

STATES OF JERSEY

YOUTH ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY, 28th MARCH 2023

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[13:31]

The Roll was called and Ms. E. Rouault led the Assembly in Prayer.

COMMUNICATIONS BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER

The Bailiff:

1.1 Welcome to Members of the Youth Assembly

Assemblée constituée. I am very pleased indeed to welcome you all here today. It is a real pleasure to be part of this Assembly and I am you are going to have a great afternoon and you have had things well explained to you. I am not, I am afraid, able to stay for the entirety of the sitting this afternoon so when I reach the point where I have to go, and I will try and make it as late as possible, Deputy Rob Ward will take over as Presiding Officer from me so you will be in extremely good hands. I am sorry, as I said, that I cannot be here for the whole event because judging by the questions and the debate topics listed on the Order Paper it promises to be a very interesting afternoon and I hope you are all going to find it that. I hope you enjoy the experience and that it is inspirational. I would like it to inspire you perhaps to think about a career in politics or at least inspire you enough to ensure you take part in the elections on a regular basis in the exercise of your democratic rights. I think you are going to have a wonderful afternoon and I am certain that Ministers are very eager indeed to respond to your questions, so do not feel the need to be merciful, they are all extremely experienced in fielding difficult questions. I am sure you will come up with a few of those. Very well, we will make a start.

QUESTIONS

2. Oral Questions

The Bailiff:

We come to the first item on the Order Paper which is Question Time and I call upon Ms. Emily Jewell of Beaulieu who will ask a question of Deputy Gardiner of St. Helier North, the Minister for Children and Education.

2.1 Ms. E. Jewell of Beaulieu of the Minister for Children and Education regarding diversifying education.

Will the Minister provide detail of any plans to diversify education in the Island?

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North (The Minister for Children and Education):

Thank you for your question. Since I have been elected as a Minister I fully intend to continue to diversify the curriculum going forward. Following the report from the Jersey Youth Parliament last year, I have prioritised the P.S.H.E. (personal, social, health and economic) curriculum, including citizenship to be developed and updated this year. We have physical literacy, religious education and worldwide views, history for key stage 1 and key stage 2 also being amended this year. There are 2 levels of consideration when going through the change. The statutory Jersey curriculum, which already stated that teachers should take into account the equal opportunities legislation that covers race, disability, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity and gender reassignment. The second is the Jersey curriculum is just one element in the education of each child. There is a time and space in the school day and in each week, term and year to extend beyond Jersey curriculum specifications and headteachers have full responsibility to add that curriculum to the needs of children and young people at schools.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much. Does anyone have a supplementary question to ask of the Minister? You will get your final supplementary at the end, Ms. Jewell, so does anyone else have a supplementary

question to ask first? Do not be shy because this is your chance to put the Minister for Children and Education to the test. No? Very well, well then your final supplementary, Ms. Jewell.

2.1.1 Ms. E. Jewell:

Seeing as there were 78 children or young people who are deaf or hard of hearing within education from 2020 to 2021 in Jersey, why is sign language not mandatory?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

It is a very good question. I have been asked this question recently and I am working with my officers to make sure that it would be done. We need to go through the process to make it mandatory. It takes time to go through the full curriculum, but before mandatory introduction the first thing for me is that each school can implement and teach sign language in advance without having to make it mandatory immediately in the law. There is an option to do it in the schools as we are going forward. It is definitely something we need to consider and my daughter this weekend asked me the same question so I am definitely committed.

The Bailiff:

I made a slight mistake earlier on because I thought we were adopting a slightly different procedure than we normally do in the Assembly so I should have asked you for your first supplementary question. So I will ask now, does anyone else have any supplementary questions for the Minister? No? Then you have the opportunity for a final supplementary question, if you would like. You do not have to if you do not have a final one, that is fine. All right, very well. We come on now to the second question that Mr. Theo Dorey of De La Salle will ask of Deputy Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter, who is Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture with responsibility for sport. Mr. Dorey.

2.2 Mr. T. Dorey of De La Salle of the Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture regarding new sports facilities on the Island.

Will the Minister advise whether the Government has any plans to introduce new sport facilities in the Island and, if so, what facilities and where?

