of the Assembly and to members of the public for taking the time to share their feedback and comments, all of which the Authority reviewed and considered at length. I can reassure Members that the best interests of the Island over both the short and the long term was a key consideration in its decision-making.

1345 Moving on from the recent applications, the Authority has identified some areas of potential improvement in the transport licence applications process, and plans to undertake a review of both this and the remit and the composition of the Authority going forwards. Its recent experience considering five applications put the Authority in a good position to reflect upon and identify areas requiring update.

1350 One area of consideration is the introduction of an air transport licence application fee. Under the current process, airlines can apply for a licence to operate an essential route for commercial purposes at no cost to their business. We, as an Authority, have held 13 meetings over these busy

few months, and a few more extra meetings for some of us over these busy few months, and hundreds of hours have gone into considering recent applications at taxpayers' cost.

1355 The Authority is currently undertaking a review of unused but still extant air transport licences that are no longer required since the introduction of the quasi open skies policy. Shortly, the Authority will be commencing the formal legal process to revoke these licences. The strategic landscape has changed since some licences were granted for the operation of essential lifeline routes. Therefore, the Authority is also to review the conditions of these licences to ensure the
1360 conditions remain relevant and fit for purpose.

Finally, a further area of consideration is in respect to the applications process guidance. The current timelines associated with the holding of a public hearing are somewhat convoluted and add significant time to the application consideration process. This will be considered as part of the review work to be undertaken that was referenced earlier.

1365 Sir, I would like to bring this General Update towards a conclusion by welcoming its new member, Deputy Chris Blin, who joined the Authority in January this year following the resignation of Deputy Neil Inder as a member of the Authority, who we thank. I look forward to working with Deputy Blin over the coming months and years, and thank Deputy Inder for his contribution to the Authority over recent months.

1370 I thank the Assembly for listening to this update and welcome questions.

The Bailiff: Members, it is now an opportunity to ask questions on the mandate of the Transport Licensing Authority.

Deputy Vermeulen.

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Deputy Vermeulen: Thank you, sir; and I thank the President for his short update.

So my question would be over the public service obligation (PSO) for Alderney. I can remember we bought some brand new Dorniers, which we have just sold, for Aurigny to fly that route; one of them being as young as seven years old. It now seems that, even though the route was given to
1380 Aurigny, another airline, Skybus, is going to fly that using a 57-year-old airframe. Is the President confident that Skybus, using that equipment, can uphold their obligations?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

1385 **Deputy Gollop:** The responses to the question, firstly, as a Transport Licensing Authority (TLA), we will obviously monitor how the extant licence is being operated and whether it conforms in every respect to the conditions. We understand that the insurance, and other respects, it does.

From a personal perspective, as a former member of Policy & Resources, I am aware that Aurigny is still continuing to operate the route using these Skybuses, and the nature of the PSO is a
1390 combination of P&R responsibility and Economic Development, and does not come within the remit of the Transport Licensing Authority.

But, as regards, will we be keeping a watching brief that the service is being done according to the conditions, not of the PSO, but of the air transport licence, yes, of course we will. Deputy Vermeulen can be reassured.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Camp.

Deputy Camp: Yes, sorry, I just had a question.

So it was flagged that one of the criteria you are now looking at in respect of licence conditions
1400 is customer satisfaction. Juxtapose that against a warning against anecdotal qualities when exercising a semi-judicial function, and could the President please perhaps describe what methodology the TLA might utilise for assessing this, given feelings are high, and opinion is divided, and customer satisfaction is so often anecdotal.

1405 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: We have not considered that in detail, but we have had a lot of discussions as to how far we should or could express, for example, not just minimum rotations, but the time of those rotations, because the nature of the time on some services is beneficial to some, business or leisure or health travellers, and not to others.

1410 We have written to at least three key Committees for feedback. I know we have written to Economic Development, Health & Social Care, STSB, and so on, to get a sensible response as to what we could be looking at. We will endeavour to look at quantitative analysis that is useful rather than anecdotal.

1415 My anecdotal point referred to the fact that some of us, before we joined the TLA, were making comments in the media about airlines, perhaps we were at one point, and that is not where we want to go. But we will be interested in evaluating, systematic evaluation, for example, of lateness or non-performance, and there was an issue last year when we were actively following an airline's progress. It has to be said the airline ceased to exist, so it never got to the point where we would have discussed in greater detail, but yes, we will take all sources of information.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: Thank you, sir.

1425 Let me thank the President of the TLA for such an informative statement. He referred to the TLA and the fact that it has met with criteria by which licences can be judged. But if you look at the law, it refers to matters to be taken into consideration which are not, in the modern sense, criteria. There is no definition of economic thresholds, financial fitness tests, demonstration of public need, competition tests, quantitative service obligations, so therefore can I ask him what definitive criteria were used in the process?

1430

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: That probably requires a more detailed response than I can give in the time. I do think we are still in the analogue age, the fact that we are using three or four-sided paper applications has certainly come to the fore in recent months. I personally think that a flaw in the process we followed, which we did diligently according to advice and procedure, was we did not take as much economic analysis from independent participants as might be advisable. Had we been able to put back some of the decisions and not perhaps been hastened by a decision by Economic Development to have a cut-off of 15th January and gone for a public review, the process might have been different.

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But we did everything we could in the rules and we have to take the matters that we have to hand and that we consider viable, which include, for example, the long-term stability of airlines, track record in serving the Islands, sustainability of competition. The advice we got from the principal Committees and from other significant stakeholders was that competition for the foreseeable future was not going to be sustainable or viable for anybody.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Ozanne.

1450 **Deputy Ozanne:** Thank you, sir.

As a member of the TLA, I wonder if I could ask my President if he would agree with me that our processes were constrained by us following both the law and the policy framework, which set out clear criteria against which we had to measure each application. It was not for us to set those criteria, that is the role of Economic Development and therefore I am sure Members can look at that policy framework and understand those criteria, which are to do with consumer interests, consumer satisfaction, tourism industry.

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1460 There is a whole set of criteria which we spent some time looking at all the consultation documents. So I am hoping my President would agree with me that we need to flag that process and indeed flag the fact that we had asked what metrics the airlines themselves use for understanding customer satisfaction.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

1465 **Deputy Gollop:** I agree that we will endeavour to use analysis for customer satisfaction, and I would agree with Deputy Ozanne, because no member has been more diligent on the Committee, especially in saying we need to review the way we work.

1470 My personal view, which has become even more apparent this term than in previous ones, is I do not think it really works having politicians acting as unpaid regulators. I think we are doing something we are neither qualified to do nor can we interfere in the way some of us would like to in shaping policy and the considerations of that. So there are systemic problems with this role.

1475 I would also say that there is an interesting question as to what strength we need to give the merits or otherwise of competition in relation to the delivery of essential licences because we are clear that there is a provision for now four routes under essentiality, lifeline routes. But we also have a duty to consider competition, which, in the nature of things, may not be possible for lifeline routes or may not even be desired by Economic Development who set the criteria. We do not.

The Bailiff: The time for replying is up, Deputy Gollop.

1480 Alderney Representative Hill, you are also on the TLA. Just a minute. Deputy Sloan, let us change it. Let us have a second question from Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: Thank you, sir.

1485 In mind of the answers, this is not questioning the integrity of the process or the decisions that were made, but would the President feel that a published and clear set of criteria, rather than matters of consideration, would be particularly helpful in the regard to decision-making, particularly as the question will come on the route out of licensing arrangements as much as the route in?

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

1490 **Deputy Gollop:** Yes, we had a paradox of one airline applying for a licence that technically they already had, but the licence was many years old. That encouraged us to be more meticulous than our predecessors in identifying revocation as an issue, for example.

1495 It has also been stated by one airline, or it was implied in the media that airlines are not eligible to fly to Guernsey. They are if they satisfy criteria on the open routes, although there are still extant licences for those routes. So it is a bit puzzling.

1500 We do need to look again at our criteria, I have already stated that is exactly what we are doing, and to update the law and policy that is relevant. As I said, we have got the 2018 Policy Statement that was updated in 2021, effectively with the new essential routes, the lifeline routes to both Guernsey and Southampton. It has been updated since it was originally done. We have a law that goes back to the great Roger Berry era of the old Transport Committee in 1995 that clearly was for a totally different aviation landscape.

So there is work to do as to identify not only how we can move forward and the criteria for licences and maybe, but not necessarily, a fee, but also the very framework of our policy and whether we have got the mix right. Because, by my reckoning, we have got six Committees involved in –

1505 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Gollop, again, your time for answering has expired.
Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

1510 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Sir, would the President of the Transport Licensing confirm and agree with me that the policy, both the Air Policy Framework and the Air Transport Licensing Statement, are in the mandate of the Committee for Economic Development. They are not in the remit of the TLA to be looking and reviewing. It is exactly the work that the Committee has prioritised and being progressed as we speak, and those documents are publicly approved and publicly available documents that outline the criteria that Deputy Sloan has been just previously referring to. So it is not criteria for the TLA to develop, but it is publicly published public policy documents that are accessible to anyone to view.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

1520 **Deputy Gollop:** I agree with Deputy Kazantseva-Miller to a degree. I agree too that Machinery of Government should perhaps take a broader look, and it would have done. We were scheduled for abolition had the report that never came to the States gone ahead.

It is absolutely correct that we, the TLA, are not responsible for air policy or transport policy. We are not responsible for selecting whether a route is a lifeline route or not. We are responsible for licensing that, if it is chosen to be a lifeline route.

1525 That might sound confusing, but when I said we would review it, we would review the criteria by which we make our decisions, and I believe we acted with complete integrity. We had a very able and experienced officer team of three senior officers plus at least three legal advisers, as well as ourselves.

1530 But, as regards air transport or the wider elements of connectivity or whether we should have competition or not as a policy, that is not our responsibility.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder.

Deputy Inder: Thank you; and thank you for the updates, Deputy Gollop.

1535 Deputy Gollop, through you, sir, made reference to a future review. Would he at least give some consideration to a future review that questions whether the TLA even needs to exist inasmuch as, as I understood it, basically we were presented with a weight of evidence mainly from STSB, P&R, Economic Development, plus the public. So we were boxed in a corner. We had to act with impartiality, and Deputy Gollop seems to suggest he stressed a little bit with his own political judgement on some decisions he may have wanted to make.

If that is the case, and if we accept that is a very human part of being a politician, would we all not be in a better place if we got rid of the TLA, got rid of the laws, and handed those decision-making processes to Economic Development, probably in partnership with P&R?

1545 **The Bailiff:** The time is up for asking the question. Deputy Gollop to answer that question, please.

1550 **Deputy Gollop:** For historians, from 2004 to roughly 2014, the Economic Development's predecessor, Commerce & Employment, had the responsibility for air transport licences. I believe legal advice and other political advice was to change that because it was perceived that at least one of the political figures of the era was too close to promoting aviation to think of regulating it. They went from a halfway house of two Members acting as a regulator and three doing other things.

1555 Then we created, in the reshaping of Government, this strange Committee and, yes, people want to get me out of existence and, to be honest, I agree with them. I personally think it should either go to a body like the GCRA; believe you me, it would cost a lot more to the regulator, but at least they would be able to have greater legal powers and greater powers over the economic advice, or to Economic Development.

Because, if it is true, and it is true, that Deputy Kazantseva-Miller and her team want to own air policy and also want to talk to airlines. I was in a situation, I could not meet representations of an

1560 airline a month ago, or my Vice-President, because it was considered that we would be in a quasi-judicial position, and yet other politicians were. I find that ridiculous.

I also find the issue of how you can have a policy of competition going to an active proactive political body –

1565 **The Bailiff:** The time for reply has once again elapsed.
Okay, no more questions to the President.

Questions for Oral Answer

COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Improvement of inter-island sea passenger, vehicle and freight capability and frequency

1570 **The Bailiff:** We will now move into Question time proper. So from answering questions, Deputy Gollop has a set of questions to put to the President of the Committee *for* Economic Development.

Your first question please, Deputy Gollop.

1575 **Deputy Gollop:** Thank you, sir.

Will the President and Committee *for* Economic Development, perhaps in co-operative partnership with the STSB and the Policy & Resources Committee, continue to work to improve inter-island sea passenger vehicle and freight capabilities and frequency?

1580 **The Bailiff:** For the President of the Committee to reply, Deputy Kazantseva-Miller, please.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Sir, the Committee will continue to consider opportunities to enhance inter-island ferry connectivity as part of its mandated responsibilities. Both air and sea connectivity have been prioritised by the Committee and the wider Assembly through the Government Work Plan this term.

1585 Alongside the Inter-Island Ferry Working Group, the Committee established in late 2025 to improve co-ordination with the current operators, the President and Vice-President met with Deputy Morel and the Government of Jersey on 13th February to discuss these exact matters. These discussions are live, and updates on any decisions resulting from them will be publicly communicated.

1590 **The Bailiff:** Supplementary, is it, Deputy Gollop?

Deputy Gollop: I thank the President for her answer and hope that progress can be made.

1595 Would the President agree that it is not a simple case of Guernsey saying no to operators or co-operation, and indeed joint solutions should be sought rather than, as Deputy Bury might say, a blame game?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

1600 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** I cannot think of an instance where we have said no. Last year DFDS had applied for a number of rotations to the Committee under our Roll-on/Roll-off (RO-RO) licensing agreements, that any new operator operating inter-island routes with a car ferry service that requires a RO-RO ramp licence requires an exemption from the existing legislation. All of the requests were granted.

1605 We have just recently – just a couple of days ago – received a new proposal from DFDS to operate a new service from Jersey on a Friday and out of Guernsey on a Monday, and this we are actively reviewing together with STSB from the operation perspective, in consultation with business bodies.

1610 **The Bailiff:** Second supplementary, Deputy Gollop.

1615 **Deputy Gollop:** If I could ask a supplementary as a response. Deputy Leadbeater earlier made the point about sports tourism, rallies and other things, being crucial to our happiness and prosperity. Would a link at the weekends, preferably both ways, involving a car ferry, be something that we really should do to improve the wider economy?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

1620 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** We think the current operators, Brittany Ferries and DFDS, that is not possible. So the DFDS is currently offering the Wednesday rotation. Any change to their rotation will fundamentally affect our northern service to Poole and Portsmouth or our southern service to Saint-Malo, which are absolutely essential not only for our critical supply chain, medicine, but also the passenger tourism connectivity.

1625 So within the current circumstances, this is not possible. But, yes, this is something we should be looking to, and these are the types of discussions we are having.

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: Thank you, sir.

1630 May I ask the President, in respect of the ferry service, and I must admit at first when I saw the press release announcing about the inter-island discussions I thought it was a spoof, but clearly not. Can I ask, my understanding is, in terms of inter-island ferries, that the summer service that we had last year was dependent on subsidy from the States of Guernsey. I believe it would be the Economic Development Department. Given the other calls on the Department's budget this year, can she
1635 reassure that that sort of funding will be available for inter-island services again this summer?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

1640 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** The inter-island service provided by Brittany Ferries is not subsidised, it is part of the new ferry agreements we have. So one rotation per week is a contractual obligation from Brittany Ferries.

1645 The Committee took the decision to provide a start-up and route development funding to Islands Unlimited last year, and the Committee is considering proposals for this year carefully through a business case.

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy Inder.

1650 **Deputy Inder:** On the same subject, could Deputy Kazantseva-Miller confirm that that initiative was driven entirely via Guernsey, and Jersey does not contribute in any way to the inter-island passenger service?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

1655 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** I can confirm that last year Jersey did not provide any funding to Islands Unlimited but we jointly did provide funding to Manche Iles Express, which provided some inter-island service, but obviously it is also the wider connectivity into France.

Ideally, we would like to work jointly, and this is the kind of discussions we are having with the Government of Jersey for more of a joint approach to inter-island service provision.

Car ferry service between Guernsey and Jersey

1660 **The Bailiff:** Your second question to the President then please, Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: Have recent joint efforts to dialogue and work with the Jersey political counterparts likely to see a daily summer and frequent winter car ferry service between Jersey and Guernsey to enhance tourism, retail, dog and horse shows, trade fairs, sports and arts and motorsport fixtures, etc.?
1665

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller to reply please.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Sir, active discussions on additional inter-island ferry services are currently underway involving officers from the States of Guernsey and the Government of Jersey and ferry service providers.
1670

It is hoped that these discussions will result in overall improvements to the connectivity between the Islands, providing a service commensurate with the market demand and responding to peak demand in a way that is able, where practical, to serve specific events throughout the year.

1675 However, a daily car service is unlikely to be commercially viable for the current providers given the small size of this particular market and the requirements of the existing schedules. The Committee is open to exploring other options with due consideration given to its existing contracted obligations with ferry operators and its statutory obligations under the RO-RO legislation.
1680

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy Gollop?

Deputy Gollop: Thank you.

1685 I have two supplementaries here really. The first is: would the President agree that one of the downsides of the two islands using separate ferry contractors, DFDS versus Brittany Ferries, has been the loss of the triangular service which was a way of providing in a relatively cost-effective manner a daily Guernsey-Jersey link, which has now been lost with direct UK services that do not need to, or are not able to go via the other Island?

1690 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: No, I do not agree with the observation. We have got much better connectivity to the north, but especially to our connectivity to France, by having an exclusive contract with Brittany Ferries. What has suffered, and this is what we are seeing, is the inter-island service, but this is where potentially new solutions can be found. But we are very happy with our northern and southern rotations with the big boats that are serving our Islands.
1695

The Bailiff: Second supplementary, Deputy Gollop.

1700 **Deputy Gollop:** I think both ferry providers have expressed the opinion, based on their commercial perspective, that the Guernsey-Jersey route is not particularly viable, despite what the public believe. But is there not still room to explore a service, not necessarily daily, but three times a week in the summer, for example, involving hopefully the co-operation of both companies and both islands?
1705

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: The only way Guernsey could provide that rotation is by taking a rotation off our northern rotation. We have only got two boats effectively, the Islander is serving

1710 our daily supply chain to Portsmouth, and the Voyager is doing a figure-eight, going out of Saint-Malo, coming to Guernsey, going to Poole, coming back down and going to Saint-Malo. So there is no scope, and it is a full-day schedule with no additional scope for additional stops. The Wednesday rotation is basically undertaken without going north. It is just doing Saint-Malo, Guernsey, Jersey, Guernsey, and back to Saint-Malo.

1715 DFDS have provided a proposal, it is very lopsided at this stage because it is only serving Jersey passengers for the weekend rotation, and they are doing it by allowing their supply chain ferry to stop over on its northern rotation and on the way down. So it is extremely difficult because the big boats are not suited effectively for inter-island travel, they are suited for doing the supply chain, the big passenger movements, and so we need to look for new solutions for inter-island travel.

1720

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy Inder.

1725 **Deputy Inder:** Yes, I think so, I am going to try anyway; probably going to fail. I am certainly happy that both yourself and Deputy Niles are trying to develop a different relationship with Jersey because these relationships are really down to both of the islands; not individuals. But, in reality, Jersey is only two or three months away from an election. Does the President not agree with me that the real new relationship will start post their June election?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

1730

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: We continue to be absolutely committed for delivering to the Bailiwick in the short, medium and long-term frame. There are opportunities for joint collaboration in the immediate, and sincerely those discussions are live and we hope they come through; they may not.

1735 Equally, we will work collaboratively and openly with whatever shape the new Government of Jersey takes.

Inter-Island Ferries – Financial, fiscal or logistical incentives

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

1740 **Deputy Gollop:** Some ferry private sector management spokespersons have indicated inter-island ferries are not always particularly commercially viable. Would Jersey and Guernsey Governments consider offering some financial, fiscal or logistical incentives to stimulate service developments, service frequency and enhanced connectivity with an economic payoff in return?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller to reply, please.

1745

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Thank you, sir.

1750 The Committee does consider incentives to support any proposal for connectivity improvements on its individual merits and in accordance with its statutory obligations under the RO-RO legislation and commercial arrangements with existing ferry operators. For example, the Committee has provided route development support to both Islands Unlimited and Manche Iles Express to enhance connectivity last year.

1755 The Committee's concession agreement with Brittany Ferries provides for one return service per week to Jersey throughout the year, which is provided without the requirements of a Government subsidy. Significant additional foot passenger capacity is also provided by Islands Unlimited and Manche Iles Express.

As part of the ongoing dialogue with Governments of Jersey and our sister Bailiwick Islands, all Governments do consider any joint funding arrangements where these are proposed and supported by a comprehensive business case. Any business case should include indicators of economic returns.

1760 **The Bailiff:** Supplementary, Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: I thank Deputy Kazantseva-Miller for her answers, and indeed the diligence of Economic Development in recent months in considering these issues, putting feelers out, and indeed in their support, as did the previous Committee, for Manche Iles and the other inter-island, Islands Unlimited.

1765 My question is though that those operators provide useful foot passenger services especially to key events, but do not answer the need of people with lots of kit or livestock or equipment. How can we improve the links for those who want accessories?

1770 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: Well, the existing providers have been working very hard to try to accommodate, where possible, sport travel, pet travel and travel with accessories, excluding cars, as far as possible. This is where the Inter-Islands Ferry Group, that is why it was set up, so that providers like Islands Unlimited, Manche Iles Express, Brittany Ferries, DFDS was also invited, could co-operate on understanding who can best serve which need and demand through their existing operations.

1775 Out of that, Islands Unlimited have slightly changed their operations to be able to accommodate better bicycles and pets, and Brittany Ferries has provided additional services, such as the Guernsey Rally, which we have just had this weekend. So I would like to again thank them for working very hard to provide that additional service.

1780 So, where possible, the operators are going above and beyond to be able to meet the demands of the community, but stopping short of providing the daily car service that Deputy Gollop I know wants.

1785 **The Bailiff:** Second supplementary, Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: The Transport Licensing Authority protecting ferries as well, and what my supplementary would be, bearing in mind that there will be a new Government, whether Economic Development wishes to work even more closely with the new States of Jersey to ensure that solutions are found and maximise our connectivity.

1790 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: My first ministerial visit was to Jersey in August. We have just had a reciprocal visit. I envision that I would probably visit Jersey soon after the election. I know that P&R, colleagues from P&R, and Presidents and members of other Committees work closely with the Government of Jersey on many issues. Economic Development works with Jersey on a number of issues, whether it is the financial ombudsman, the Director of Civil Aviation, and so on. So the dialogue and collaboration with Jersey is ongoing. We have got lots of areas of co-operation, and especially notwithstanding the external relations and our approach to some of the matters relating to financial services.

1800 **The Bailiff:** Supplementary, Deputy Sloan.

1805 **Deputy Sloan:** Thank you, sir.

This is to applaud the efforts of Economic Development improving our connectivity because it is something we all know is useful to our community, both socially and economically. My

1810 supplementary is with regards to Islands Unlimited and, given the call on ED's budget this year with its commitments elsewhere, can she confirm that the ED budget can accommodate this similar level of subsidy or the same level of subsidy it was providing last year this year?

The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

1815 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** I am sure all Presidents and Committee members will agree that we all face significant budget constraints and we need to operate, as far as possible, to deliver the best we can for the public. So it is something we are very carefully considering and, if we were to support any future proposals, we would need to consider how they are funded. But I could not comment any further at this stage whether they will happen or not and how they will be funded.

1820 **The Bailiff:** Second supplementary, Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: Yes, I did not ask that question. Those answers are to a different question. What I asked was; can she confirm, yes or no, whether the Economic Development budget has sufficient resources to provide the same level of support as it provided last year?

1825 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: We would have to look very carefully at how budget is reprioritised or if this proposal was to be funded, so I do not think there is a simple yes or no, because the proposal is not yet finalised or confirmed and the quantum of the potential funding required is not yet finalised.

COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION, SPORT & CULTURE

Balance freedom of expression and the concerns of vulnerable Members – States-owned venues

1830 **The Bailiff:** No one else is rising, so we will move on to the second questions. This time it is Deputy Ozanne putting questions to the President of the Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture. Your question, please, Deputy Ozanne.

Deputy Ozanne: Thank you, sir.

1835 Does the President of Education, Sport & Culture agree that the States has a duty to balance freedom of expression and the concerns of vulnerable members of the Island community where States-owned venues are providing platforms?

The Bailiff: I call on the President, Deputy Montague, to reply please.

1840 **Deputy Montague:** Sir, I do believe that the States does have a duty to strike a balance in matters relating to freedom of expression; so the answer is yes.

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy Ozanne.

1845 **Deputy Ozanne:** Thank you.

Given this duty, what safeguards has the President put in place to protect vulnerable members of the community using our public facilities, at the same time as an event in a public venue that is known to have hateful content? I think in particular of an event planned for just after Liberation Day

1850 at Beau Sejour, which Beau Sejour have just chosen to relocate, by someone who is banned in both South Africa and Australia for their racist comments, and which are highly likely to fall foul of our own Racial Hatred Law here in Guernsey.

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague.

1855 **Deputy Montague:** Thank you, sir.

This is a nuanced issue. The answer is not clear. I spent over 10 years attempting to teach John Stuart Mill's 'On Liberty' as a set text in a philosophy course. I was no clearer at the end of that process than I was at the beginning. He makes it clear though that a lot of this is to do with context.

1860 Where an event is badged as entertainment, it is not up to us to decide what people find entertaining. Beau Sejour is being run as a business. It is not a school assembly. There was no invite to these entertainers to come over. I would ask that we consider this very carefully. It is entirely inappropriate for an Assembly such as ours to descend into a culture war issue on this. We need to treat the concerns of vulnerable people very seriously. But I believe it is consistent with democratic principles and individual freedom that people should be allowed to book a venue in the States of Guernsey.

1865 Freedom of expression protects, not only popular and agreeable views, but also those that many people strongly oppose. So preventing a so-called entertainer from hiring a public venue risks setting a precedent where access is determined by a political opinion rather than rule of law.

1870 I will finish there by saying that we are asking officers to look again at the booking policy. It would be entirely wrong for every booking to be elevated to a political decision. We need some robust and really carefully thought through principles to avoid any contentious issues in the future.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Second supplementary, Deputy Ozanne.

1875 **Deputy Ozanne:** Second supplementary, thank you, sir.

1880 I believe the President has misunderstood my question where I asked what safeguards were in place for those using Beau Sejour, not part of the event, who themselves will feel very vulnerable knowing that there are those present who may well share those views and indeed, when we know that the person who is providing 'entertainment' has been found guilty of racism, which is likely to fall foul of our own Racial Hatred Law.

1885 I would remind the President that our Racial Hatred Law does not allow performances or people to incite racial hatred. So I am thinking about the people in the vicinity, which Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights shows that we have a duty to protect those in a public order place.

The Bailiff: Deputy Montague to reply.

1890 **Deputy Montague:** Sir, we are talking about something that is badged as entertainment, it is not a political rally. I did not have time, but when Mill used this example he said if you publish in your pamphlet saying that the corn dealers are starving the poor, that is probably acceptable. If you address the same statement to an angry mob outside the corn dealer's house that is probably not acceptable.

1895 Beau Sejour has a theatre and people will be going to that theatre, if they bought tickets for this particular piece of entertainment. I do not see how there is a safety issue here. People may feel vulnerable and may feel concerned. We might get upset when we read about these comments online and we might feel that this is uncomfortable knowing that maybe our neighbour has booked a ticket. But I do not think it is the responsibility of this Assembly to judge what people find entertaining. I do not think there is a really clear safety issue here.

1900 I am open to persuasion. This is an issue that may need some more discussion, but I would like to know what the safety issues are. It is badged as entertainment, people will buy tickets, they will go to listen to some things and then they will go home.

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy Camp.

1905

Deputy Camp: Perhaps one measure of judging the safety issues, whether Bailiwick law enforcement has raised with ESC such safety issues, as we seem to be talking in the realms of law, and any racial hatred incitement would be for Bailiwick law enforcement to consider. So perhaps the President of ESC could comment on that element.

1910

The Bailiff: I do not think that arises out of the answer that was originally given, so there is no need for Deputy Montague to reply.

Deputy Gollop, you are going to try a supplementary.

1915

Deputy Gollop: Yes, I probably will not succeed here.

The questioner may have been wanting to know whether Education, Sport & Culture, not necessarily on a particular event – although an event clearly has inspired the question – but general events, and there have been other comedians and mediums and other people who might be controversial in some people’s eyes, whether there might be a policy of safe spaces and more particularly notices up generally, not for specific events, saying participants at events are welcomed but not if they use offensive language or say offensive things, because that might be a way of preventing the perceived fear.

1920

There might be members of an audience for an entertainment or other function who would say things that could be offensive to other people but not necessarily breaking the law. I suspect there might be. So is there a policy of educating audiences?

1925

The Bailiff: Time is up, Deputy Gollop. You have failed to ask a question in that time. In any event, it does not arise out of the answer that was given to the initial question.

STATES’ TRADING SUPERVISORY BOARD

Current reservoir storage levels and recent recharge patterns

1930

The Bailiff: The final question is from Deputy Sloan to the President of the States’ Trading Supervisory Board.

Your question please, Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: Thank you, sir.

1935

Sir, could the President of the States’ Trading Supervisory Board confirm current reservoir storage levels and explain recent recharge patterns?

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

1940

Deputy Helyar: Sir, raw water storage levels are currently at 100% capacity. This follows a gradual recharge since October 2025 when reservoir levels were at approximately 72% of maximum capacity, the lowest level recorded last year. This is not atypical, with an average low point over the past 30 years being around 76% of maximum storage, usually in October or November.

1945

The Bailiff: Supplementary, Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: Sir, thank you, if I may.

1950 Sir, may I ask the President, given that the published data that he has referred to and the answer that he referred to, that there are no issues with the recharging of the reservoir and in fact the data shows consistent winter refill performance, and the expectation of wetter winters regionally as a result of climate change going forward, does he agree it would be reasonable to review whether the 0.2%, also known as a 1-in-500-year event, severe drought standard remains proportionate for Guernsey's specific hydrological conditions before committing to a step change expansion of storage?

1955

The Bailiff: Deputy Helyar.

Deputy Helyar: Thank you, sir.

1960 The first thing I would say is that the STSB is not a policy maker, so policy in relation to water storage is set by the Environment & Infrastructure Committee. The 1-in-500 drought provision is a UK objective, which is set to be complied with by 2040. That includes a number of other elements which would include reducing leakage and managing consumption and applying restrictions. My main concern as the President of STSB about that decision is it has set us on a sole point of failure course towards Blackrock and, using parliamentary language, that the figures that were used in the Policy Letter to make that decision about Blackrock's costs were manifestly and grossly underestimated.

1965

The Bailiff: Second supplementary, Deputy Sloan.

Deputy Sloan: Thank you, sir.

1970

Given that recently households have faced sustained cost-of-living pressures and are about to absorb the introduction of GST, apologies to prejudge the debate, does he think it is fair or even sensible to ask this generation to perform protection today against a 1-in-20 generation event at worst, and quite probably, given hydrological conditions, even less likely than that?

1975

The Bailiff: I am not sure that really arises out of the question that was answered, but anyway, Deputy Helyar, do you want to say something?

Deputy Helyar: Thank you, sir.

1980

Yes, as I said in answer to my previous question, STSB does not make policy so we have to enact the decisions of the States. In my personal perspective, fairness and taxation are not two things that are synonymous with each other. You could treat taxation as States-sponsored theft, for example. My main issue is that we have a lot of very expensive projects on our list. Things like generators at the power station –

1985

The Bailiff: That really is not an answer to any question that is being asked. It might be in the debate later. I am going to stop you there. Just a minute.

Is this a supplementary, Deputy Inder?

Deputy Inder: That is right, yes, sir.

1990

The Bailiff: Yes.

Deputy Inder: Thank you.

1995

Deputy Helyar made the point that they are not a policy-making committee, yet in the same breath he expressed some concerns about the decision that was made previously and the figures are unlikely to be correct, particularly on Blackrock.

2000 Even if that is the case, if that is effectively what he said today in the States, does he not have some responsibility as President of STSB to at least try and bring that back to the States and see if that decision is still as sound as it was? I think what he said is the information around Blackrock and the costs have now, as usual, been batted out of the ballpark.

The Bailiff: That does not arise out of the answer that was given to the question that Deputy Sloan asked.
2005 Deputy de Sausmarez, supplementary.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Supplementary, sir.
I am thinking very carefully how I can frame this. Would the President agree with me that the policy issue is one that has already been debated and that, in terms of any consequences coming out of that, they will be returning to the Assembly relatively soon in a Policy Letter that will be brought by the Committee *for the Environment & Infrastructure*, possibly in conjunction with the STSB?
2010

But would he also agree that there are significant efficiencies to be gained compared with our current system of using many smaller water reservoirs and so there are some efficiencies, not just in terms of leakage, but more to do with consolidation of storage to make it more efficient.
2015

The Bailiff: I am not sure that that really arises out of the original answer that was given on the basis that raw water storage levels are currently at 100% capacity, so the rest of it just falls away.
Okay, that concludes question time.

Billet d'État III

ELECTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

2020

COMMITTEE FOR HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

1. Re-Appointment of the Medical Director as Responsible Officer under the Regulation of Health Professionals (Medical Practitioners) (Guernsey and Alderney) Ordinance, 2015

Article 1.

The States are asked to decide:-

Whether, after consideration of Policy Letter entitled 'Re-Appointment of the Medical Director as Responsible Officer under the Regulation of Health Professions (Medical Practitioners) (Guernsey and Alderney) Ordinance, 2015.' dated 9th January 2026 they are of the opinion:-

To re-appoint Dr Peter Rabey as Responsible Officer for Guernsey and Alderney under section 10(1) of The Regulation of Health Professions (Medical Practitioners) (Guernsey and Alderney) Ordinance, 2015, for both classes of medical practitioners for whom revalidation is required (being UK Connected Practitioners and Local Practitioners) - such appointment to take effect from 8th March 2026 for a period of 5 years, after the expiry of his current term of office.

The Bailiff: Let us see if we can rattle through some appointments and then work out what you are going to do for the rest of this meeting.
2025

The States' Greffier: Article 1, Committee *for* Health & Social Care. Re-Appointment of the Medical Director as Responsible Officer under the Regulation of Health Professionals (Medical Practitioners) (Guernsey and Alderney) Ordinance, 2015.

2030

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

Deputy Oswald: Thank you, sir.

2035

I am pleased, you will be glad to hear, I do not intend to speak for long, but I thought it would be useful to share some background information on this reappointment. The General Medical Council is the UK regulator of doctors and in 2009 it established a new system for regulating doctors. For doctors to retain their licence under this system they are required to demonstrate through medical revalidation that they are fit to practice.

2040

Revalidation provides a framework within which doctors are required to maintain and improve their practise against standards set by the GMC, and this is overseen by a Responsible Officer. The Responsible Officer in Guernsey is our Medical Director, Dr Peter Rabey, who is an experienced senior doctor both in terms of his clinical experience and management of the revalidation and fitness to practice of doctors. For the avoidance of doubt, Dr Rabey must also take part in the same revalidation process that he oversees by an independent Responsible Officer in the UK and his appraisal position is fully up to date.

2045

I can also confirm that he meets the criteria for this role as set out in the Ordinance. The duties and functions of the Responsible Officer are set out in the Regulation of Health Professionals (Medical Practitioners) (Guernsey and Alderney) Ordinance 2015. Under this Ordinance, the Committee is required to make a recommendation to the States of Deliberation as to the appointment of the Responsible Officer.

2050

As Dr Rabey's current term of five years is due to expire on 8th March of this year, 2026, the Committee *for* Health & Social Care unanimously recommends his reappointment for a further term of five years after the expiry of his current term of office. I hope that States' Members will support the Committee's recommendation.

2055

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, sir.

2060

I thank Deputy Oswald for this short Policy Letter. I have just got a couple questions. I am going to support it. I just wanted to know in 2.2 it tells us that the Responsible Officer is responsible for receiving and, if necessary, appointing authorised persons to investigate any concerns raised about a doctor. I just wanted to know about that appointment process and who those authorised persons may be. Would it be somebody from the local medical profession? Would it be some sort of investigator, someone from the UK? I just wanted to know exactly how that process would unfold.

2065

Thank you.

Deputy Oswald: Thank you, Deputy Leadbeater.

2070

The Bailiff: Nobody else is rising so I will ask the President to reply to that set of questions from Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Oswald, please.

Deputy Oswald: Thank you, Deputy Leadbeater, for that question, which is pertinent.

2075

I am aware that, of various inquiries that he has made in the past, he has utilised both systems, both external and internal. I suspect it very much depends on the category of the concerns raised at the time.

2080 **The Bailiff:** Now, Members of the States, it is now time to vote on the Proposition to reappoint Dr Peter Rabey as the Responsible Officer, and I will ask the Greffier to open the voting on that please.

There was a recorded vote.

2085 *Carried – Pour 30, Contre 0, Ne vote pas 2, Did not vote 4, Absent 3*

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

2090 **The Bailiff:** In respect of the reappointment of the Medical Director as the Responsible Officer, there voted in favour 30 Members, no Member voted against, 2 Members abstained, 7 Members did not participate in that vote, and therefore I will declare it duly carried.

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

2. Election of an Ordinary Member of the Guernsey Financial Services Commission

Article 2.

The States are asked to decide:-

*Whether, after consideration of the Policy Letter entitled "Election of an Ordinary Member of the Guernsey Financial Services Commission", dated 16th December 2025, they are of the opinion:-
To elect Mrs Fiona King as an ordinary Member of the Guernsey Financial Services Commission for a three-year term with effect from 17th April 2026.*

The Bailiff: Next Item, please, Greffier.

2095

The States' Greffier: Article 2. Policy & Resources Committee, election of an ordinary member of the Guernsey Financial Services Commission.

2100

The Bailiff: I am going to invite Deputy Falla, on behalf of the Committee, to open the debate, please.

Deputy Falla: Sir, in response to a vacancy at the Guernsey Financial Services Commission for a commissioner from off the Island, and preferably with banking experience, this position was advertised through the normal appropriate channels such as *The Times* newspaper.

2105

A strong field of candidates responded to the advertisement and three were shortlisted for interview in Guernsey. Mrs Fiona King, whose CV is contained within the Policy Letter, elaborating on more than three decades' experience in financial services, was unanimously selected by the interview panel.

2110

This is ultimately a matter for the States to agree, and therefore I ask the Assembly to approve the election of Mrs King as an ordinary member of the Financial Services Commission for a three-year term from 17th April 2026.

Thank you.

2115

The Bailiff: Deputy Laine.

Deputy Laine: Thank you, sir.

2120

I will be as brief as possible. I will be supporting the election of Mrs Fiona King as an ordinary member of the Guernsey Financial Services Commission. She clearly meets and exceeds in many respects the legal test in the 1987 Law that commissioners should be persons having knowledge, qualifications or experience appropriate to the development and supervision of financial services businesses in the Bailiwick. Her CV speaks for itself, decades in senior roles at Citigroup, Deutsche Bank, previous career with the UK regulator, etc.

2125

If we are serious about wanting more regulatory and banking experience at the top table, this is exactly the kind of appointment we should be making. But I do not want my support for this individual appointment to be mistaken for complacency about the overall framework or the balance of the Commission.

2130

I have three brief points. First, we need to be honest that the current law sets a fairly low bar. It asks that commissioners have knowledge, qualifications or experience appropriate to the finance business in the Bailiwick. That is necessary but is not sufficient for a jurisdiction whose largest industry lives and dies on regulatory credibility. Other centres have gone further. They have hardwired into their frameworks an expectation that commissioners collectively bring substantial frontline service experience, not just general public sector or legal backgrounds. In my view, Guernsey should follow suit. Appointments like Mrs King should be the norm, not the exception.

2135

I would also note that businesses in the Bailiwick comprise significant elements that may not be commonly seen in large jurisdictions, for example captive insurers. So it is important to have people with specific knowledge to balance the benefits of regulatory intervention against the costs.

2140

Secondly, we should reassess the balance between local and non-local perspectives and how we approach potential conflicts of interest. While I appreciate the international viewpoint that some like Mrs King offer us, it raises a valid question regarding how many commissioners should have strong connections to our local industry and community. This is crucial, not only for detailed knowledge they provide about our specific industry sectors, but also so far as possible within the GFSC primary objectives, their motivation to support the international competitiveness and the future growth of the Bailiwick economy in the medium and long term.

2145

Additionally, we need to consider safeguards we have in place for individuals who come from or remain closely linked to competing jurisdictions. It is essential that commissioners prioritise the overall wellbeing of the Bailiwick. I am not questioning the integrity of any individuals, rather

I believe the regulation should be strengthened to ensure that confidence does not solely rely on personal reputations.