Deputy L. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture):

Thank you very much for your question. The introduction of new sports facilities in Jersey is under constant review and consideration. The Inspiring Active Places Strategy sets out the Government's plans for new and refurbished facilities. As part of this a new gym and group exercise facilities will open at Springfield later this year. Planning permission has also been obtained for a new sports facility at Oakfield, which will improve what is available for the community in and around town. In addition, the new skate park at Les Quennevais was recently opened, as well as a new 3G pitch at Oakfield Sports Centre. Work is also being done to introduce smaller, skate friendly facilities in St. Helier. Other plans are also being considered and these include new sports facilities at Le Rocquier School as well as at FB fields. The Minister will also have plans for new sports facilities at various school sites in 2023.

2.2.1 Mr. T. Dorey:

May I ask what the Minister makes of the decision not to build new indoor facilities at Farmers? Can the Minister explain why these have not been built?

Deputy L. Stephenson:

Thank you for the question. The decision on Farmers was a planning application decision, so well outside of my remit and before my time in the Assembly as well. What I will say is I have been up to Farmers and watched some excellent cricket up there. They are doing some great things and Jersey

Cricket generally is thriving. I know there is a need in the Island for more cricket facilities, we also have some challenges around the size of the existing cricket facilities that we have around the Island. The game of cricket has changed and people can hit the ball far further than they used to. I am very aware of the challenges there and would love to see us address some of those in the future.

2.2.2 Ms. C. Connor of Jersey College of Girls:

Does the Minister believe that there is any relation between the current lack of recreational sports facilities and the increased crime rates in young people?

Deputy L. Stephenson:

Thank you for the question, which I think I could talk to for quite a long time if we had it today. I think it is fair to say that the more things we have for our community to do, not just young people, the better provided for we all are. We know that physical activity is a very important part of keeping our population well, both in mind and in body. I would certainly say that the more we can do, the more we can provide opportunities for people, it can help to prevent some of the troubles we may encounter. I would also say there has been some great projects over the years that have been shown to reduce problem areas, or potentially even offending, and officers have been discussing how we may be able to rekindle some of those in the future. I note, for example, some of them around the Millennium Town Park in the past with inflatable football pitches and work with the Youth Service have been very impressive.

2.2.3 Ms. A. McGurty of Hautlieu:

How does the Minister justify knocking down Fort Regent's sports facilities if they plan to improve the sports facilities of Jersey?

Deputy L. Stephenson:

Thank you for the question. I have said that I am very supportive of us continuing to look for a future where Fort Regent can provide community and leisure facilities, but what we have to do is look at the future of Fort Regent currently in a realistic way. What is there currently is not fit for purpose for sports facilities and we do have to address that and that may mean that sport needs to move out of there for the time being so we can address some of the challenges there. I personally am not saying that that means sport should be off the table for the future of Fort Regent for ever.

[13:45]

The Bailiff:

Supplemental question? Does anyone else have a supplement question for the Minister? Then Mr. Dorey, the final question is yours. Very well, we then come to Mr. Lachlan Muir of Victoria College will ask a question of Deputy Gorst of St. Mary, St. Ouen, St. Peter, who is Assistant Minister for External Relations.

2.3 Mr. L. Muir of Victoria College of the Assistant Minister for External Relations regarding links with France.

As the new Government has claimed to have focused on links with France, will the Minister set out what specific links he would like to develop further and whether he has considered any impact on Islanders' lives?

Deputy I.J. Gorst of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (Assistant Minister for External Relations)

In line with our common policy for external relations, this Government committed to develop and enhance our relations with France. France is our closest neighbour and we have strong historical regional ties with Normandy and Brittany as well as many common interests at regional and national

level. This is reflected in the fact that we have a joint Channel Islands office in Caen, which is responsible for regional co-operation with Normandy and Brittany. It was established in 2000 for Jersey and as a joint office in 2014. In the post-Brexit and COVID environment, resilience is important for Jersey and part of this will require us to diversify our supply chains and political relationships. France will be integral in this due to our close links. The Minister has set out in his ministerial plan that he will work collaboratively with departments across the Government to develop and implement projects across trade, connectivity, travel, education, arts, heritage and sport. A key consideration for any new project or link will be the impact it has on Islanders' lives.

2.3.1 Mr. L. Muir:

The Minister asserted in his ministerial plan that he was to develop a cross-departmental working group by quarter 3 2022, to focus on improving and cultivating Jersey-French relations. Can the Minister please outline the outcomes of this working group and how he wishes to implement its ideas into government policy?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

As the questioner will know, I am standing in for the Minister today. It is my understanding that he had already developed that working group, well ahead of the timeline in his ministerial plan. What that does is draw together officials at one level and then Ministers at the other level to make sure that the External Relations Department is facilitating the priorities of other departments. I have a long list of appointments and meetings that have led to important changes that the Minister has undertaken not only throughout 2022 but also 2023 to facilitate change and improvement on behalf of Islanders, not least of which is the changes that we have just seen that the Minister for Home Affairs announced in relation to day visitors.