2150 Thirdly, we ought to use this appointment as a moment to review the appointment process itself. Policy & Resources tells us it has run a comprehensive, competitive and robust process under HR oversight in collaboration with the Commission. This is welcome, but I would like to see, before the end of this term, proposals which tighten the statutory criteria so that significant direct financial service experience is an absolute requirement for at least the majority of commissioners, and set a clear expectation that the majority of commissioners, members, should be locally resident and
2155 closely connected to the Bailiwick's finance sector, complemented, not dominated, by a smaller number of external appointees.

So I will vote for Mrs King's appointment because I believe she will strengthen the GFSC and bring exactly the sort of expertise we need. At the same time, I hope Policy & Resources and the Commission hear this as a polite but firm signal that, as we refresh the board over the next few
2160 years, this Assembly expects to see not just strong individual CVs but stronger, clearer frameworks for those who sit around the table and whose interests they serve.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Falla, do you wish to respond at all to what Deputy Laine has just said?

2165

Deputy Falla: Thank you, sir.

So I would like to thank Deputy Laine for saying that he will indeed support this appointment, and he has been heard. It is true that Mrs King does in fact fulfil the criteria as he has described, and certainly we will take those views into consideration in our ongoing dialogue with the GFSC
2170 around the rotation that occurs on that board and future appointments.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: We come to vote on the appointment of Mrs Fiona King as an ordinary member of the Guernsey Financial Services Commission and I will ask the Greffier to open the voting please.

2175

There was a recorded vote.

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

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

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

2180

The Bailiff: In respect of the proposed appointment of Mrs Fiona King to the Guernsey Financial Services Commission, there voted in favour 36 Members, no Member voted against, no Member abstained, 3 Members did not participate in that vote, and therefore I will declare that duly carried.

APPOINTMENTS LAID BEFORE THE STATES

Re-Appointment of Chairman of the Officer of the Financial Services Ombudsman; Appointment of an Ordinary Member of the Guernsey Competition and Regulatory Authority

2185

The Bailiff: Can we just lay the appointments please, Greffier?

2190

The States' Greffier: The following appointments are laid before the States. The re-appointment of Chair of the Officer of the Financial Services Ombudsman; the appointment of an ordinary member of the Guernsey Competition and Regulatory Authority.

The Bailiff: I have not received any indication of a desire to annul either of those appointments, but there is another opportunity next meeting.

Procedural – Rearrangement of Debate Order

2195

The Bailiff: Before we rise, it would be helpful for you to know what the plan is for the remainder of the meeting.

Deputy de Sausmarez.

2200

Deputy de Sausmarez: Thank you, sir.

I have given Members advance warning of this, but I intend to lay a motion to reorder debate, and I am also grateful to the President of the Committee, President of SACC, who is supportive of the order in which we are proposing to reorder business.

2205

So, we are proposing that other business will be reordered as follows, taking first the By-Election, then the Alderney Runway debate, then Tax Reform Policy Letter, then the requête, and finally the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) British Islands and Mediterranean Region (BIMR) report, which is not time sensitive. I am grateful to the agreement of SACC, or at least its President, in that respect.

So I hope that is clear.

2210 **The Bailiff:** So the motion, Members of the States, is that the next item of business be the By-Election, followed by the Alderney Runway, followed by Tax Reform, followed by the requête, followed by the CPA BIMR report, which was the matter that was deferred from the last meeting. Those in favour; those against?

Members voted Pour.

2215 **The Bailiff:** I am going to declare that carried and we will now adjourn until 2.30.

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

LEGISLATION LAID BEFORE THE STATES

**The Income Tax (Guernsey) (Budget) Ordinance, 2025;
The Limited Partnerships (Fees) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations, 2025;
The Open Market Housing Register (Inscription in Part A) (Fees) Regulations, 2025;
The Open Market Housing Register (Inscription in Part A) (Forms and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations, 2025;
The States Housing (Statutory Tenancies) (Amendment) Regulations, 2025;
The Health Service (Pharmaceutical Benefit and Medical Appliances) (Amendment) Regulations, 2025;
The Health Service (Payment of Authorised Appliance Suppliers) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations, 2025;
The Salles Publiques (Fees for Renewal of Licences) (Amendment) Regulations, 2025;
The Public Highways (Temporary Road Closures) (Fees and Penalties) (Amendment) Order, 2025;
The Income Tax (Approved International Agreements) (Implementation) (Common Reporting Standard) (Amendment) Regulations, 2025;
The Social Insurance (Benefits) (Amendment) Regulations, 2025;
The Income Tax (Approved International Agreements) (Implementation) (Crypto-Asset Reporting Framework) Regulations, 2025**

The Bailiff: Shall we just lay the legislation please, Greffier?

2220

The States' Greffier: The following legislation are laid before the States. The Income Tax (Guernsey) (Budget) Ordinance, 2025; the Limited Partnerships (Fees) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations, 2025; the Open Market Housing Register (Inscription in Part A) (Fees) Regulations, 2025; the Open Market Housing Register (Inscription in Part A) (Forms and Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations, 2025; the States Housing (Statutory Tenancies) (Amendment) Regulations, 2025; the Health Service (Pharmaceutical Benefit and Medical Appliances) (Amendment) Regulations, 2025; the Health Service (Payment of Authorised Appliance Suppliers) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations, 2025; the Salles Publiques (Fees for Renewal of Licences) (Amendment) Regulations, 2025; the Public Highways (Temporary Road Closures) (Fees and Penalties) (Amendment) Order, 2025; the Income Tax (Approved International Agreements) (Implementation) (Common Reporting Standard) (Amendment) Regulations, 2025; the Social Insurance (Benefits) (Amendment) Regulations, 2025; the Income Tax (Approved International Agreements) (Implementation) (Crypto-Asset Reporting Framework) Regulations, 2025.

2230

2235 **The Bailiff:** Members of the States, all of those items have been laid before this meeting. There is no motion to annul any of them and therefore we will move swiftly on to the first item of the real business please.

Billet d'État IV

STATES' ASSEMBLY & CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE

1. By-Election 2026 – Propositions carried

Article 1.

The States are asked to decide whether, after consideration of the Policy Letter entitled "By-Election 2026" dated 2 February 2026, they are of the opinion:

To agree that the date of the By-Election of a People's Deputy required pursuant to Article 29(2) of the Reform (Guernsey) Law, 1948 will be 29 April 2026.

2. To agree that the Electoral Roll will close on 25 April 2026 at 23:59.

3. To agree that applications for postal votes will close on 10 April 2026 at 23:59.

4. To agree to maintain the expenditure limits set for the 2025 General Election, as follows:

i. Up to £3,000 in money or money's worth for candidates

ii. Up to £3,000 in money or money's worth for political parties

iii. Candidates supported or endorsed by political parties have the option of transferring up to half of their expenditure allowance to fund their political party, provided the total of all transferred expenditure does not exceed the party's expenditure limit prescribed in (ii).

5. To agree that the regulated period will start on 2 March 2026 and end on 29 April 2026.

6. To approve The By-election Ordinance, 2026.

7. To approve the Postal Voting (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026.

8. To approve The Electoral Expenditure (By-election) Ordinance, 2026.

9. To approve the Super Polling Station (By-election) Ordinance, 2026.

The above propositions have been submitted to His Majesty's Procureur for advice on any legal or constitutional implications.

2240 **The States' Greffier:** Billet d'État IV, Article 1. States' Assembly & Constitution Committee, By-Election 2026.

The Bailiff: I will invite the President of the Committee, Deputy Hansmann Rouxel, to open the debate please.

2245 **Deputy Hansmann Rouxel:** Thank you, sir.

I do not think it is necessary to speak at length on the by-election proposals, as they are set out in the Committee's Policy Letter and are straightforward and self-explanatory. Therefore I will simply touch on a few issues to endeavour to reassure my fellow Members around matters already raised.

2250 When a vacancy occurs in States of Deliberation, the Reform Law requires that a by-election be held to fill it. Such a vacancy occurred in December 2025, and in line with its responsibilities to ensure the legislative framework for a by-election is put in place, the Committee has consulted with the relevant stakeholders and is proposing that the by-election takes place on 29th April 2026.

There are pros and cons to any date chosen for an election, and the Committee has carefully considered a number of factors in selecting the proposed date. It has been mindful to avoid school

2255 holidays and bank holidays, while balancing the need to ensure the vacancy is filled without undue delay.

The Committee is recommending no change to candidate party expenditure limits as the 2025 General Election was less than one year ago and nothing has changed that might necessitate a review of those limits at this time.

2260 As this is the first election under the current Island-wide system, it is difficult to predict turnout. The Committee is proposing that, as with the general election, all polling stations should be super-polling stations. In other words, if you are on the electoral roll, you can go to any of those polling stations. You do not have to vote in your parish, with Beau Sejour being the main central and super-polling station, as well as the count venue. In addition, three of the larger parishes,
2265 namely St Martin, Castel and Vale, have kindly offered to provide venues for super-polling stations. I should like to express the Committee's gratitude to them.

I know that some of my fellow Members, along with those in the community, have expressed concern about the potential cost of a by-election, arguing that this is something Guernsey can ill afford. I want to reassure anyone with such concerns that the Committee has worked extremely
2270 hard to ensure that the costs are kept to a minimum, while maintaining a fair and democratic process. Anticipated costs are at a maximum of £75,000. To keep costs down there will be no manifesto booklet delivered to every household with at least one person on the electoral roll. Instead, every candidate will be invited to upload a manifesto and video on to the election website.

There will be no States-run meet the candidates events, but within the budget there will be a small, modest amount of funding offered to parishes to pay for hustings, should they wish to host one. The Committee is confident that candidates will be sufficiently supported to ensure their manifestos are widely available without significant States' expenditure being incurred. Other expenses naturally fall away because of the nature of a by-election and also its proximity to last year's general election.

2280 Electoral roll, for instance. The data has been refreshed only recently, i.e. less than a year ago, and therefore it is not necessary to close the roll and repopulate it, as anyone already on the roll will remain registered to vote in the by-election. Anyone not on the roll, who qualifies to vote and who wants to sign up, will be able to do so prior to midnight on 25th April. Postal voting will remain an option and anyone who wishes to vote by post will need to register for a postal vote. Postal vote
2285 registrations will not carry through from the general election. That is important to let members of the public know. Because voters will have only one vote, manual vote counting is feasible, meaning that the costs associated with automated count processes are also avoided.

Sir, I trust my colleagues in this Assembly will be reassured that the proposals for the by-election represent a pragmatic, cost-effective and proportionate approach to the necessity of complying
2290 with the Reform Law, and will accordingly vote in favour of these propositions in order to arrange for the by-election; that the by-election may start in earnest.

[Amendment 1.](#)

In Proposition 9, to insert immediately after "2026" the following:

", subject to deleting the words "Dave Ferguson Hall" in Clause 1 paragraph 1 of the Ordinance and substituting therefor the words "Sir John Loveridge Hall".

The Bailiff: There is one amendment that has been lodged, which is a Committee amendment.
2295 Do you want to move Amendment 1, Deputy Hansmann Rouxel?

Deputy Hansmann Rouxel: Yes, sir.

Sir, this amendment is a practical and relatively minor adjustment to Proposition 9. It is, in
2300 Proposition 9, to insert immediately after '2026' the following, 'subject to deleting the words "David Ferguson Hall" in clause 1, paragraph 1 of the Ordinance, substitute therefore the words "Sir John Loveridge Hall".'

2305 Members will see that it substitutes the Sir John Loveridge Hall for David Ferguson Hall at Beau Sejour as the designated super-polling station and count venue. Since the Policy Letter was lodged, issues have arisen in relation to the temporary closure of the theatre at Beau Sejour. In order to assist the centre in reconfiguring its bookings and managing the impact of that closure, it has been agreed that the by-election polling station and count should move to the Sir John Loveridge Hall instead. This allows the centre greater operational flexibility while still enabling us to deliver the by-election effectively.

2310 The Sir John Loveridge Hall provides sufficient space for the scale of the operation we are planning, bearing in mind the turnout for the first by-election of this Island-wide system is difficult to predict. It allows for an order of flow of voters for the venue to be converted efficiently into a count centre later the same evening.

2315 One Member has suggested that the concourse might be used. Having considered it, it would not be secure or appropriate for the purposes of either polling or counting. It is not sufficiently self-contained, and on the day in question there will also be significant footfall in the area, which will not be compatible with the controlled environment required for an election.

2320 There is some limited displacement of sporting bookings but the date coincides with the end of the main sporting season and the impact is contained. We are also exploring an alternative venue should a recount be required at the weekend, in order to minimise any further disruption. So this amendment simply ensures that we can accommodate Beau Sejour's operational needs, while maintaining a secure, practical and proportionate arrangement for the by-election.

I hope Members will support it.

2325 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford, do you formally second Amendment 1?

Deputy Burford: I do, sir, thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

2330 **Deputy Leadbeater:** Thank you, sir.

I just wanted to ask, just looking at the Ordinance where it has a person entitled to vote at the by-election for the office of People's Deputy to be held on Wednesday, 29th April 2026, may vote in that election between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. on that day at the polling station at the Beau Sejour Leisure centre (Dave Ferguson Hall), and that is going to be changed.

2335 Why does it have to have anything in brackets? Could it just have Beau Sejour Leisure Centre and then it gives the opportunity for anywhere to be used as operationally suits? So I just wanted to know why we are specifically designating a room within that building rather than the building itself.

2340 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Thank you, sir.

2345 Just a question and an observation. Will there be enough separation and lack of cross-contamination, for want of a better word, between the voting area and the counting area? I would imagine it is relatively unusual to have the voting area then converted into a counting area. I have not seen or heard that at this scale of election before. So, can the President give us some confirmation and confidence that there will be no ability for cross-contamination or vote changing or anything like that?

Thank you.

2350 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Laine.

Deputy Laine: Thank you, sir.

2355 It will be no surprise to Members that I am asking Members to vote against these Propositions and not to proceed with this by-election.

This is not because elections are unimportant to me or because I underestimate the seriousness of a vacant seat. It is because of our current circumstances. Calling an Island-wide election less than a year into this term is, in my view, a poor use of public money, a poor reading of public sentiment, and a missed opportunity to show that the Assembly can manage with less. (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.)

2360 The electorate has only just gone through the effort of a general election under the Island-wide system with all the manifestos, debates and doorstep conversations that entailed. They gave 38 of us a mandate for a four-year period. In that context, I do not believe there is a strong democratic case for asking Islanders so soon to go through a full Island-wide campaign and polling operation simply to choose one additional Deputy.

2365 The Policy Letter itself notes that the electorate has now experienced two Island-wide general elections and that the Committee is keen to make this by-election feel similar. That is exactly my concern. We are proposing to run a mini general election for one seat less than a year after the last one. The public is frankly more likely to shrug than engage. Turnout for parish by-elections in 2015 and 2016 sat around 27% to 34%. The Committee optimistically suggests a 30% Island-wide turnout this time. I fear it will be lower.

2370 This is a time when trust in politics has taken a battering. I question whether the way to rebuild it is to spend tens of thousands of pounds on an exercise many Islanders will experience as noise. The Committee estimates the direct costs of this by-election at approximately £75,000. That is before you count officer time, opportunity cost of pulling people away from other work to organise nominations, polling stations, counts, IT, and communications. We are not operating in a vacuum. For me it is not really the money thing, but we do, after all, face a grave fiscal situation. We all know there are areas that £75,000 would not go amiss.

2375 The Policy Letter is explicit that it wants to ensure that the cost of the by-election is kept as low as possible, and I point to the good work that SACC has done on reducing those costs when we had some crazy estimates going out there. But, for example, not printing and posting a manifesto booklet to every household, that is welcome, but it misses the key point. Even the cheapest by-election is still an expensive by-election if the case for holding it is weak.

2380 If we cannot, as a Government, look Islanders in the eye and say, in the current deficit situation, we will manage with 37 Deputies instead of 38 for the next three years, what does that say about our seriousness when we ask them to tighten their belts? We often talk in this Assembly about efficiency, transformation, and doing more with fewer resources. Here is a concrete test for all of you. We are not being asked to operate with half of our Members gone. We are being asked to consider whether we can function with 37 rather than 38 Deputies until 2029. If we say we cannot, we are effectively telling the Island that the Machinery of Government is so fragile that the loss of one single person from 38 makes it unworkable. I do not believe this is true.

2385 If we choose not to hold this election, we do not undermine democracy, and democracy is precious. We demonstrate democracy's resilience. It is precious but it is not fragile. This is not a routine vacancy. The seat we are discussing became empty because a former Chief Minister, a man Islanders trusted to lead this Assembly, is now in prison. That was a profound shock to the community and a blow to confidence in the system.

2390 I do not believe we rebuild that confidence primarily by rushing into an expensive by-election to put a new name on the list of 38. We build it by showing that we have faced up to what happened and are capable of getting on with the job with integrity. In a way, deciding not to hold a by-election can also be a statement. We managed our affairs however unknowingly with a predator in our ranks. We can certainly manage our affairs knowingly and carefully without him. We do not need an immediate symbolic replacement to prove this Assembly is legitimate. We need to demonstrate case by case that our decisions from now on are worthy of the trust that has been shaken.

2400 The Committee's own paper makes it clear just how much machinery must be cranked up for this exercise. It proposes an Island-wide polling day on 29th April with a super-polling station at

Beau Sejour and additional stations elsewhere. A full regulated period for campaign expenditure from 2nd March to 29th April with £3,000 spending limits for each candidate and each party. A comprehensive postal voting operation, including closing dates, packs and processing on the assumption that many voters now see postal voting as their default.

2410 All of this is proportionate for a general election. It is not obviously proportionate for filling one seat in an Assembly that has been sitting for less than a year. We will be asking volunteers to staff polling stations, officers to administer the process, and the public to pay the bill at a time when we know from recent by-election turnouts that the majority of voters are unlikely to participate. That imbalance between effort and engagement matters to me.

2415 We have wrestled with how many vacancies should trigger a by-election before. Previously, the Assembly was asked, when most of us started this term, to approve changes to Article 29 of the Reform Law so that a by-election would only be required when three or more seats fell vacant. Many Members have contacted me regretting not having supported that option and now is your chance to put that right. With the benefit of hindsight, we should be honest and say we got it wrong. I am not just asking Members to reject this particular by-election though. I am asking us to acknowledge that we missed an opportunity last time and to put that right.

2420 If we vote against these Propositions, we create the space and the political pressure for SACC to come back promptly with an updated version of the earlier reforms. A clear trigger such as three or more vacant seats and limited discretion near a general election so that we only run Island-wide elections when they are genuinely justified.

2425 We ask Islanders to accept difficult decisions on tax and spending and services. We will soon ask them to accept there is no endless pot of money. Here is a chance to show that we apply that discipline to ourselves. We have 37 Deputies ready and able to work. Let us get on with that work. Let us demonstrate that democracy is resilient and not fragile like a meringue. Let SACC return with a sensible three-seat trigger for future by-election options instead of locking ourselves into an expensive one-seat contest that few are asking for.

2430 I will be voting against the Proposition and I urge Members to do the same.
Thank you.

2435 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Laine, I am going to treat that as a general debate speech. It was not on the amendment at all.

Deputy Laine: Sorry, it was general debate. My mistake.

2440 **The Bailiff:** Therefore, you will not get an opportunity to speak when we resume in general debate.
Deputy Vermeulen.

Deputy Vermeulen: Thank you, sir.

2445 We have heard that nothing has changed except it is changing the venue. We have heard that everything has been carefully considered, and you can treat this as general debate as well if you like, sir.

The Bailiff: Thank you very much. *(Laughter)*

2450 **Deputy Vermeulen:** Has been carefully considered, but has it? As I have got older, I have noticed I have become my father. I go around the house switching lights off, telling my children just turn the light off before you go downstairs for breakfast. So you do not like wastage, and the eyes of the Island are on us and they do not want to see, particularly with the spectre of GST, us wasting money.

2455 I come at it from a slightly different viewpoint from the Deputy that spoke before, and my concern is that, even though it was carefully considered, I have heard noises about one Deputy

wanting to resign. I have noticed another Deputy being incarcerated and taken out of the equation, and there are legal proceedings going on at the moment that could jeopardise another position.
2460 So we would have to be – I do not want to use that word – but we would have to be crazy to do a by-election for just one position.

I have gone around trying to get people to stand in the by-election. Total apathy, sir. No interest at all. All the Committees are populated at the moment and it is not quite the same as going in a general election. We were premature when SACC brought this thing to paper, which said a
2465 by-election would need three people to trigger it, and we got rid of it very quickly on the advice of Deputy Hansmann Rouxel. I do not think I blame anyone. Nobody could have foreseen what has happened so quickly, sir; the position we are in.

So I am not going to vote for the amendment and I am not going to vote for the by-election. We need to go very careful with our funds, albeit it is a small amount, and I would urge other
2470 Deputies to follow the same path.

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: Deputy Laine, in a very able and well-thought-out speech, has made an
2475 interesting and quite plausible case. But, funnily enough, he came in the States the same time as me, but he went out and did effective work in the community and expertise. He will remember that, once upon a time when we first sat here, there were 57 Members. This is a general speech as well although I do of course support the amendment. (*Laughter*) They were elected in a variety of ways
2480 from Island-wide Conseillers to Douzaine representatives, but however they were elected, vacancies were filled.

Sadly, there was a time when we had almost a jurat system of elected Aldermen, the Conseillers were elected from the Electoral College, and there was a spate of deaths in the early 1980s, but those seats were filled. It is a basic premise of the rule of law of democracy that we follow our laws, our system of Government, our basic election laws from 1948. They may need reform, there are lots
2485 of arguments about whether we need 37, 38, 35, 33 Deputies. That is not the point. We had an election for 38 and we have 38 places and plus the two from Alderney where they are elected, but what we are not doing is changing the Reform Law.

As Deputy Hansmann Rouxel has pointed out, and former Deputy Roffey in his column, our Reform Law says there should be 38 of us. Now, Deputy Vermeulen and Deputy Laine have made
2490 the point that they would have encouraged others to have voted differently at the start of the term, when we reversed the earlier decision from the then SACC Committee led by the then Deputy Meerveld. I did not agree with that decision at the time. I always wanted one for one by-election. The previous States had entertained two vacancies and then three seemed even more. It was a subtle attempt by some campaigners to reduce the cost of Government by reducing the
2495 number of Members. That was the undertone. Of course, if you do not have a Member, you do save nominally on their salary.

I think we have had two very curious arguments so far, apart from not following our Reform Law. The first is not to do yo-yo government but, in a way, to do yo-yo government because first of all we voted to do it for three, then the new States and a new mandate comes in and, by a strong
2500 majority, votes to have a by-election, and then it turns out within a short period of time a by-election occurs. But Deputy Laine is saying let us say we got it wrong before and go back. That is odd.

Of course, one of the criteria where the issue of having by-elections was reduced was when you had it just close to a general election. I believe in previous years the time was extended so as not to waste resources with just a few months left. Now, as this vacancy unhappily has occurred at the very
2505 beginning of our term, and the winning candidate, assuming we support it, which I hope we will, will have hopefully at least three years' membership of the Chamber, that surely is a stronger reason than two years or one year.

If we held it, we cannot really debate whether we should have it for three or not, that is not the Proposition today. But, if you did hypothetically wait for another vacancy or third vacancy, and there

2510 were none last term, then you might end up filling all three with 18 months to go. Would that be wise? I think not. Because there may not be vacancies on Committees, but we saw only last month there was a vacancy on Transport Licensing, and we do get people changing and moving Committees. So I think that would happen, and some of us do not sit on the Committees anyway.

2515 But, for me, the by-election is not just conforming with the Reform Law, but it represents an opportunity for a former Member or a new Member, a person unused to politics, to enter our Assembly and contribute for three years. We heard only earlier the point in the SACC President's excellent speech and responses that there is a call for more diversity, for a wider range of candidates, for people from different backgrounds. This is an opportunity. The winning candidate may well be a specialist in areas that we need – from IT to social policy – or may well be somebody who could
2520 come up with constructive ideas within Government for saving money.

Deputy Laine gave an interesting perspective when he said turnouts for by-elections are low, they are quite low, but 30% would be good. We have had a certain amount of dialogue with somebody who had knowledge of previous Island-wide elections and resents the fact that we perhaps have cut this down, because Deputy Laine said we are having a mini general election.
2525 I would say that we are not. We are not only not using the IT equipment, but we are not publishing a booklet, we are not distributing it to everybody, we are not holding events at the Beaucamps school. Some might want that to happen, but we have really restrained it to more of a heart to mind basic campaign.

Let me put it like this, an election that is filled is an opportunity for a candidate to come forward and, not only somebody perhaps who was not available at the time of the election and can bring new perspectives, but more importantly will be able to test the weather to see where we are at. Because a by-election campaign would be useful to all of us, to SACC, to know how a first-past-the-post system works Island-wide, only been done once before in a very different era and different system, and whether we can make improvements to electoral systems, whether we say they are
2530 Island-wide or whatever. I would have liked to have seen an experiment whereby it would be possible to vote electronically Island-wide, but that is going a bit beyond this.

But look across the water to another place where they are having a by-election close to the centre of Manchester. That by-election, admittedly in a different system, the constituency, will see ideas and perspectives from the right to the left, from environmentalists to people who want a different kind of reform; I think it will be groundbreaking. It will make an impact. I think a by-election here would be significant.
2540

I will close by saying Deputy Laine reminded us of two by-elections that did not produce enormous turnout, but they were quite significant. One was from my old area of St Peter Port North. Deputy Parkinson was elected against two other candidates, one of whom was controversial perhaps, but we gained Deputy Parkinson back. It was easy for him to get a really strong mandate a few months later, and I am sure we benefited from his premature return rather than having to wait a year.
2545

The other by-election, the last one we have ever had, maybe we should not have had it because we would not have had Deputy Inder elected. If we had the attitude we do not need to fill the seat because of a personal tragedy, then we would have lost Deputy Inder. We would not have had his impact with the charter group, we would not have had the sea wall requête, we would not necessarily have seen Island-wide voting because he was the President of SACC that delivered it.
2550

So it would be galling if he and his supporters do not support the by-election. We need the by-election, not only to conform with law, not only to conform with our politics, but to bring forward new talent and new ideas and ensure that the mandate we received last year can be reinforced by engagement with the public.
2555

The Bailiff: Deputy Ozanne.

2560 **Deputy Ozanne:** Thank you, sir.

My speech too is linked to general debate because I do see the two as completely intrinsic, as have my predecessors who have spoken.

2565 I do find Deputy Laine's clear and well-argued case very persuasive and one that I am likely to support. Context is everything and I do remember that it was our first proper States' meeting where we were asked to make a decision on whether it should be three or one Member standing for a by-election. As a new Member, I felt quite overwhelmed by processes; I did not know how to make amendments, I did not really know the system, and I also did not want to be seen to be throwing a
2570 spanner in the works, for want of a better word, in our first meeting. But had I had the courage, I would have put an amendment down and I am going to raise the idea here about a process that I was used to in a different electoral system where we used to have to elect 480 people from 44 different constituencies around the country for five years.

2575 The system there was that for the first half of that term, if a place became vacant, the process was to automatically go to the next person on the list, because they had been democratically elected. If that person did not want to stand or for whatever reason had moved out of that constituency or no longer felt able, it went to the next person. Because ultimately it saved money, but it also, and I know who the next person on the list is – I can see people laughing – but that does not take me away from the point that that is a democratic mandate that they hold, and it is one that the Island has bought into.

2580 Context is everything and the context we now have is that we have a public who are sceptical about our ability to make wise and common-sense decisions. We have a public who question whether we really truly are committed to making savings. We have a public who think that we put our own processes and ways of working ahead of their needs. I can think of no better way than sending a very clear message to the public that we are willing to change and to do things differently. I do not think we should be slaves to procedures and legislation. They should be slaves to us.

2585 We, as masters, or dare I say mistresses, should be in the driving seat and find creative ways around our rules and regulations where common sense dictates. So my question to SACC would be: what would it take? Would it take a sursis perhaps of this particular proposition to ask that they come back with a recommendation to look at how we change or delay this by-election, because I also agree with Deputy Vermeulen, that we have shown that we can work with 37 of us and the savings that that would generate would be a token towards what the general public are clamouring
2590 for.

Thank you.

2595 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Dorrity.

Deputy Dorrity: Thank you, sir.

2600 I would like to thank Deputy Laine for his very persuasive speech. This is a very small point, I am not sure whether it is general debate, but anyway. In relation to the point the President of SACC makes in relation to candidate election spends cap, can I ask whether there is any real penalty for any by-election candidate who exceeds the candidate spend limit and, if so, could she detail same in her response?

The Bailiff: That is general debate.

2605 **Deputy Dorrity:** Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Inder on the amendment.

2610 **Deputy Inder:** Yes, weirdly enough, I was going to speak to the amendment. Simply, I will support it because literally it is a case of moving it from a room to another room. That is the point, I remember. But I accept it is such a minor point, I will be supporting the amendment. I will not obviously be supporting the Policy Letter, but it is the case you have got to, if SACC want to get us

back into shape and maybe it either wins or loses, but if SACC decide they want to move it from one room to another because they found out the badminton is in one room or something like that, that is fine by me.

The Bailiff: Deputy Cameron.

Deputy Cameron: Thank you, sir.

While I recognise the need to identify a suitable venue for the by-election, and I note the President's comments, the disruption to sport will be minimal. As the political lead for Sport, I am concerned that the Sir John Loveridge Hall, one of the most heavily utilised spaces at Beau Sejour, will be taken out of use and will still impact sporting activities. I understand this will displace sessions including basketball, badminton, kiddie capers, toddler sessions, as well as preventing other regular and casual bookings. I agree with Deputy Leadbeater's suggestion that the amendment could simply refer to Beau Sejour rather than specify the Sir John Loveridge Hall.

Could the Committee confirm what consideration was given to alternative spaces within Beau Sejour before deciding to use the sports hall?

Sir, in response to Deputy Laine's comments that we do not need a by-election, I would simply observe that when a vacancy recently arose on the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture, we only had two Members come forward to fill that position. To me that demonstrates clearly that we need a full complement of Deputies if Committees are to function properly.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: I do not see anyone else. Deputy Williams. Okay, well let us sort out the voting on the amendment first.

So, Deputy Hansmann Rouxel, would you like to reply to the debate on the amendment?

Deputy Hansmann Rouxel: Yes. I will take this opportunity to only reply to those points made about the amendment and not to the general debate.

The Bailiff: General debate comes later.

Deputy Hansmann Rouxel: Yes. So, Deputy Leadbeater asked a technical question and in fact that stems from us having specified the room in the legislation, and it was deemed safer to replace it with the hall. We did, or officers did, look at alternatives, including I did go back and check with them whether we could use different venues. Clearly, no one was anticipating, prior to us deciding on the date of the 29th, a lot of pre-work was done with Beau Sejour and different venues in order to secure at least the super-polling station and crucially the venue where all the votes will be counted. So that venue needs to be big enough to have a manual count. It is not the same as in parish elections where each of the polling stations does their own vote count. There is a central vote count so all of the ballot boxes need to be transported to that central vote count, and that venue needs to be big enough for that.

So the super-polling station, the size of the Sir John Loveridge Hall is big enough to accommodate the super-polling station and then, straight afterwards, the vote count where all of the ballot boxes from the different super-polling stations across the Island will be transported to and take place. So there are a lot of technical details that allow that to happen smoothly. There would not be enough of a benefit in other areas, but we have tried to keep it to a minimum.

For instance, if there is a recount required, the venue needs to be specified where that is going to take place, and preparations have been made in the eventuality that happens, looking for an alternative venue rather than disrupting Beau Sejour over the weekend where it will be fully booked. So, it is a case of trying to accommodate as best we can.

The question I believe Deputy Gabriel asked regarding, it sounded a bit – I do not think the word was 'unsafe' – but unusual to have the polling station and vote count. I do not think it is unusual,

2665 the parishes do it all the time, and again the size of the venue allows that preparations, putting up tables and things in preparation for being ready to have all the different counters or understanding where everything is, those can start to take place before the polling station is closed. But obviously the ballots and all of that process only happens once the polling station is completely dismantled and the vote count starts.

2670 Who else spoke to the amendment? Deputy Cameron, again I have hopefully addressed some of his concerns. I understand that the issue with Beau Sejour is something that falls under the Committee for Education, Sport & Culture and, because of the theatre having to close, rearrangement of a lot of spaces and as much as possible trying to accommodate those rebookings.

I thank Deputy Inder for his support for this amendment.

2675

The Bailiff: Well, Members of the States, it is now time to vote on Amendment 1 to the by-election 2026. It is proposed by Deputy Hansmann Rouxel, seconded by Deputy Burford, and I will ask the Greffier to open the voting on it please.

2680

There was a recorded vote.

Carried – Pour 29, Contre 3, Ne vote pas 4, Did not vote 1, Absent 2

Pour	Contre	Ne vote pas	Did not vote	Absent
Blin, Chris	Cameron, Andy	Hill, Edward	Niles, Andrew	Goy, David
Burford, Yvonne	McKenna, Liam	Ozanne, Jayne		Humphreys, Rhona
Bury, Tina	Vermeulen, Simon	Sloan, Andy		
Camp, Haley		Snowdon, Alexander		
Collins, Garry				
Curgenvin, Rob				
de Sausmarez, Lindsay				
Dorrity, David				
Falla, Steve				
Gabriel, Adrian				
Gollop, John				
Hansmann Rouxel, Sarah				
Helyar, Mark				
Inder, Neil				
Kay-Mouat, Bruno				
Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha				
Laine, Marc				
Leadbeater, Marc				
Malik, Munazza				
Matthews, Aidan				
Montague, Paul				
Oswald, George				
Parkinson, Charles				
Rochester, Sally				
Rylatt, Tom				
St Pier, Gavin				
Strachan, Jennifer				
Van Katwyk, Lee				
Williams, Steve				

2685 **The Bailiff:** In respect of Amendment 1 proposed by Deputy Hansmann Rouxel and seconded by Deputy Burford, there voted in favour 29 Members, 3 Members voted against, 4 Members abstained, 3 Members did not participate in the vote, and therefore I will declare Amendment 1 duly carried.

We now go into general debate, noting that some people have already spoken in general debate.
Deputy Burford.

2690

Deputy Burford: Thank you, sir.

2695 Just briefly, the majority of this Assembly, as has been mentioned, were given the opportunity
to decide whether one or three vacancies should trigger a by-election, and that was last July.
Overwhelmingly, they voted for that to be one. It was not a complex decision. I listened to what
Deputy Ozanne says, but fundamentally the majority of Deputies voting on it were returning
Deputies, so that should have been quite straightforward, and it was generally a very straightforward
decision. Costs, which were significantly in excess of £75,000, were touted at that time and
nevertheless a vast majority voted for the Reform Law to remain that one vacancy would trigger a
2700 by-election.

Therefore, this Policy Letter responds to that confirmation of the Reform Law and simply asks
Members whether 29th April is the date they would like the by-election held, as opposed to whether
a by-election should be held.

2705 Now, clearly, if everyone or a majority vote against the Policy Letter, SACC will be required to do
something because we will then be in a position where we still have the law saying a by-election
should be held, we just have not agreed on the date. So obviously we would need to look at that
pragmatically, but I am hoping we do not get to that point.

2710 Deputy Vermeulen, just picking up on the cost of the by-election, it is always very difficult to talk
about figures in this Assembly when we are talking about them in the context of a £700 million
budget, and yet we talk about £75,000, and it is almost impossible not to think of that in household
terms, and we think that is quite a lot of money, which it clearly is. But in context, it is less than
one-hundredth of 1% for an Assembly that spends £2 million a day, or a Government that spends
£2 million a day.

2715 **Deputy Vermeulen:** Point of correction.

The Bailiff: Point of correction, Deputy Vermeulen.

2720 **Deputy Vermeulen:** If we have got to do three separate by-elections, there is a significant
greater cost than if you just take, for instance, Deputy Ozanne's suggestion of the next person that
narrowly avoided getting in by 10 votes.

The Bailiff: That is not really a point of correction, Deputy Vermeulen.

2725 **Deputy Burford:** No, I could have given way to you, Deputy Vermeulen.

Yes, I hear Deputy Ozanne's suggestion, it is not something that is afforded in the Reform Law,
it is not something that we have discussed, I doubt that it is something that I would support, and
so I really do not think it informs today's decision on that basis.

2730 I have also heard other Members talking about the fact that now there are maybe four, five, six
names in the frame as to who might be throwing their hat into the ring on this by-election, that this
is shading Members' views as to which way they might vote. I hope that is not the case, but it
certainly is not a basis on which to decide this vote.

2735 The best speech so far was in fact from my colleague on SACC, Deputy Gollop, who really picked
up on a lot of very pertinent points, and it is not just because Deputy Gollop is a fellow Committee
member on SACC, because he would always inform Members of his views whether they were in
accordance with the Committee's view or not. But he makes the point in particular that a new person
could bring a great deal to the Assembly, which would put both their salary and the cost of the
by-election into the shade. Now clearly there is no guarantee of that, but if we just treat every
potential Member of this Assembly as a cost and not somebody who can bring something to the
2740 party, then it is time to all pack up and go home.

But my final and perhaps most important point is in relation to what Deputy Laine said, and he
was talking about rebuilding trust in democracy and that not many people are going to turn out for
this, the public do not want a by-election. But I honestly cannot see how we can rebuild trust in
democracy by cancelling a democratic process. (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.)

2745 Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Camp.

Deputy Camp: Thank you, sir.

2750 I think rather predictably this debate seems to be about the growing suggestion we should not hold this by-election. Two arguments are clearly being advanced. First, that it costs approximately £75,000. The second, that we can manage perfectly well with 37 Deputies instead of 38. At first glance those arguments may sound pragmatic, sensible even. But when examined properly, they are neither constitutionally sound nor strategically wise. (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.)

2755 Let me start with the cost, £75,000 is not insignificant. No public money should ever be treated casually, but perspective matters. We are an Assembly that oversees hundreds of millions in annual expenditure. We regularly debate capital programmes in the tens of millions. We tolerate – and I choose that word deliberately – levels of inefficiency that dwarf this figure. If we are prepared to allow systemic waste measured in millions but suddenly become fiscally austere when it comes to democratic representation, then we are not being consistent, we are being selective. Democracy should not be the line item where we decide to economise.

2760 The second argument is that we can manage with 37 Members, and perhaps we can, but that is not the point. The electorate voted for 38 Deputies under an Island-wide mandate. The law requires that vacancies be filled. Those rules were not written accidentally. They were written to ensure continuity of representation and stability of constitutional practice. If we now decide, because it is administratively convenient or financially attractive not to replace a departing Member, then we are not merely saving money, we are altering the composition of this Assembly mid-term without formal reform. That is constitutional change by omission, and I do not believe constitutional decisions should ever be made by the back door.

2770 If this Assembly genuinely believes that 38 Deputies are necessary, let us bring forward proper reform. Let us consult. Let us amend the legislation prospectively. Let us apply changes for the next term. But we do not change the rules halfway through the match. Precedent matters. If we do not fill the vacancy this time, what happens next time? What if two Members resign? What if a resignation changes the balance on a major policy issue? Once we establish that vacancies are optional, we make representation conditional, and that is not a road we should begin to travel.

2775 This is not about protecting incumbents. It is not about favouring any political outcome. It is about maintaining the integrity of the system voters endorsed. Three years remain in this term. That is not a brief interval. That is a substantial period in which every citizen is entitled to the full complement of representation they voted for. Democratic legitimacy is not a discretionary expense. It is the foundation on which everything else rests. If we wish to be cost-disciplined, then let us be serious about cost-discipline across the board. Let us tackle structural inefficiency. Let us challenge systemic overspend. Let us reform how Government operates. But let us not send the message that representation is expendable when budgets tighten.

2780 Sir, I believe the cleaner, more principled and more defensible course is to follow the law as it stands, uphold the mandate that was given and allow the electorate to decide who should occupy the 38th seat. If reform is desired, let it be deliberate. If savings are required, let them be structural. But let us not erode constitutional certainty for the price of 0.01% of annual expenditure.

Thank you.

2790 **The Bailiff:** Deputy de Sausmarez.

Deputy de Sausmarez: Thank you, sir.