2.3.2 Ms. C. Connor:

Could the Minister please highlight how the impact of these projects on Islanders' lives will be monitored?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

It is a very good question. The truth of the matter is that very little of government policy is sufficiently or appropriately monitored. It is fair to say that the work that the Minister for External Relations and his team does falls into those areas where it is very difficult to monitor. It is difficult to monitor diplomacy. One of the only ways that you can do it is around actions achieved. As I have just mentioned, an action has been achieved only recently in regard to changes to requirements for day visitors. The External Relations Department is working with the Deputy Chief Minister to facilitate enhanced supply line links. That is in an early stage but we expect to see improvements there. The reality is that diplomacy oils the wheels of government policy and priority but pinning changes and improvements to one particular engagement or meeting is challenging.

2.3.3 Ms. C. Connor:

To what extent do you think Brexit will have an effect on the diplomacy? I am talking about the supply links.

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

Brexit has already had an impact on diplomacy. If we look to the north, we see the impact it has had in relation to the United Kingdom and their standing in the diplomatic world. It has affected us in regard to our engagement with France, which is why the incoming Government very much prioritised building and improving our relationship with our neighbours, which has been historically strong but was impacted negatively because of Brexit. It has also meant that the Minister and his officials in Brussels have had to work even harder to open doors to decision makers in Brussels. The reality is it has had a detrimental effect but, alongside that, the Minister is absolutely committed with his

colleagues to ensuring that perhaps those perceived barriers of Brexit in relation to Jersey are removed and that we get back to the strong relationship that we have had, not only to the north of the United Kingdom but with France and in Brussels.

2.3.4 Ms. J. Simpson of Jersey College for Girls:

How would the Minister monitor any further effects with Brexit on Jersey-French relations?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I would like think, and I believe it to be the case, that the Minister and his work throughout 2022 and 2023 has continued to deal with the difficulties around implementing the fishing proposals within the T.C.A. (Trade and Cooperation Agreement). They have been worked with the Minister for Environment, who is sitting at the back. I think that they are being worked on carefully and, as we stand, they have been delivered successfully. Not everyone would agree with that, of course, but I think they have. That now removes the barrier that was brought by Brexit in regard to diplomatic relations. The Minister has now put in place a provision within in the embassy in Paris for officials to be able to travel and work there. That will continue to enhance our relationship there. Diplomatically, Minister to Minister, Government to Government, that work has been done and can now be built on. There are some remaining things around S.P.S. (Sanitary and Phytosanitary) checks and access to markets which need continual work in order to ensure that there is as little as possible friction on those borders.

2.3.5 Ms. J. Simpson:

How can it be classed as successful if the consensus does not agree with it?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

That might be more of a philosophical question that I am not best placed to deal with. Something can be successful even if the majority do not agree with it. The reality of the T.C.A. is that for the first time it repatriated to Jersey Ministers and the Jersey Government the ability to issues licenses in Jersey waters and bring in measures to manage Jersey waters. That is a constitutional and practical improvement to the previous arrangements. Therefore, even if it has been challenging to implement and there is disquiet in some quarters, evidently in black and white the T.C.A. is an improvement.

2.3.6 Mr. S. Oldridge of Victoria College:

Deputy Gorst, you talk about enhancing trade and building and improving relations with France. I highlight last year where we had fishing disputes where French boats had blocked our vessels from leaving the ports of Jersey, how do you aim to benefit the fishing industry and the relationship between each and then subsequently remove the chance of the French threatening to remove our power supplies with our shared cables under the sea?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

The reality is that Jersey Ministers will stand up for the interests of Jersey and the whole Island, and I would expect nothing less. If a benefit that has been negotiated on behalf of the Island is to be appropriately implemented Ministers should stand up and deliver that benefit, not concede to the loudest voices who wish to see something else implemented. That, unfortunately, led to a very difficult relationship with our near neighbours. As I said earlier, I believe that the new Minister, working together with the Minister for Environment has continued to implement the T.C.A., in a careful and appropriate manner in Jersey's best interests. That will ultimately deliver for Islanders and for the fishing industry, even though it might seem difficult at this point in time. In resolving those difficulties that means that the Minister is able to enhance and build Minister to Minister and Government to Government relationships, which he has done. He has had something like 14 engagements with either French Ministers or officials or regional officials during 2022 and has a very busy diary for when he returns to the office for 2023 as well. I have every faith that he will do that,

together with his other ministerial colleagues who themselves are engaging directly with our French counterparts.