I would like to commend Deputy Camp on an excellent speech and she has made many points that I would have made, but she has done so very articulately.

2795 I just want to add, I was keen to stand and speak immediately after Deputy Camp because I would like to just add another perspective, which is what this looks like from beyond our shores.

Many of us at lunchtime attended a presentation which underscored the point or underscored the value of our political stability, and that is not just to the Island's reputation generally, that is to our economy. That was an economic value that was underscored as a finding of a big bit of work.

2800 We are a small, autonomous jurisdiction and we do need to show that we are credible and competent in that autonomy. As Deputy Camp and Deputy Burford have recently set out, we have a law that requires us to hold by elections. So the question today should not be whether we hold a by-election. This Policy Letter in front of us, the Propositions in front of us, are about some of the detail of that by-election. The rule of law really does need to come first. As Deputy Camp has said,
2805 if we decide that 37 would be a good number, then we need to do the things required to change the Law. But actually the reason we have 38 Deputies in the Assembly, or 38 seats in this Assembly, is because we held a referendum. I was involved in organising and running that referendum as I was on SACC, and I think actually the Vice-President of SACC at the time. I can assure any Members that were not involved, it cost considerably more than £75,000. So I would just be wary of false
2810 economies there, but the rule of law really does need to come first.

I would just really urge Members to have a think about how this looks from beyond our shores. If we are voting to not hold a by-election, the nuance would be lost. Some of the details about, 'Oh, well, we did not want to spend a bit of money' is just really not a good look. Obviously, the UK has had a similar example. They were planning to not hold a range of – I will give way to Deputy Ozanne.

2815

Deputy Ozanne: Thank you, Deputy de Sausmarez.

Sir, I presume I am able to speak. I do not know if I need to be called. Yes, thank you.

I just want to pick up the point she is making about the rule of law. The rule of law is there to serve us and we obviously need to respect it, but when it does not serve us we have the power, indeed it is our job, to reform it. I do urge Members to consider what the implications could be of
2820 us turning this down. What we are saying is that we do not want to have a by-election on 29th April, which sends a very clear message to SACC that that is not the date. But we could then use the time to change the Law and do, as I have been proposing, a far more cost-effective way of taking our democratically-elected group and looking at the next name down.

2825 So we are not shackled into having to do something just because the Law always says that. We are supposed to be in the driving seat and I really urge people to look at what makes common sense. With all due respect to the Law, it is there to serve us.

Deputy de Sausmarez: I thought I had actually just addressed those exact points.

2830 Deputy Ozanne is exactly right. We are legislators. We actually create the Law and we had already decided; this very Assembly had already made a conscious decision. We had had a whole debate about whether we should allow a democratic deficit to accrue over up to three vacancies. That was the first decision that this Assembly actually made. So we have already had a debate about that. Deputy Ozanne is right. That decision could be looked at again, but the reason we have 38 seats in
2835 this Assembly is not because we decided that was appropriate, it was because the electorate decided that that is what was appropriate. We went out to the people. Guernsey's first and to date only referendum was held on that very question. It is a constitutional issue and my belief is that if we are going to make any fundamental changes, and I think a change in the number of seats in this Assembly would be a fundamental change, then it is right to go back and ask the electorate again.
2840 If we were to do that, then that would cost significantly more than the £75,000 that some Members are suggesting would be saved.

I will give way to Deputy Burford.

Deputy Burford: I thank the Chief Minister for giving way.

2845 I think the fundamental point here, listening to what Deputy Ozanne was saying, is that changing it now would be making a decision in the face of the event, which is entirely different to making it when you are not presented with that event. Therefore, SACC, as people know, are under a resolution to look at, among other things, the number of Deputies in this Assembly. That is a

2850 workstream for this term and it will be done, but it will be done not in the face of a vacancy, it will be done as a separate piece of work consulted with all of this Assembly. So hopefully that would provide some comfort to Deputy Ozanne.

Thank you.

2855 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** No, I am not giving way.

Deputy Ozanne: I just wanted a point of correction.

Deputy de Sausmarez: On who, on me?

2860 **Deputy Ozanne:** Well, on both of you actually. *(Laughter)* On you.

The Bailiff: Just a minute. You cannot have a point of correction in respect of somebody who the speaker has given way to. You can have a point of correction on what Deputy de Sausmarez has been saying.

2865 **Deputy Ozanne:** On Deputy de Sausmarez's point.

The Bailiff: All right. So, point of correction, Deputy Ozanne.

2870 **Deputy Ozanne:** I am not looking to reduce the number of Deputies, I am looking to have a different way of electing the final one. So I am not proposing 37, which is what you appeared to be saying I was doing.

2875 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** I think that is a fundamental change to our system of government, absolutely. I was quite surprised to hear a suggestion that there is already some mandate for this. To me, that is a profound change and is one that would need much more serious consideration.

2880 But anyway, we have an interesting example nearby and very recently, in fact, in the UK where there was a suggestion that a number of council elections were to not go ahead. Again, it was really expedience was the main – there were some structural issues. I think actually there were a number of arguments that I could understand why the proponents of that suggestion were making it, but the point is that that decision was swiftly U-turned because of the democratic deficit. It would have denied the opportunity for a good number of people – I think about 4 million people – to vote. To Deputy Laine's point earlier, the turnout itself is not the point. The point is giving people the opportunity to vote. That is the critical point. Actually, the legal advice with respect to the situation
2885 in the UK was clearly unequivocal because otherwise that U-turn would not have been made. It was a decision that was about to be judicially reviewed.

I think again, going back to really my point, I am just urging Members to please look at how this would look to people looking at Guernsey from the outside. I think the nuance would be lost. I think it would look like an abuse of power. That was certainly the suggestion in the case of the UK. I am
2890 worried that that would be ascribed to us if we were to make a kneejerk decision, as Deputy Burford says, in response to a specific set of circumstances.

Certainly, we know that eyebrows have been raised. It is always very uncomfortable, and there is a fair amount of disquiet when in some of our even closer jurisdictions there are uncontested elections, for example. I just think that while we have a Law in place that requires us to hold a
2895 by-election, choosing to not do so would reflect poorly on how highly we hold democratic values and the rule of law.

So for that reason I would urge Members to support the Propositions.

2900 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Gabriel.

Deputy Gabriel: Thank you, sir.

2905 I believe it is vitally important that Guernsey holds a by-election to fill a vacancy in the States of Guernsey because of how our political system is structured and how democratic legitimacy works in the Island. By a majority we have agreed that the level of vacancy to trigger a by-election is one seat or one vacancy. I will explain here why it matters to me and why I think it should matter to you, too.

2910 In 2020 we changed our method of elections and how Guernsey elects its Deputies through Island-wide voting. We know each Deputy represents the entire electorate, not just a district. If a seat becomes vacant and then is not filled, voters lose part of that representation. The Assembly no longer reflects the full democratic choice made at the last general election.

2915 Voting against these Propositions here today undermines democracy. Along with 179 other Parliaments, we are members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the CPA. Those members around the world on a regular basis attempt to build on a global commitment to safeguard, support and strengthen parliamentary democracy. In some jurisdictions, democracy is not as strong as it is here in Guernsey. Ask yourself, Members, how does not setting a date or vetoing a by-election contribute to that commitment? In my view, sir, it clearly does not.

2920 A by-election restores democratic balance. The States of Guernsey is designed to operate with 38 Deputies. If there is a vacancy, voting margins become tighter. Major policy decisions could be influenced by one missing vote. Committee memberships may be disrupted. Filling the seat ensures proper functioning and fair decision-making. Guernsey has a committee-based system, meaning individual Deputies carry significant influence. Every vote in this place can matter on taxation, housing, health, economic policy. Leaving a seat empty for too long weakens public confidence in our system. There is a strong constitutional principle that elected offices should not remain vacant without good reason, and a by-election upholds constitutional practice. It reinforces democratic accountability and, in the case of a vacancy, most importantly voters deserve the opportunity to reassess current political issues, choose someone who reflects their present priorities, and influence the direction of the Assembly mid-term.

2925 In summary, sir, we are constitutionally bound to deliver a by-election in Guernsey to maintain the current number of Deputies, and this is not just a procedural formality. It protects democratic representation, legitimacy, fairness and effective governance. I urge Members to vote for the Policy Letter and all its Propositions.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

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Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, sir.

2940 I am going to be supporting the Propositions. I would just like, when Deputy Hansmann Rouxel sums up, if she can articulate to Members what happens if this is not supported. Do we find ourselves in a place where there is no by-election or do we find ourselves with our SACC going away and having to come back at some point and bring further proposals for a by-election and knocking the date further past 29th April? She is nodding her head, sir, so I believe that is probably what would happen.

2945 The last States agreed that a by-election would happen with one vacancy. That was reaffirmed at the start of this term, as pointed out by Deputy Hansmann Rouxel, by this Assembly. We have had this discussion; we have made this decision. None of us foresaw that we would be needing a by-election this early in this term, certainly not under the circumstances that arose. None of us foresaw that because we may have made different decisions at the start of the term if we had. But we have made those decisions and the Law is the Law.

2950 As articulated by Deputy de Sausmarez and by Deputy Burford, if we want to make changes to the Law, it is a piece of work that SACC is looking at anyway, and that can happen. But we find ourselves now in a situation where the Law tells us that we have to have a by-election. So we have to have a by-election, it is as simple as that. So I would urge Members to really think deeply about

2955 rejecting these proposals because they will come back again and all it is going to do is delay and potentially add further cost. So, please, if you do not want a delay and you do not want to add cost, support the Propositions.

The Bailiff: Deputy Helyar.

2960 **Deputy Helyar:** Thank you, sir.

I just remind Members that it was already the settled view of the last Assembly that we should not have a by-election for up to three spare candidates. That was the settled view until the current SACC decided to reverse that.

2965 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** Point of correction.

The Bailiff: Point of correction, Deputy de Sausmarez.

2970 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** I think that is an unusual way to frame the situation. If I recall correctly, because it is a change to the Reform Law, it required a super majority. I will probably get told off for using that term, but it required two-thirds of the States' Assembly to approve the change. As it was, it scraped through and then a legitimate mechanism was used where more than seven Deputies, which is the minimum threshold, signed a letter to the Bailiff in order to bring it back. So it was not SACC bringing it back of their own volition, it was required to come back. The legislation was required to come back to this Assembly and that is why there was a debate on it again.

2975 So I would say that to say it was the settled view of the previous Assembly, it was the previous Assembly who lodged the petition to look at it again.

Deputy Helyar: Thank you.

2980 So going on from that, we have been led to believe by the Chief Minister that the referendum was a choice as to the number of Deputies. This is arrant nonsense. Option A: elect 38 Deputies. Option B: elect 38 Deputies. Option C: elect 10 Deputies plus 28, which is 38. Option D: elect 38. Option E: elect 38. There is no choice of how many are chosen. That is not a referendum decision; that is a mandate to keep 38. What nonsense; absolute nonsense. I brought a requête during the last section in the States to reduce numbers by 10, and that was refused, but an amendment brought by Deputy Inder tried to reduce the number by five, and that was a score draw. It was a 19-all draw, so it very narrowly failed to get through.

2985 I think the very strong public view is that we should not replace Deputy Le Tocq. I think it is very overwhelmingly the view. In fact, I think the view about this is stronger than the view about GST. (**A Member:** Absolutely.) This is quite wrong and I am not going to vote for it. We should not do this. It should not have been brought as a by-election. We should reduce the numbers by more than one, in my view. I may bring another requête to try and do that.

Let us please get on and vote.

2995 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Parkinson.

Deputy Parkinson: Thank you, sir.

3000 Well, I have a fair amount of history in relation to this subject. Deputy Gollop has reminded the Assembly that I was re-elected in a by-election in 2015, I think it was for St Peter Port North. In the last States' term I seconded the amendment brought by Deputy Inder, which would have reduced the number of States' Members by five. Unfortunately, we were not successful and I am sure Deputy Inder shares my disappointment that we were not successful. (*Laughter*)

At the start of this States' term I voted to increase the number of vacancies that would be required before a by-election would happen to three. I think six of us voted for that – Deputy Laine,

of course, was one of them – but we lost that vote very substantially. We were left in a position where we need to hold the by-election for a single vacancy under the Law.

I obviously have sympathy with the views expressed by Deputy Laine, because I agree that we do not need to replace a single Member from the point of view of the function of the States, and I do not think it creates any significant demographic deficit if we have an unfilled vacancy. But I am not going to vote against the amended Propositions in this Policy Letter, mainly for the reasons articulated by Deputy de Sausmarez and others. The time to take a decision on the number of States' Members there should be is not now. We probably should have made a different decision last July, and perhaps SACC will bring a Policy Letter to the States which will argue for a different number of vacancies in the future, and that will be the time to make that decision. I think to vote against this Policy Letter and the Propositions in it would simply be flip-flop government. We just cannot keep changing our minds when that issue is not in front of the Assembly today.

So I think the by-election should go ahead, although I have great sympathy with those who see it as being a waste of money. I personally would continue to vote to reduce the number of States' Members if that ever came back before the Assembly, but I am not going to vote against these Propositions.

The Bailiff: Deputy Bury.

Deputy Bury: Thank you, sir.

I had intended to speak about the proposed by-election because that is what the Policy Letter is about, but obviously the debate has taken a direction around whether it should or should not happen, so I will touch on that first.

While I think some of the arguments made, particularly by Deputy Laine, are reasonable, valid, good arguments, I am slightly perplexed as to why Members who feel quite strongly about this, and there is clearly quite a strength of feeling, why did no one bring an amendment to the Reform Law? Because at the moment the Law dictates that we must have a by-election. While Deputy Laine's points around the signal that we should be sending out around our practicality and our savings, etc., I think the signal it sends if we vote against having a by-election reinforces a narrative that the public think we all think anyway, that we are above the Law; we can just ignore Laws; we do not even need to bring an amendment to change it, we will just say no. So I am quite perplexed why no one brought an amendment to the Reform Law.

I am not going to major on this point too much. I think some really good points have been made, and I would also like to commend Deputy Camp on her speech. I think she made all of the points that I would love to have made and far more eloquently, so I will just echo the sentiments, I think.

It is very clearly stated in the CPA BIMR report, that we might get to one day (*Laughter*), that if you are making change to legislation, rules around elections, etc., international good practice is to make sure that you do it at least one year before that election. I am sure the same applies to by-elections. It is a standard practice.

To Deputy de Sausmarez's point, I think it will make us look immature and not a mature jurisdiction that is able to follow its own rules, and reactive, to Deputy Burford's point. This will not be a measured, evidence-based, thought-through piece of work. This will be a reaction to a situation. As she said, we make different decisions in those two different sets of circumstances. Reform should be purposeful, not reactive.

Anyway, moving on to the part that I actually wanted to talk about, which was the details of the by-election, it is only brief and I think it would be remiss of me not to speak on this point, having advocated so hard last term. I do understand the reasoning behind having no manifesto booklet from a cost perspective. However, I do find it quite difficult, the disparity that creates between the previous election and this one and how that may affect engagement. The reason I think it would be remiss of me to not speak on it is that I advocated hard for the expenses limits to come down, and that was on the basis that the manifesto booklet existed. Some of the arguments at that time were that £3,000 was not enough money for a single person to print enough manifestos and to send

them to everybody they would need to. That level will still exist, so any candidates in the by-election I imagine will not be able to do that, and we are also now not providing them the ability that they still will land on everybody's doorstep. So I find that a bit difficult.

3060 I do understand the reasoning behind it, but I think it could potentially affect engagement. Maybe it is the way that we are trying to increase youth engagement, because percentages-wise it might knock a lot of older people out who do not engage with the internet. So percentages wise, it might look like more young people are engaged. So that is a slight concern, and I would be interested to hear from the President in her summing up if those discussions were had in SACC and how that might be tackled. It is not a reason that I am going to vote against, but it is a concern. I do
3065 think we have to be wary, particularly with our demographics, that not everybody is engaged online. That is actually not just about demographics; sometimes it is about accessibility financially.

So that is my major concern with the proposals on the table, but other than that – I think I might know the answer to this – just around the electoral roll. In the Island-wide election, the last election, the electoral roll closed several weeks before the election date. To the point again that is made in the CPA report, I think that does affect turnout because people do not even know who is standing
3070 by the time they have had to register. Your favourite person in the world might end up standing and you did not realise it and you did not register. In this situation, the electoral roll is closing a matter of days before the election. I am assuming that the answer is probably because it will only be a few extra people on it, and so the checks are not as arduous, but I would just like to double
3075 check that because I really do feel that from an electoral roll point of view we need to hopefully nail it by the next election that people are not having to re-register each time round and also so far in advance. Because it is barely even touching people's radars at that point and then it closes and you are done. So, those are my questions about the actual by-election.

Thank you.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Curgenvén.

Deputy Curgenvén: Thank you, sir.

3085 Just two quick points. Well, kind of. I was going to make a joke at Deputy Inder's expense. He is not listening but I think I am a bit too late to the party. (*Laughter*) I will tell you later.

First, I very often – and I am looking at Deputy Helyar here – hear that unelected officials run the show (**Deputy Gollop:** Yes.) Thank you, Deputy Gollop. If you happen to believe that, why would you want to cut the number of elected officials?

3090 Finally, as others had rightly pointed out before me, we are not talking about one person here. We are talking about at the moment 5,500 people or round about 5,500 people. That is the cut-off for having the privilege of being in this Chamber. Taken with the £75,000 cost of the by-election, that is just £13.63 per person. Please do not take this away from the people.

Thank you, sir.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Blin.

Deputy Blin: Thank you, sir.

3100 I have been really impressed by the quality of most of the debate, and particularly Deputy Camp and Deputy de Sausmarez, and I will tell you why those two. I thought I was being very straightforward on this. When this debate began I had some real reservations. We are not in an easy financial position. We have had the overspends, the errors. We have had projects that have damaged the confidence of the public in us. Islanders are feeling under pressure and quite reasonably expect us to be careful with public money. I have been following that thought process for the last few weeks. We just have to sometimes adapt to what we have to do when we cannot
3105 just put money.

When I calculated the cost, yes, I was impressed that we got the cost down from SACC for the by-election to £75,000, although I did find the same as Deputy Bury, the £3,000 is strange because

3110 they do not have the support of the other aspects, but then it is meant to be a smaller election. Then also there is the salary, the three years of salary, in the late £48,000, £49,000, multiplied by three years. So you are talking £150,000, £200,000 for the remainder, so that is not a small commitment, but I say it because we have to acknowledge it openly.

3115 I have also heard from various members of the public, friends, businesses, that we can continue with just 37 Members instead of 38 for the remaining three years. On the face of it, and I was kind of going along with this, it was practical and it was an economical and pragmatic option. (A Member: Hear, hear.) Having listened to the debate today, I mentioned a couple of individuals who have actually made me reflect on this. I have come to the conclusion it is actually not the right course, particularly for my vote. The Islanders, the Island, voted for a 38-Member Assembly. That is the structure we are operating under and the Law provides that when a vacancy arises it is filled. So that was not accidental; it was designed, it was voted and that is what we have done. So could we 3120 function with 37? Yes, easy, but that is not the point now. The point is whether we start having exceptions because it feels financially convenient. It feels that we are demonstrating a saving at the moment, but once we begin down that road it becomes easier and easier to justify it each time with any change we want to make.

3125 So here I go against the pragmatic part because democracy is not cost free. It never has been; it never will be. We still yet need to trim when the finances are tight. So it does not mean we are not being cautious about expenditure. We are not throwing this out in the wind to say, 'All is okay now'. We do need to revisit how we look at the by-elections or how we look at the structures there, but not at this point. I am following on from Deputy Leadbeater with his comment: what will happen if we actually do not support this?

3130 So I think this is now about the consistency and it is the framework, it is the Law, and we have to follow it. So, really, after these speeches, and I am very grateful to my colleagues in the Assembly for having expressed their views so clearly, I will be supporting the policy.

Thank you, sir.

3135 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Williams.

Deputy Williams: Thank you, sir.

3140 I would just like to say, I am fully supportive of Deputy Laine's speech. I thought it was very eloquently put. I was one of the six who voted last summer – so for consistency I am keeping to it – against the proposal of going to an election for just one candidate. So let us save the money on the election and three years' salary. We can survive with 37, and I think if you went to the public and said, 'What about it?' they would say, 'Shoulder the work and get on with it. It is there to be done for the 37 of you and you have to shoulder the work'. So I think we should reject the proposal and we should revert to having an election when there are three vacancies.

3145 Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Oswald.

Deputy Oswald: Thank you, sir.

3150 My thoughts very much echo those of Deputy Blin, and I thank everybody for the very high quality of the debate we have had to date. So far I have changed my mind at least twice (*Laughter*) but I have come down to the view that I will be supporting this proposal for the arguments raised.

3155 I would echo Deputy Ozanne's view as to how many of us new to the Assembly voted in our first vote. I shared her thoughts. I know there are only a third of us as newbies, and clearly we have heard two votes from new Deputies who want to reject the Proposition and one who wants to accept it, but it was true that I felt at the time I am not very happy about this but I do not want to upset the apple cart. Listening to the very considered debate so far I am now convinced that the right way to go ahead is to accept the Proposition, but I am going to ask that SACC takes a message away from the electorate at the end of this electoral process. Because I, like many others, suspect that turnout

3160 is going to be very low and the electorate will probably be delivering a verdict on the process to us in the result of that election. The commonest question I am asked at the moment is: what constitutes a spoiled paper because I want to send a message to the States?

So I think there will be messages, and I think we are actually going to be in a very much stronger position to review the process of when and where we have by-elections after the procedure rather than before. I totally take Deputy Bury's point of view that any decision has to be made well in advance of any further by-election.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy St Pier.

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Deputy St Pier: Thank you, sir.

I put His Majesty's Comptroller on notice that I have a question, and I know that she has been giving it some thought, but I would be grateful if she is in a position to respond either when I have finished or perhaps before the debate closes. That is really to confirm my understanding of the legal implications of voting this Policy Letter and legislation out.

3175 As I understand it, sir, the Reform Law still requires that there is a by-election. That will remain the case until such time as this Assembly chooses to change the Reform Law. Now, if that is the case, while there is a procedure, as the President of Policy & Resources has set out, for changing the Reform Law that has led to the decision early in this States to require an election for one vacancy rather than three. In that sense, the States, of course, remains the master of its own destiny. However, I would also suggest that there are potentially European Convention on Human Rights issues which are engaged. To cancel, to effectively choose for this States, for the state, for the Government, to cancel a by-election between general elections, even though it can do it within the Reform Law, I think potentially engages the European Convention on Human Rights, Article 3, Protocol 1, which is potentially the right of the electorate to have an election but also the rights of individuals to stand have potentially been breached, and also Article 10 in terms of the right of free expression.

3180 Now, as ever with these issues, it is a grey area. There will be no certainty. It has probably never happened anywhere. It may never be challenged, but that is no reason not to ignore it as an issue. Again, I would be grateful if the Comptroller was able to comment in any way on that.

3185 I think Deputy Camp has given the best speech so far in this debate. It was truly excellent. Deputy Ozanne's comment that the people have given a mandate to the 39th candidate to sit I think is wholly flawed. There is no basis for that. In the electoral system that was operating it was very clear to those who voted that the top 38 would be elected and anybody below that would not. Now, if the 39th candidate is not available, does that mean that the 40th candidate has a mandate? Does it mean the 45th candidate has a mandate or even the 63rd because actually between 39 and 63 none of those people are available or want to do it? All of those issues I think have not been thought through, and it is an illogical position.

3190 Deputy Laine, I found it extraordinary that he – I am not giving way. Deputy Laine, I found it odd that he said we have only just had an election a year ago and, therefore, we do not need this election now, which means are you ever going to have a by-election? Because surely as the clock ticks down your need for a by-election gets less because you get closer to the end, which of course is actually provided for in the Reform Law, that if a vacancy does come up towards the end an election does not need to be held. But to suggest we have just had an election so we do not need to test the public's opinion again seems very odd.

3200 I think the argument that apathy and low turnout is a good reason for not having a by-election is truly bizarre. While I respect Deputy Oswald's position and, in particular, he said listening to the debate and landing where he has, the one point I would challenge is taking a message from a by-election that apathy and low turnout means that we should think about whether we have by-elections at all. If we have low turnout and we treat that as a message that we do not really need elections, that takes us to a very dark and dangerous place. If we have apathy and low turnout, that

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should be presenting us with very real challenges as to why that is the case and how we ensure greater engagement.

3215 This Policy Letter is the price of democracy. It is the price of having a truly bizarre electoral system. If we did not have the electoral system we have, we would not be here. I think it is also worth pointing out that we would not be having this debate if we had had the district system. When vacancies arose in the district system, it was never questioned that we should have a by-election. It has entirely arisen as a result of introducing the bizarre electoral system we have.

3220 The Vienna Commission has already been mentioned by Deputy Bury. Cancelling a by-election because it is inconvenient, in essence, I think really does take us into banana republic territory as to what on earth we think we are doing.

3225 The other comment I would say is, I know it was only a turn of phrase from Deputy Ozanne but she said the Law is there to serve us. No, it is not. The law is there to serve the people. (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) I think that without the consent of the people for this particular group of people to choose, as a convenience or because it feels inconvenient or expensive, to not have a by-election would wholly be the wrong decision. So I would strongly urge Members, however uncomfortable it may be in terms of the expenditure, it would be, for all the reasons that Deputy Camp set out far more articulately than I have done, the wrong decision today. Therefore, the Propositions need to be supported.

3230 I would be grateful for His Majesty's Comptroller.

The Bailiff: Madam Comptroller, are you in a position to offer the Assembly some advice at this stage?

3235 **The Comptroller:** I can try to assist as best I can, sir.

3240 Deputy St Pier is completely correct that there is a right under the European Convention on Human Rights, which is, of course, given effect by the Human Rights (Bailiwick of Guernsey) Law 2000. It is in the First Protocol. It is Article 3 and it provides that there is a right to free elections, but it is not an absolute right. There are absolute rights such as the prohibition against torture which cannot be derogated from or varied in any way, but the right to free elections is actually a qualified right, sir, and I believe also effected by the principle of subsidiarity.

3245 So where we are looking at a situation where there is a by-election for just one vacancy, I would suggest there is a strong argument that the right to free elections is not engaged in any significant way. If it was more than one vacancy, then the position may, of course, differ, sir.

3250 The duty to call for an election actually arises under Article 29(2) of the Reform Law, which makes it mandatory where there is a vacancy for there to be a by-election. So were these Propositions overturned and the Reform Law not amended, SACC would have to come back to the Assembly with further proposals for another election in such way that it considered appropriate. The other alternative is for SACC to come back with an amendment to the Reform Law, which under Article 3 of the Reform Law would require a two-thirds majority for that to be passed. Of course, if it is not passed by a two-thirds majority but passed by a majority, there is a special provision that allows Members to vote it back in seven days, sir.

That is all I have to add, unless anyone requires any further assistance, sir.

3255 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Matthews.

Deputy Matthews: Thank you, sir.

3260 I intend to support the Policy Letter from SACC. I think failing to do so on the basis of really trying to make what I would call something of a tokenistic saving would not be correct. I do understand Members' frustration, in the face of what we have seen as some really great areas of losses and money not being wisely spent, to try and spend every penny wisely, but I really think that SACC have done a good job in getting the cost of it down. A by-election is a normal part of the democratic process. In the UK there is a by-election upcoming in the Thurrock and Basildon

3265 constituency. Now, I do understand we do not have constituencies, it is not a district system, but we should be operating the same principles. When a vacancy arises, a replacement should be filled. As I think had already been mentioned by Deputy de Sausmarez, there are 30-odd council elections in the UK which had been cancelled but are now being put on. The basis for that was really that it would otherwise be a denial of people's democratic rights, which is the basis for their individual rights. So I just do not think it is really credible to say that we should not be holding a by-election.

3270 Just really one point was that Deputy Helyar I think mentioned that his view was that people thought that Deputy Le Tocq's position should not be replaced. Well, that is exactly the opposite of what I have heard from people. In my view, if we did not hold a by-election, although the seat is vacant we are effectively leaving the 2025 election results in place. I think a lot of people would actually welcome the opportunity to choose a replacement for the Member who has obviously had to, quite rightly, resign and stand down. So I entirely support the process of a by-election and

3275 I thank SACC for bringing the Policy Letter.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy Sloan.

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Deputy Sloan: Sir, I find myself in the perverse position of wanting to speak on the amendment but obviously that ship has sailed. *(Laughter)* I do feel it for the kids that are going to miss the support, and I am sorry I was not really following at the time. I abstained at the time.

3285 Yes, let us face it. A by-election, people will whip it up but if history is any judge, there will be a great deal of apathy out there, as there already is for this Assembly. I am not entirely sure many of the public realise we actually have some significant votes on GST and we are going to form and decide how it is going to be this week.

3290 On that basis, I am not in the business of planning to overturn the decision of this Assembly as elected in June 2025 that is already made. We made this decision, one of the first ones we made. Some people might have regrets but the fact of the matter is still the fact of the matter. I voted on a point of principle. When you get to know me better, that is my political Achilles heel. I always vote on a point of principle. Nothing has changed. This is the democratic system we have. I do not necessarily think Island-wide voting is the best system we could have, but it is the system we have and this is the by-election mechanism that comes with it.

3295 In terms of numbers, quite frankly as I intimated to Deputy Laine, if it was a Proposition to actually reduce the number to 37 I would have been in support of that because, quite frankly, a system where we have an even number of Deputies is a fatal flaw, in my view. Since we do not elect the Presiding Officer, we always have an in-built status quo. Therefore, I would have supported that, but I do not support on this particular instance. You reduce the value of one, you reduce the value

3300 of all of us. That may be in line with the views of the members of the public but it is not a robust principle, in my view. So I will be voting for the Proposition, and I wish I had been paying a bit better attention because I would have voted against the amendment.

Thank you very much, sir.

3305 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Collins.

Deputy Collins: Thank you very much, sir.

3310 Obviously, I have a lot of history as regards this topic. Having lost my seat in 2016 with the reduction in numbers, I stood in the by-election and did not succeed, with Deputy Inder jumping over me. Before we started this afternoon, Deputy Inder and I had a lovely conversation and I agreed to put it behind me. *(Laughter)* So I am not going to talk about numbers.

I really just wanted to echo the very wise words from my ESS President, because I had exactly the same issue. In 2020 I decided to post a manifesto to everyone. I could spend £6,000 and I did so. We were in the middle of COVID as well. I thought it was a good idea. For me, having a spending

3315 limit of £3,000 with no booklet does seem to be they are not able to do all two or four pages the way the candidate would like to. This is a point I raised with the CPA team when they came over.

The second point I raised with the CPA team, and again I always like interesting things that no one else picks up, for me the website, if that is what we are focusing on, has always come up with three candidates, which is new candidates, current Deputies and previous Deputies. Of course, 3320 I have actually been all three of those, as a couple of Members in this Assembly have also been. I do not think that is right because in 2025, out of those new candidates, nine were actually previous candidates. So I think there should be four categories. My advice would be that because somebody has stood before, they are not a new candidate. They have been a candidate, stood and been rejected. I felt in the past I had a lot of people who said, 'Oh, previous Deputy, I am not even reading your manifesto, you are a previous Deputy'. You think, well, actually, I voted to reduce my seat. I lost. 3325 In fact, I gained votes in 2016 and in 2020 I gained considerably more votes. But I took the bold decision to get rid of the number 7 seat in the Vale, which obviously led to Deputy Inder being here. For me, I would like SACC to make sure that is looked at, whether that is possible or not.

Going to the final point about Deputy Ozanne's comment, in 2016, brilliant, that would have 3330 been me; but I do agree, I do not think that is the right way to do it. I stood in the by-election. There was four of us that stood. At that time education was a hot topic and I viewed that by-election was about education. Deputy Inder won that fair and square and that is the way it was.

So, for me, I did have reservations about this by-election, about the cost, but I have changed my mind on that. Obviously, this morning we have some good news. We have found £100 million or 3335 £52 million down the back of the sofa, whatever way we want to look at it. I certainly do not mind. It would be wrong for me. I voted to say yes, if we have one vacancy we should have a by-election. Having stood in a by-election, it is not democratically right that I say no, we are not going to do that. I would certainly agree and echo that point again. Any changes should be a year in advance.

So really those were just a couple of points I wanted to raise that maybe SACC could look at and 3340 take into consideration. I wish perhaps I had brought an amendment to maybe consider and we had a debate about whether it should be £3,000 or £6,000, but it is too late for that.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: I will turn back to the President of the States' Assembly & Constitution Committee, 3345 Deputy Hansmann Rouxel, to reply to the debate, taking into account that some Members spoke in general debate on the amendment.

Deputy Hansmann Rouxel: Thank you, sir.

I thank Members for their contributions. There have been some excellent points raised. It is 3350 unfortunate in a way that the amendment debate was a mini general debate so I could not reply to those points then. But I believe that a lot of the points raised initially by Deputy Laine have been addressed by various points.

I think Deputy St Pier's reply to Deputy Laine, something that struck me as Deputy Laine was speaking was the use of the words 'we can manage'. We can manage with less. What has come 3355 across from many Members is what the public want. Throughout our term we will continually reference what the people want. There will be consultations. There will be times where you speak directly to members of the public. But essentially, the only true reflection, the only point where it is governed by a secret vote, where people can genuinely have a direct influence on the makeup of this Assembly and what we do, is an election. This is not for social media commentaries. This is not 3360 knocking social media, but it is not taking account of just the loudest voice. Yes, social media has improved democracy by allowing more people to have direct access and be able to elevate their voice above printed media, above everyone else, and reach more people. The point is that our democracy and any democracy, the only time that you can genuinely say this is what the people want is at an election.

3365 So I caution Members and I am not trying – well, obviously I am trying to change your minds and ask you to support the Propositions to allow democracy to continue. Just to put to bed the

3370 conflation between the number of Deputies and having a by-election, I think it was unfortunate that
it was conflated right at the beginning of the term with the amendment to the Reform Law. I do not
think that that is the correct mechanism. Obviously, we are an Assembly. I think it would be
3375 constitutionally awkward when no other jurisdiction that I could find in the world allows vacancies
to continue through an elected period. I take Deputy Ozanne's point that perhaps we could do it in
a different way, and that was something that when SACC was looking at the Reform Law I did look
into, the different ways that democracies cover casual vacancies. But again I refer to
Deputy de Sausmarez's point very ably raised. I think other Members, and particularly
3380 Deputy Camp, raised this and likened it to changing the rules halfway through the match. Any time
we as an Assembly have the power to change laws, but changing the constitution, changing the
rules halfway through the match is constitutionally unsound. There is a reason why changing the
Reform Law requires a two-thirds majority. It is for that exact point. Those changes should not be
made willy-nilly. They should be made with clear insight.

3380 So, the conflation of number of Deputies and the need for a by-election I think needs to be
separated. SACC is determined to look at the number of Deputies, and that comes from the requête
that Deputy Helyar referenced in the previous term in his speech.

3385 On to Deputy Bury's query, and Deputy Collins again mentioned the spending limits. Now, when
SACC approached the by-election we looked at first of all the general election. When looking at
Island-wide voting, there are a number of mitigations that need to be put into place to try and make
what is a very unique system – and yes, it is agreed by the population by a referendum, but in order
to make it as accessible as possible and allow people to have the best opportunity to vote for the
person that they want or the people, the Assembly, that they want, there are mitigations.
Government is far more involved in the election than they are in other elections, and the manifesto
3390 booklet is an example of that. Yes, Deputy Collins and Deputy Bury are right to point out that
originally in Parish elections the spending limit was based on the premise that it was set at a limit
which would allow a candidate to print a manifesto and distribute it to every household on the
electoral roll in their district. So that is why spending limits were quite low.

3395 Now, when we moved to Island-wide voting, looking at the spending limits, the obvious thing
to do would be to set the spending limit at the level that would still allow you to send out a
manifesto to every household. As Deputy Collins pointed out, in the 2020 election that was set at
£6,000. The issue with that is that that is not accessible to Members who do not have £6,000.
Therefore, having that ability only reserved for those who can afford to pay to do that limits the
candidate's ability and creates an unfair playing ground.

3400 I will give way to Deputy Collins.

Deputy Collins: Just to clarify, are you saying £3,000 is not a lot of money to some people?
Because I know some candidates that would struggle to find £100 spare in this cost of living.

3405 **Deputy Hansmann Rouxel:** Just to clarify, that is absolutely not what I am saying. £3,000 is still
a limit, but what was decided, and Deputy Bury is right, that in reducing the expenditure limit of
candidates to £3,000 but acknowledging that every candidate would still be able to produce a
manifesto and that would be sent out to every household, that would in a way level the playing
field. Now, in looking at the by-election, there are two things that we looked at. One was a lot of
3410 the mitigation – and one of them is the manifesto booklet – is required in order to compare all of
the candidates because you have the manifesto booklet with all of the 80 candidates and then
choose up to 38. So it helps the electorate to have something physically there that they can look
through, and evidence from the survey afterwards does point to that being the reason. It is linked
to the number of candidates and allowing people.

3415 There is also evidence that many people did not feel that printing a manifesto and posting it –
some people asked not to have one and could not opt out of having one. So when looking at the
by-election itself and how we do not need all of the mitigations for the vast number of candidates.
There are things that can happen in the by-election that allow that comparison, allow candidates to

3420 access the public, which cannot happen at the general election because of the number of candidates
so things like hustings, where if you go back to the parish elections where in your parish election
you would have a hustings with all of the candidates that you could vote for.

If somebody did not pitch up to that husting that would mean that you discount them, and now
we have put aside a small budget to enable the Douzaines to host hustings and hopefully those will
be filmed and made available on the website. So, yes, it is not ideal but keeping that spending limit
3425 down also does help limit having some candidates' ability based on their ability to pay rather than
just on the different mechanisms that we can help Members do. There is also the press and being
able to have all 10 candidates in one media, and I am sure the media will get on board with helping
distribute the information from candidates. But it is not the same as a general election where you
need to have something that has all of the candidates, and the expense of that was not warranted
3430 in the circumstances.

Deputy Dorrity, who is waving at me, 'Remember my question,' yes. So there is in the Reform
(Guernsey) Law, if convicted it is you get a fine up to scale 5, which I believe is up to £10,000 at the
moment. You can get a fine. If a candidate goes over the expenditure limit they can be fined. If the
candidate was successful they can lose their seat. Equally, that does highlight an issue which
3435 I mentioned in that there is not an electoral body to oversee that, so it sits outwith a proper part of
the States so when we run an election SACC creates a lot of the run-up to the election and Home
oversees part of the election, but the actual election process itself does not have a body looking
over it, and that is why we need to look at an electoral body.

I thank Members who have contributed, and particularly Deputy Camp for her excellent speech
which set a good tone, and Deputy Parkinson for his pragmatic contribution. I thought
Deputy Curgenvén's point, which is something that I thought of myself, and that certainly will be
something that we will look at when we look at the number of Deputies. But if there is not scrutiny
... there is a vacuum of scrutiny at the moment and Members are feeling stretched on different
Committees. There is only so much scrutiny a Member can complete outside of that, so if we really
3445 want to make sure that we are in the best place to serve the public I would encourage Members to
go out there and get Members to stand for the election to fill that vacant seat, and get out there
and publicise and get the voice of the electorate. This is a point where the electorate has an
opportunity to genuinely have a voice, and particularly since they will be very knife-edge decisions
that we will be making.

That comes to Deputy Oswald's point. I would caution against ever suggesting that Members
spoil their vote. It is democracy, however the best way that members of the public can exercise their
democratic right and their voice is to choose a candidate who aligns with what they think. So
whatever the manifesto is of that candidate, if they are saying, 'No more by-elections; vote for me'
that is a way to access a person's vote. So I encourage you to vote for this and to encourage – if
3455 you want to get rid of by-elections to encourage a candidate to stand who runs on a platform to
get rid of by-elections.

I believe that is all the questions. If there is anything that I have not covered I encourage you all
to vote and let us get on with simply getting on with the by-election and getting on with the
business of this parliament.

3460 **The Bailiff:** Well, Members of the States, there are nine Propositions. The ninth Proposition has
been amended by the successful Amendment 1. I am going to take a vote on Proposition 1 on its
own first, because if Proposition 1 does not carry then the other Propositions are not needed. There
will also be separate votes on each of the Ordinances, which are Proposition 6 through to 9, but
3465 does any Member want to vote differently on Propositions 2 to 5? So we might take Propositions 2
to 5 together, assuming that Proposition 1 carries. So we will open the voting on Proposition 1 on
its own first, please.

There was a recorded vote.

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Carried – Pour 24, Contre 11, Ne vote pas 2, Did not vote 0, Absent 2

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

3475 **The Bailiff:** So in respect of Proposition 1 there voted in favour 24 Members, 11 Members voted against, 2 Members abstained, 2 Members were absent at the vote but I will declare Proposition 1 duly carried.

We will now take Propositions 2 to 5, I think it is collectively, and I will invite the Greffier to open the voting on Propositions 2 to 5 taken together, please.

3480 *There was a recorded vote.*

Carried – Pour 26, Contre 8, Ne vote pas 3, Did not vote 0, Absent 2

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

St Pier, Gavin
Strachan, Jennifer
Williams, Steve

3485 **The Bailiff:** So in respect of Propositions 2 to 5 taken together there voted in favour 26 Members, 8 Members voted against, 3 Members abstained, the same 2 Members absent. I will declare Propositions 2 to 5 also carried.

3490 We will now do each of the Ordinances on their own because I think that is the only appropriate way of dealing with the piece of legislation. So we will take Proposition 6 first, please. We now open the voting please on Proposition 6, which is the By-election Ordinance, 2026.

There was a recorded vote.

Carried – Pour 25, Contre 10, Ne vote pas 2, Did not vote 0, Absent 2

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

The Bailiff: So in respect of the By-election Ordinance, 2026 there voted in favour 25 Members, 10 Members voted against, 2 Members abstained, 2 Members absent. I will declare Proposition 6 carried.

3500 We will now move on to the next of the Ordinances, Proposition 7. This is the new way of voting, which is slower than it used to be. I will invite the Greffier to open the voting on Proposition 7, which relates to the Postal Voting (Amendment) Ordinance, 2026.

There was a recorded vote.

3505 *Carried – Pour 26, Contre 9, Ne vote pas 2, Did not vote 0, Absent 2*

Pour	Contre	Ne vote pas	Did not vote	Absent
Blin, Chris	Helyar, Mark	Hill, Edward	None	Goy, David
Burford, Yvonne	Inder, Neil	Snowdon, Alexander		Humphreys, Rhona
Bury, Tina	Laine, Marc			
Cameron, Andy	Malik, Munazza			
Camp, Haley	McKenna, Liam			

Collins, Garry	Niles, Andrew
Curgenvin, Rob	Ozanne, Jayne
de Sausmarez, Lindsay	Van Katwyk, Lee
Dorrity, David	Vermeulen, Simon
Falla, Steve	
Gabriel, Adrian	
Gollop, John	
Hansmann Rouxel, Sarah	
Kay-Mouat, Bruno	
Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha	
Leadbeater, Marc	
Matthews, Aidan	
Montague, Paul	
Oswald, George	
Parkinson, Charles	
Rochester, Sally	
Rylatt, Tom	
Sloan, Andy	
St Pier, Gavin	
Strachan, Jennifer	
Williams, Steve	

3510 **The Bailiff:** So in respect of Proposition 7 there voted in favour 26 Members, 9 Members voted against, 2 Members abstained, 2 Members absent. I will declare Proposition 7 also carried.

Proposition 8 next, which is the Electoral Expenditure (By-election) Ordinance, 2026, and I will ask the Greffier to open the voting in respect of Proposition 8, please.

There was a recorded vote.

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Carried – Pour 24, Contre 9, Ne vote pas 2, Did not vote 2, Absent 2

Pour	Contre	Ne vote pas	Did not vote	Absent
Blin, Chris	Collins, Garry	Hill, Edward	Dorrity, David	Goy, David
Burford, Yvonne	Helyar, Mark	Snowdon, Alexander	Inder, Neil	Humphreys, Rhona
Bury, Tina	Laine, Marc			
Cameron, Andy	Malik, Munazza			
Camp, Haley	McKenna, Liam			
Curgenvin, Rob	Niles, Andrew			
de Sausmarez, Lindsay	Ozanne, Jayne			
Falla, Steve	Van Katwyk, Lee			
Gabriel, Adrian	Vermeulen, Simon			
Gollop, John				
Hansmann Rouxel, Sarah				
Kay-Mouat, Bruno				
Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha				
Leadbeater, Marc				
Matthews, Aidan				
Montague, Paul				
Oswald, George				
Parkinson, Charles				
Rochester, Sally				
Rylatt, Tom				
Sloan, Andy				
St Pier, Gavin				
Strachan, Jennifer				
Williams, Steve				

3520 **The Bailiff:** So in respect of Proposition 8 there voted in favour 24 Members, 9 Members voted against, 2 Members abstained, 4 Members were absent at the vote, and therefore I will declare Proposition 8 carried.

Finally, Proposition 9, which was amended to replace the words 'Dave Ferguson Hall' with 'Sir John Loveridge Hall' by successful Amendment 1, and I will invite the Greffier to open the voting on Proposition 9 as amended, please.

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There was a recorded vote.

Carried – Pour 25, Contre 8, Ne vote pas 2, Did not vote 2, Absent 2

Pour	Contre	Ne vote pas	Did not vote	Absent
Blin, Chris	Cameron, Andy	Hill, Edward	Dorrity, David	Goy, David
Burford, Yvonne	Helyar, Mark	Snowdon, Alexander	Inder, Neil	Humphreys, Rhona
Bury, Tina	McKenna, Liam			
Camp, Haley	Niles, Andrew			
Collins, Garry	Ozanne, Jayne			
Curgenvin, Rob	Sloan, Andy			
de Sausmarez, Lindsay	Van Katwyk, Lee			
Falla, Steve	Vermeulen, Simon			
Gabriel, Adrian				
Gollop, John				
Hansmann Rouxel, Sarah				
Kay-Mouat, Bruno				
Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha				
Laine, Marc				
Leadbeater, Marc				
Malik, Munazza				
Matthews, Aidan				
Montague, Paul				
Oswald, George				
Parkinson, Charles				
Rochester, Sally				
Rylatt, Tom				
St Pier, Gavin				
Strachan, Jennifer				
Williams, Steve				

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The Bailiff: So in respect of Proposition 9 as amended there voted in favour 25 Members, 8 Members voted against, 2 Members abstained, 4 Members did not participate in that vote and therefore I will declare that carried, which means that all nine Propositions have been carried.

Billet d'État III

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

5. Alderney Airport Runway Rehabilitation - Delegated Authority – Propositions carried

Article 5.

The States are asked to decide:

Whether, after consideration of the Policy Letter entitled 'Alderney Airport Runway Rehabilitation – Delegated Authority' dated 9th January, 2026, they are of the opinion:-

1. To authorise the Policy & Resources Committee to proceed with the procurement process for the rehabilitation of the Alderney Airport runway, based on the design outlined in section 5, by issuing an invitation to tender with the intent to engage in early contractor involvement.

2. To delegate authority to the Policy & Resources Committee to approve funding of up to £24 million from the General Revenue Reserve, subject to approval of an appropriately detailed business case for the rehabilitation of the Alderney runway, based on the design outlined in section 5.

3. To direct the Policy & Resources Committee to work with the States' Trading Supervisory Board and the States of Alderney to ensure best value is achieved.

4. To direct the Policy & Resources Committee to report back to the States of Deliberation upon completion of the tender process, confirming the final contract value.

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The Bailiff: The next item of business, please, Greffier.

The States' Greffier: Article 5. Policy & Resources Committee, Alderney Airport Runway Rehabilitation - Delegated Authority.

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The Bailiff: I am going to invite Deputy Burford to open the debate on behalf of the Committee. Deputy Burford, please.

Deputy Burford: Thank you, sir.

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In this speech I do not propose to rehearse the long and somewhat chequered history on the attempted rehabilitation of Alderney's Airport, stretching back over 15 years, or the variety of estimated costs, which reached £37 million at one point. Instead, I wish to stress that the sole purpose of the Policy Letter is to seek the approval of this Assembly for the Policy & Resources Committee to be granted delegated authority on this project to commit up to £24 million on behalf of the States.

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This is to enable the STSB to take this project forward. The reason that the Policy & Resources Committee is seeking delegated authority within that upper limit is because the timeline for this project is tight. Requiring the Committee to return to the Assembly for approval of the final business case in order to unlock funding would add some months to the programme and would not enable construction to commence in the summer of next year. That is because to finalise the tender process in time for the 2027 summer season, when weather conditions would allow the work to be undertaken more easily, the process needs to commence next month. Any delay will slip the project by a full year, due to the need for work to be undertaken in the summer months, pushing construction to 2028.

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As an aside, on the issue of delegated authority and for new Members, it is probably worth explaining that at the start of the last States, P&R sought and somewhat surprisingly were granted delegated authority of £568 million. That is the entire projected cost of the capital portfolio for that term. That authority was reduced back to £5 million towards the end of the term by an amendment, which I laid. This Committee will not be seeking to raise the current delegated authority limit of £5 million for capital projects generally, as we consider it important that the Assembly is fully involved in major spending decisions. This is a specific ask for a specific project.

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It is a valid criticism of capital projects that the States publishes Policy Letters, including the sum allocated, and as a result the belief in some quarters is that contractors work to that sum and then add a little more on for luck. I wish to be clear that both the Policy & Resources Committee and the States' Trading Supervisory Board are going to be all over this project like a rash doing everything possible to ensure that costs are kept to an absolute minimum and Deputy Helyar is nodding at this point. £24 million is a maximum, not a target. Only yesterday P&R members were quizzing project and operational civil servants about aspects of this project and opportunities to limit expenditure.

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I fully sympathise with those Members who consider this sum to be excessive for what could fundamentally be defined as half a mile strip of 75-foot wide concrete or asphalt, but Alderney does

present very significant logistical challenges for a construction project of this nature and that adds cost. It is true that small, robust aircraft like the Twin Otter land safely on beaches, grass strips much shorter than Alderney, and graded gravel strips within the UK, but once major rehabilitation works are required, adherence with the latest standard is a requirement of the regulator. It does not help that dire warnings of imminent permanent runway closure have been issued for the last five years at least, but it is true that it is currently costing £400,000 a year in patching and this is not sustainable indefinitely.

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The risk of enforced closure by the regulator does exist should greater structural degradation occur. I do not think it is overstating it to say the runway is operating on borrowed time and it is not clear how much more borrowing we can do. This is the main reason for the delegated authority being asked for now, to ensure that we can at least have a shot at commencement next year. If we miss this window these risks continue to grow and are increasingly likely to crystallise. The States needs to be aware that if they choose to delay, whether that be for the outcome of the Bailiwick Commission or the outcome of tax reform, that there is a real risk of runway closure. That would lead to financial consequences not just for Alderney but for Guernsey, as the States will still need to continue to meet its obligations to the people of Alderney.

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The Office of the Director of Civil Aviation has made it clear that patching is not a medium or long-term solution. The renewal of the licence for the airfields is on a rolling short-term basis. While there are contingency plans in place should the runway close, they will still have an impact on the community and those contingency plans will not be cheap. They will include medivac by rotary wing aircraft and a new ferry link. This would represent a deterioration in connectivity and a commensurate impact on the Island's economic and social fabric.

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Towards the end of last term the States agreed to a no-frills rebuild of the runway at the lowest possible cost compliant with regulatory requirements. That resolution deliberately did not provide a figure, but an envelope of £24 million for works to the airfield had previously been agreed by the Assembly and the requested figure today is based on that financial appetite and on baseline costs in the RPS report of last year. This Policy Letter is the product of the work undertaken by the project team to deliver on that direction and it sets out parameters that represent the 'do minimum' option to deliver a functional and compliant runway.

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The next step will be to enter into early contractor involvement as part of the procurement process. This will enable the project team to work directly with the chosen contractor and authorities in Alderney on the risk and mobilisation issues to find the lowest cost solutions for project delivery. It will only be after this intense collaborative work that we will know the actual cost to deliver this project. Delegated authority will provide the contractor with greater confidence that the States is committed to delivering this project and give a greater incentive to work with the project team to find the lowest cost solution.

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After the extended history of this project and the previous tender, the patience and confidence of these specialist suppliers in a heated market can easily wear thin and that risks impacting the price that we pay. This is why we are presenting Members with an unconventional process for a project that has had an unconventional journey since its inception.

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Flexibility is important as in an imperfect world not every process fits every project, and this is certainly one of those times. We are stepping outside of those templated processes while maintaining appropriate governance in order to give this project the best chance of success and the opportunity to deliver what has eluded the States for so long. This is a topical issue, given the recent announcement of the establishment of the Bailiwick Commission which, among other things, will be considering the 1948 Agreement between Guernsey and Alderney. The States is required to meet its existing obligations under the agreement to maintain an airfield in Alderney.

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The last Assembly recognised the need to review the agreement, but the resolutions at that time also made clear that this review should not delay the States delivering on its existing obligations to maintain an airfield in Alderney, which has been identified as needing rehabilitation. Such a review of the 1948 Agreement has been tried previously and failed, and the Islands are now agreed that

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the Bailiwick Commission is the only way to realistically do this. As Members will be aware, the agreement can only be revised by the consent of the States of Guernsey and the States of Alderney.

3630 For full transparency, I must advise Members that this remains a very challenging project to deliver, and there are still significant risks and unknowns and a limited capacity in the market for such a project.

3635 If, having been through the process set out, the final costs of the project do exceed the delegated authority from the States, the Committee will need to return to the Assembly. If that is the case, the States will be at a fork in the road. All other options for rehabilitating the runway will have been exhausted. The States will need to decide at that point whether to proceed, based on the final cost estimate, having trimmed the project to the bone or close the project. If the States choose to close the project we will enter into a future where we have to approach the transferred services in a new way. There will be a different future for Alderney and its residents. The Bailiwick Commission work will become more urgent and its outcome more critical for the community in Alderney and for the States' obligations to that community.

3640 It is important to stress that granting P&R delegated authority on this project does not mean the Committee has to use it. If circumstances change significantly in terms of the fiscal position and our taxation policy, then the Committee will not just plough on regardless. Its use becomes self-regulating with a return to the Assembly for a decision becoming inevitable, regardless of the costs being below the current maximum of £24 million.

3645 The Policy & Resources Committee has worked with STSB in the production of this Policy Letter as STSB is the Committee responsible for delivery of this project. Deputy Helyar, as President, will respond during this debate to any of the technical aspects falling within his mandate.

3650 So, in summary, this Policy Letter presents the States with a choice: to agree the delegated authority and have a chance of starting work next summer or to reject the proposal awaiting a full business case in the knowledge that work is then not likely to start before 2028, cognisant of the risk that that entails.

Thank you.

3655 **The Bailiff:** Is there no debate? (*Laughter*)
Alderney Representative Hill.

Alderney Representative Hill: Thank you, sir.

3660 Thank you, Deputy Burford, for making this Proposition. Last April I was standing here discussing the Alderney runway in conjunction with the economic pathway in the Bailiwick Commission. Some of you probably thought it was probably just words. However, on behalf of the Economic Development Committee for the States of Alderney, I am glad to say that we have steered a steady path towards fulfilling some of those promises. The Bailiwick Commission, as I rightly predicted then, though an excellent and warmly welcomed initiative by the people of Alderney, has taken far more time to come to fruition than was originally planned. However, I would ask my fellow Deputies to consider the need for Alderney runway not as a social enabler but as a source for Bailiwick economic growth.

3665 Here are just some of the achievements we have made in Alderney over that period. New pathway for tidal, windfarm, with an appointment for a dedicated specialist working for Alderney and also with Guernsey to make this a reality, even with some of the start dates looking as early as 2028. An exciting forward-thinking programme to create expertise on bitcoin, crypto and data centre and AI expertise. Working alongside GFSC to provide the best advice on regulation as well as opportunities to create a sandbox for the modern frontiers of finance and technology. We have an excellent Gambling Control Commission, not only for Alderney but also from data provided by Association of Guernsey Charities (AGC) to ourselves but yet to be verified by the Guernsey Treasury and also by the forthcoming Bailiwick Commission, which will examine Alderney's real contributions as well as estimated deficit of £8.5 million a year. The AY licensees operating out of Alderney are contributing between – well, we have moving figures, but anything between £27 million and

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3680 £84 million, and one licensee that we have been told – but obviously it is money that is not yet in the system – has accrued £23 million in potential Pillar Two payments for 2027.

So when I read in *The Guernsey Press* that there is no appetite to spend £20 million on the Alderney runway, aside from the Income Tax that we do pay to Guernsey, I would kindly ask that Deputies might want to put that potential earning capacity into the £24 million runway perspective. I would also like to ask Deputies to wonder if without a functioning airport that that licensee would remain committed to this jurisdiction as a bailiwick and simply choose a Pillar Two option elsewhere. £23 million? Nice work if you can get it.

3690 We also have commenced proceedings to introduce an entrepreneurs' tax cap to attract younger entrepreneurs to set up businesses offering genuine white collar and manufacturing employment beyond building and hospitality, persons who are going to contribute in real terms by creating jobs and regenerating tax revenues and bringing the age of incomers down. In the words of Bob Hoskins in that famous film 'The Long Good Friday', a little bit more than a hotdog. The marketing arising from the deep frustrations of this generation in the UK, whom the current Chancellor seems determined to red tape, thwart and employer punish, however for the Island to be attractive to such a segment we must have a fully functioning airport to assist a reliable airline. If you took the time to watch our video, which we circulated to all of you, you would have seen an example of this type of younger economic generating entrepreneur.

3700 We have created an enterprise and technology hub to act as a welcome base for new businesses and innovations. Ironically, that was mentioned today in that presentation we heard about Guernsey Finance, lack of desk space. Well, we are here. An exciting new education working group to provide skillsets for the very early learning and a suite of sixth form options going further into adult education, all designed for one good reason: economic development. However, again this platform, teachers and pupils alike, will only come if they can see a fully functional commercial airport.

3705 We shall shortly be announcing an Innovate Alderney summit in September, inviting serious leaders, headline names in their respective fields, to give presentations on the finance and technology opportunities by a small island jurisdiction such as Alderney, crypto hedge funds, modern tech finance, leading economists and more. The response to our recent presentation at Bitcoin Amsterdam has, frankly, been overwhelming.

3710 All the aforementioned in just 10 months since I last addressed this Assembly, as well as the fact that Alderney is a wonderful place to visit, play sport and now even enjoy the only Michelin Key hotel in the Channel Islands. Come on, all; that is not bad progress.

3715 So when it comes to asking you all here to support our runway rehabilitation, with admittedly the huge financial commitment that it involves, I am asking you all to note that we are performing to my word to make Alderney onwards a serious net contributor to the Bailiwick economy. We are, as I firmly believe, with our unique jurisdiction within a jurisdictional proposition – and an item that was not mentioned in today's lunchtime presentation that other jurisdictions I know would give their eyeballs for – going to sell together.

3720 I am more than aware that there are some Deputies in this Assembly who have genuine concerns about cost control and procurement. Let me say that we, too, are on the same page and we thoroughly endorse the scrutiny proffered by Deputy Burford on P&R and, indeed, Mark Helyar on the STSB Committee. It will have to be compliant but not be over-designed. The exam question will be basic, simple, and every effort will have to be made to monitor and control specifications and avoid runaway tendering.

3725 This type of capital project monitoring will also be subject to the recently passed P&R amendment in the last Assembly that demands six-month reviews and assessments on all aspects of projects undertaken. However, continual past delays on this project has confirmed Deputy Humphreys' mantra in the January Assembly, a stitch in time saves nine. It is cheaper to pay to fix the runway properly than to continually year on year patch it. In our case, in 2012 we would have saved £12 million, so we need to be understanding about the increased cost put to us today.

3730 To the argument that one should only vote once a final tender cost has been submitted, I would like to politely remind the Assembly that there are many airports going through the same

rehabilitation and very few contractors. Those will only be mindful to bother to tender this time if they can see that there is a clear approved price envelope for the project. So, in essence, if we are to progress with this within the DCA prescribed time limits of the certifiable life of Alderney runway, P&R need that delegated authority now to commence proceedings to match the required timelines.

3735 All Deputies, of course, in the fullness of time will have full transparent opportunity to assess the tender and, at this juncture, I must remind the Assembly that it is 'up to' £24 million.

Talking financial limits, some Deputies, Mr Speaker, wish to enquire what contribution Alderney will be prepared to make to the runway. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) Firstly, I would like to reassure them that we have made substantial provisions for the 2026-27 Budget for things airport, such as jet A1 refuelling to reduce cost of PSO by increasing payloads, as well as a contribution to the runway upon provision of a costed tender proportionately to what we can afford out of our reserves.

3740 We would then go through the usual due process to release capex via our Policy & Finance Committee and final full Alderney States approval. Today, due to such procedural requirements, us here as Alderney Representatives do not have the political mandate to give an exact figure due to the unknown quantities involved in the tender, but there will be a full dialogue to work out a pathway forward, and the States of Alderney are, of course, supportive.

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We have also noticed in the last tenders that a large chunk was mobilisation cost. In fact, some of them were up to 50%. Upon provision of the tender, we would be willing to bring these costs dramatically down by offering things in kind: staff accommodation, road widening, batching plant being already installed on the Island. However, please rest assured we will contribute in the best possible and financially prudent way a small Island can.

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Finally, as you are now already noticing with the tax reform programme and its effect on economic confidence, as mentioned in *The Guernsey Press* yesterday, uncertainty kills. I have given you an outline of what we have achieved to date since last April, what we would still like to achieve, but all of this will vanish into thin air with the economic burden consequences too hard to even imagine unless we have today a firm degree of financial certainty for Alderney to have a rehabilitated runway as part of a reliable, fully commercially compliant airport.

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I therefore, Madam Speaker, ask the Assembly (*Laughter*) to support these Propositions – sorry, Mr Speaker. Last time it was the Queen. Sorry. (*Laughter*)

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I therefore, Mr Speaker, ask the Assembly to support all these Propositions on this policy paper and would like to thank you all, given the many other pressing issues Guernsey faces, for your time today. As you have heard from me in the speech, not quite so potentially economically small Alderney, I promise you we will do the Bailiwick both financially and reputationally proud.

Thank you.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Leadbeater.

Deputy Leadbeater: Thank you, sir.

I am minded to support the Proposition and this Policy Letter. I am just drawn, though, to the summary timeline in 4.4, so if Deputy Burford could speak to this when she sums up. Because I just noticed the tender process concludes May 2026, the evaluation June 2026, but the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) 4 detailed designs are not until January 2027. I am just mindful of the experience of the Our Hospital Modernisation (OHM) project and the fact that in between RIBA 3 and RIBA 4 there was a massive escalation in the cost. Then by the time those figures were brought back to us the project was completely financially unsustainable. Alderney Representative Snowdon is nodding his head.

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So I just want to make sure we have this timeline right. I want to make sure that we do not make any mistakes here. Because if we do get to the RIBA 4 stage in January 2027 and it cannot be done within the £24 million, what is going to happen? Is the scope going to change? Is the spec going to be reduced? Who is responsible for any project overruns if that materialises? It is going to be one of those three things that will materialise if we get to RIBA 4 and the project exceeds the £24 million. So I would just like to know what contingencies P&R are considering to make sure that we can

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mitigate that and we do not have these project overruns when we get to the RIBA 4 design stage in January 2027.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

(Interruption) (Laughter) Is that a continuation of your speech, Deputy Leadbeater? *(Laughter)*
Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

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Deputy Kazantseva-Miller: With some AI intervention from Deputy Leadbeater's phone.

I wanted just to speak and reiterate how I think it is absolutely crucial that we support Alderney and the wider Bailiwick. We are the Bailiwick of Guernsey and this is absolutely what makes us unique and different to our other Channel Island neighbours. I think this is something from the economic development perspective we are really keen to strengthen, regardless of what happens with the Bailiwick Commission. We have economic ties that will continue regardless of the constitutional format, but without connectivity we are not a bailiwick, as simple as that. So without both air connectivity but also improving our sea connectivity and the opportunities that provides is absolutely essential to reinvigorating what the strengths and the value of the Bailiwick of Guernsey proposition is.

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We have seen the transformational effect of the Brittany Ferries partnership in Guernsey. That is starting to have spillover effects into Alderney as well. Having a proper runway will have a transformational effect on Alderney. What has been really encouraging, actually, is the speech that Alderney Representative Hill has just given us. The Government of Alderney and their Economic Development Committee have been very active in advancing some really forward-looking and forward-thinking Propositions. We are, as the Economic Development Committee, looking forward to establishing a closer working relationship and we are just engaging, especially following the re-election of the Chair of the Alderney Economic Development Committee, because we have a number of key areas for collaboration, especially around tourism, around digital. There are the wider energy discussions. All of that is absolutely underpinned around connectivity, and I think there is a lot of work to do around that, not just with the runway extension but what it means in terms of then the air connectivity and the sea connectivity as well.

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So I think we need to stop talking Alderney down that unfortunately happened over the last political term. I think we need to talk Alderney and the Bailiwick up (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) because this is absolutely the future of our growth strategy, because this is our geography and this is how we are going to be stronger together.

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So we should be absolutely voting for this Policy Letter and really support to make sure that it happens in the timeline that is being proposed.

The Bailiff: Deputy Blin.

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Deputy Blin: Thank you, sir.

I will start off with the obvious statement that Alderney needs an airport, and that is the fact of it. I think last term, and Deputy Kazantseva-Miller has just spoken about the fact we do not have to look back at that point, but that point for me particularly was really awful. We could have been already here by now if we had have just started on the target of what we are doing now. So there is an element which says that we cannot be arguing now, we have to actually come to resolve this. It has been going on for too long. The other part of it, as we heard in debate the whole of the last term, it is part of the 1948 Agreement. By the way, on that subject, the Bailiwick Commission, which will include aspects of the 1948 Agreement, I am glad it is done in the right order, that first we sort this out and then we go to that, otherwise we would be really out of kilter, out of sync.

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I think Deputy Burford in her speech made it very clear what is part of the Policy Letter and what is the impact of what we do now or if we delay later to get all the information, and what will the true impact be of that. That was very clear as well. That helps me with the thinking of what we need to do.

3835 We have been there before. We have had the overrun. We have heard it from Representative Hill. It is very clear. It is up to £24 million, but let us be realistic. Sometimes these things can change. It is a very hard thing and we must have almost a contingency plan of what we would do if it came to that point. It is understandable saying it will not, but the reality check here, because it is actually not an engineering estimate, it is a political estimate. It is a statement made and everyone is looking at those numbers as we go along.

3840 So, in effect, what Representative Hill also said in his speech was that actually he is making it clear that £24 million is the hard cap, and that must mean we remain compliant to 2B or whatever the correct solution there, no scope drift, no expansion, no incrementals, etc. That discipline and our joint working together can make that happen.

3845 Then I would like to get some frank understanding in the summing up of the speeches there about the five-month closure, because again that can have another scope creep on there. Because we are going to have the significant issues for the medivac, we are going to have the issues for education, essential services for local businesses. We had a lovely document put on to our tables this morning from businesses saying what they do, and those will be impacted. How is that going to be taken in as part of this change? Like others, I am concerned that that might run over, depending on time. That is if we vote for it now to get that time forward.

3850 Then the last part I would like to talk about is the partnership. It is a little bit of a question but I would be really grateful in the summing up if it covered it. Again, I am sorry to keep repeating but Representative Hill did a very fine speech there, and he actually almost made me a little bit envious of the drive that they have in Alderney on the various business aspects, including the work we are doing jointly with the windfarm and looking at the AI and the crypto, etc. But it does make me think about something else when we talk about growth and ambition, especially when we as agile islands could be more dynamic. So here is just a question I would like you to consider. We have defined, and you are asking for this cap of the £24 million, but it would also be interesting to strengthen confidence if Alderney, rather than saying that there will be contributions – you spoke about the fuel opportunity there and you also spoke about identifying cash amounts that could be generated to assist, according to what can be done. So all I am thinking here is that if we can state a clear baseline contribution what is required from our side, then surely there should be consideration to have a baseline consideration of what could be given from the Alderney side on the growth and building, especially based on what we are trying to achieve is growth and a situation where finally we allow our Bailiwick to have the opportunity to develop without the restrictions we are having right now.

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3875 So, doing nothing we know carries huge risk and, in fact, I will be really disappointed with us all if we end up in a situation where we do not go forward, but also proceeding without discipline carries equal risk as well because we are responsible for the Island and the Government, etc. So, subject to those assurances, I will be and I really would like to support this Proposition because the managed stability is preferable. I really want to see this there, and we cannot afford an unmanaged decline. That would be the worst picture. So delivery within the cap, the scope, a partnership, and with all of that I will be a strong supporter. I hope that this is included in the summing up to cover some of those points there.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy Collins.

3880 **Deputy Collins:** Thank you very much, sir.

I will be very brief, a couple of points. As my President of the Transport Licensing Authority mentioned this morning, we have been busy the last quarter. So for me I have had the great opportunity of really having a lot of evidence, a lot of support, and so for me to have a triangular route you need airports. So for me I definitely will be supporting that.

3885 Also, just to mention while I have the chance, St John Ambulance Service through the Flying Christine do a wonderful job, and obviously this project will happen during the summer; so that is

good for them. They are going to be on standby. So again, just to praise the work those guys and girls do. So for me there are other options of emergency.

I really just wanted again to thank the Committee for the Policy Letter and I will be supportive. Thank you.

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The Bailiff: Deputy Vermeulen.

Deputy Vermeulen: Thank you, sir.

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We have been here before, have we not, Alderney Airport? I think on the last time it came to the States there was much concern about whether those figures which were produced, very similar format to this, that you could have all-singing, all-dancing option, including a terminal, for a ridiculously low amount of money. I think it was only Deputy Inder and myself that did not vote on it. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

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I am a Guernsey Deputy, so you might have noticed. I was born on the Island, raised on the Island, went to school here. I represent the people of Guernsey. I do not represent Alderney, I do not think. I think Alderney have their own States and they have their own Alderney Representatives, which sit in the Guernsey States. Now, there is concern about the design of what is being put forward and there is also a lot of concern from local people about whether Guernsey taxpayer money should be used in Alderney: if Alderney want this airport, perhaps they should be paying for it themselves.

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I do not know what the Bailiwick Commission will come up with. Might that be something which they say: 'Yes, this 1948 Agreement you have is all well and good but it is quite archaic and all it asks Guernsey to pay for is maintaining the grass airfield', which is no longer there. I hear from Alderney Representative Hill about the mega millions which they are taking from their offshore gambling and paying into the Guernsey Exchequer, but that has not been agreed at all. I do not know what the position is with GST in Alderney. Have they adopted it yet? Is it going to be paying GST in the future? I do not know. I thought I saw something in an Alderney journal saying it is up to Alderney to decide if they are going to pay GST.

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So, it kind of cuts across the grain if Guernsey taxpayers are having to pay this, and it is an awful lot of money. This is £24 million. I spoke to Mr Hill and it is £24 million we have not got. This is Guernsey taxpayers' money. Perhaps that would be better spent in education. I do not know. I do not know.

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Then we get on to the specification of the runway, which I alluded to. So we are being told that the Twin Otter is a 2B coded aircraft. I am not sure that that is right. Perhaps it is more like a 1B. When I did some research and looked into the Twin Otter that is operated by Airbus in the Scilly Isles, the main runway at St Mary's, the main runway this is, it is 695 metres long and 23 metres wide. They have another runway, the second runway, and that is 522 metres long and 18 metres wide. The longest runway in the Scilly Isles is 695, which is nearly 200 metres shorter than Alderney. St Mary's is the home of Skybus on the Scilly Isles. Both runways are asphalt, as they are in Alderney. It seems like there is a bit of scaremongering going on that all hell is going to break loose if we do not act right now, but we have been maintaining that runway each year and it has been costing £400,000. If we were to shorten the runway to a category A, let us say it was one metre under 800, there could be a significant saving to be had. After all, I do not believe Aurigny want to fly to Alderney, sadly, and Skybus is going to be flying that route, but there was last term a lot of talk about standardising the fleet on Aurigny. That is why we sold the jet and we were going to land the ATR-72s in Alderney. That was the plan. The pilots at Aurigny were most concerned about that, and they said they did not think that is a good idea at all. Now, those pilots are the aviation professionals, which I tend to listen to when it comes to flying and the practicalities.

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So why would we build a wider runway and provide a length which is not needed? Most of the Scilly Isles' 695 metres; most of it, the 450, is all that the Twin Otter uses on average. So I think this needs to go back to the drawing board. I think there is significant savings to be had. I know it sounds something like my friend Deputy Trott used to say, but I do not think Alderney runway/airport

3940 should be a millstone around the neck of the Guernsey taxpayer. So I am not going to be supporting this.

I notice in the paper, which I have read through several times and I was desperately searching for stuff that I could support, that they had looked into restoring the grass runway. When I have talked to other aviation people on the Island in Guernsey, they said what about putting a reinforced metal grid over the grass runway. That would again be a more cost-effective solution, but I do not see that as part of it. So as it is formatted at the moment, it is a no from Deputy Vermeulen.

3945 Thank you.

The Bailiff: I will turn back to Deputy Burford to reply to the debate.
(*Interjection*) Too late, Deputy Gollop.

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Deputy Burford: Okay. Caught on the hop there at the length of that debate or lack of it.

So, Deputy Leadbeater, you asked what happens if it is more than £24 million, what happens with the timing of the various stages. I think I outlined largely in my speech what happens if the price goes above the £24 million, and that is that we will return to this Assembly. So that will lose the opportunity for it to be done in the time window we are trying to achieve now. We are fully cognisant of that and it is a risk we take. If we do not start now from here we cannot perhaps take advantage of the opportunity of starting in the summer next year.

In terms of monitoring the timeline – I am not going to get Deputy Helyar to nod again around this – we will be watching it at every stage, questioning it at every stage. The fact that we are doing this slightly differently with early contractor involvement should also mitigate some of those risks. So we are not just going to say to people just go off and come back and tell us what you have got at the end of this. We will be monitoring this at every single stage, and I take the point on the OHM project.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller, thank you for the support. I would, perhaps slightly against my own interests here, correct one point that she made, which said a proper runway will have a transformational effect on Alderney. I think it needs to be made clear that this runway will not do anything that the current runway cannot do, with the exception of not being at imminent threat of closure at any given time. So I think from the point of view of the certainty, that may be transformative, but the runway itself is not going to deliver any more. At the end of the day, it is a strip of concrete or asphalt for landing on.

I think Deputy Kazantseva-Miller also asked about the timeline. What we have to say here is neither the timeline nor the price are guaranteed. I want to be upfront about that. We do not have enough information at this stage to make promises to the Assembly on either of these things. We are just asking for the delegated authority, which is fundamentally all this Policy Letter is about, in order for us to see what those things are, and if they come in within price and within time we could be building this runway next summer. We want to take that opportunity but we are not making promises that it is possible because we simply do not have information sufficient to make those promises on at this point.

Deputy Blin asked about closure for work. I think all I can say to Deputy Blin at this stage is that we are very mindful that runway closure, which inevitably will be necessary to a degree for a project of this nature, will be kept to the minimum, balanced with the cost. There are a lot of factors to take into account. We could probably have ways of doing it where it was barely closed at all, but your price would be a great deal more. So we will do that, but I think the other thing to say is that there is a risk – and I will not put it any broader than like that; I am not going to paint doomsday scenarios – that at any point in the current set-up the runway could close. That is the big risk for Alderney, not the closure during construction.

Deputy Vermeulen, I have quite a few points to pick up here. £24 million better spent elsewhere. I am quite sure ESC would be very happy with a £24 million windfall, but the thing is if we do not have a serviceable runway in Alderney then we still have obligations, and those obligations are not going to be cheap. Over a period of years they could soon add up to that kind of money.

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Your point about scaremongering, I am not scaremongering. I am not saying that people are going to die in great big holes in the runway, and some of the more lurid comments that perhaps we have heard in the past. I am simply saying that the runway is not in particularly good repair. It is being patched up, but if the sub-base crumbles further there is a risk that the regulator will not be able to license it further. So that is a fact at the moment.

I agree with you: £400,000, yes, if we thought we could patch it happily without that risk of closure coming from regulatory things forever, £400,000 a year is actually cheaper than spending £24 million. So we would not be coming. We would be saying this is how we are going to do it; it is the 'do minimum' option. Unfortunately, the 'do minimum' option has now reached a point where that do minimum is to rehabilitate that runway.

The grass runway, those things have been looked into in terms of the grass. I flew in on the grass runway for many years when I was freelancing with Aurigny, and I always took the opportunity to land on the grass when the wind direction and the condition of the runway permitted, but that was very rarely in the winter because it is very prone to waterlogging. Significant work would be needed to be done in that case and you would probably still risk periods of closure. It does make sense to have a hard surface runway.

You talk about the Scilly Isles. There are plenty of other examples like the Scilly Isles. A lot of the Scottish isles have shorter runways, as I referenced in my speech. There is no issue, in my view, in making this runway shorter and if it is below 800 metres it could also retain the current width of 18 metres. However, we have also been told that that would trigger other things if we were going to make it shorter. It would require approach lights to be moved and various other things. The arguments are that the actual cost of a little bit of extra tarmac – and there is no extra tarmac on the length; it is currently 877 metres so the length is not the issue. It is merely a five-metre increase in the width that is being proposed. I am quite sure that STSB and P&R will be looking at this, and if there is an opportunity at any point in the project where it makes sense, where we have figures, where comparative data is there, that it is better to do it shorter or to look at a different option, those things at this stage are still on the table. So I really want to stress that we will be examining the most cost-effective do minimum option to have a runway that is compliant. That is simply the case.

Deputy Vermeulen also started talking about option C plus. Option C plus was gone a long time ago. There is no intention to put ATR-72s into Alderney.

Finally, Deputy Vermeulen referenced it being a millstone around Guernsey taxpayers' necks. I am not sure I am very fond of that phrasing, and I think that we have an obligation to Alderney as part of the Bailiwick even without the 1948 Agreement, but we certainly do with the 1948 Agreement.

I am not going to give way because I think it is time to wrap this debate up.

Deputy Vermeulen: Point of correction, sir.

The Bailiff: Point of correction, Deputy Vermeulen.

Deputy Vermeulen: What we are describing is betterment. We have no obligation to better. We have an obligation to maintain a grass runway and that is the end of it.

The Bailiff: Deputy Burford to continue.

Deputy Burford: Thank you, sir.

We have an obligation to Alderney that if the runway becomes non-functional, which is a risk that is there, that we will need to provide other services for medivac and for ferries.

So with that, sir, I think I have covered all the points that were raised in the short debate. I thank Members for their contributions and I would ask them to support this Policy Letter.

Thank you.

4045 **The Bailiff:** Members of the States, there are four Propositions. Does any Member want to vote differently in respect of all four or any of the four or can I put the four to you collectively? Nobody is leaping to their feet so we will take a vote on all four Propositions and I will invite the Greffier to open the voting on the four, please.

There was a recorded vote.

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Carried – Pour 32, Contre 3, Ne vote pas 1, Did not vote 1, Absent 2

Pour	Contre	Ne vote pas	Did not vote	Absent
Blin, Chris	Inder, Neil	Camp, Haley	Bury, Tina	Goy, David
Burford, Yvonne	McKenna, Liam			Humphreys, Rhona
Cameron, Andy	Vermeulen, Simon			
Collins, Garry				
Curgenven, Rob				
de Sausmarez, Lindsay				
Dorrity, David				
Falla, Steve				
Gabriel, Adrian				
Gollop, John				
Hansmann Rouxel, Sarah				
Helyar, Mark				
Hill, Edward				
Kay-Mouat, Bruno				
Kazantseva-Miller, Sasha				
Laine, Marc				
Leadbeater, Marc				
Malik, Munazza				
Matthews, Aidan				
Montague, Paul				
Niles, Andrew				
Oswald, George				
Ozanne, Jayne				
Parkinson, Charles				
Rochester, Sally				
Rylatt, Tom				
Sloan, Andy				
Snowdon, Alexander				
St Pier, Gavin				
Strachan, Jennifer				
Van Katwyk, Lee				
Williams, Steve				

4055 **The Bailiff:** So, in respect of the four Propositions, there voted in favour 32 Members, 3 Members voted against, 1 Member abstained, 3 Members did not participate in that vote. I will declare all four Propositions duly carried.

We will now adjourn until 9.30 in the morning.

The Assembly adjourned at 5.38 p.m.

4060