2.3.7 Mr. D. Riley of Victoria College:

How will the Minister measure how effective a proposal is that boosts relations between Jersey and France in addressing the priorities of Islanders, particularly given the high cost of living?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

That is a question which touches on the work of the Deputy Chief Minister whose desire is to see enhanced supply chains to the south. There are 2 main policy reasons - and I do not wish to speak for him when he is in the room - for doing that. One is resilience. So in times of difficulty to ensure that we have more than one supply line. The other is for competition to ensure that rather than always looking to the United Kingdom, we have the ability to bring in what we might expect to be lower cost goods from the south. I think it is a very important policy priority and I know that the Minister for External Relations is supporting the Deputy Chief Minister in that desire and doing all that is necessary. Some of that is speaking, yes, to supermarkets, it is speaking to hauliers, it is speaking to the ferry companies, it is speaking to the ports, but it is also speaking to regional officials and elected officials in France, which is the job of the Minister for External Relations.

2.3.8 Mr. L. Muir:

Given how currently in France there are over 1 million citizens on strike over Macron's pension reforms to increase the age of retirement from 62 to 64, has the Minister considered how this might affect relations with central French Government and does it point to a necessity to prioritise extending relationships with local government beyond those developed at the offices in Caen?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

As you will recall when I was Minister for Social Security I increased the pension age from 65 to 67 so perhaps I am not best placed to answer this particular question. The reality is that Governments must engage with counterparts in other Governments whatever political persuasion happens to be in power at that time or whatever domestic difficulties there are. We have very strong relationships with our colleagues in Caen and in Rennes and we should continue to build those at the same time, whether there are the difficulties that the questioner has just referred to - and, indeed, there are - that should not stop us engaging in Paris either.

The Bailiff:

The next question is Ms. Jaimie Simpson of Jersey College for Girls and will ask a question of Deputy Hilary Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity, who is the Assistant Minister for Home Affairs.

2.4 Ms. J. Simpson of the Assistant Minister for Home Affairs regarding the Illegal Immigration Bill recently debated in the UK.

With reference to the Illegal Migration Bill recently debated in the U.K. (United Kingdom), will the Minister advise whether the Island will be taking any action to support refugees and, if not, why not?

Deputy H. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (Assistant Minister for Home Affairs):

Thank you for your question. If passed by the U.K. Parliament, the Illegal Migration Bill will not automatically come into effect in Jersey. Jersey has our own laws made in this Assembly and we do not always need to follow the U.K. It would be for our own Assembly to make that decision. The challenges in the U.K. which the Bill is seeking to address with significant numbers of people arriving in small crafts in the U.K. have thus far not materialised here. Nevertheless, the Customs and Immigration Service are monitoring developments closely and are well prepared should a landing occur. The question of how Jersey supports refugees came to the fore once more with the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, having previously been discussed in relation to Syria and Afghanistan. Jersey

has provided significant support for Ukraine. Since the Russian invasion the Government and public have committed over £3 million to humanitarian agencies in the Ukraine and neighbouring countries. One of the highest per capita contributions in the world. The question of whether Jersey should accept refugees from areas experiencing humanitarian crises is complex. We know that we are a prosperous Island and that Islanders want to help. However, we are also a small Island with our own local challenges.

[14:00]

If we were to resettle refugees via the U.K. relocation scheme we would be obliged to ensure parity with the provisions made under that scheme. This would include immediate access to work, education and health services plus the provision of housing and the provision of benefits or an equivalent income. There is a legitimate question as to whether Jersey has the capacity to manage that impact of this. When previously considered it has been judged that Jersey could best support those in need by providing funds directly to agencies supporting refugees, which we do via Jersey Overseas Aid. Since 2018 Jersey Overseas Aid has supported hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people and refugees from Ukraine, Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Colombia and the Central African Republic.

2.4.1 Ms. J. Simpson:

In reference to the £3 million quoted as supporting Ukraine, can the Minister clarify how much is from public donations and how much is from the Government money?

Deputy H. Jeune:

I am afraid I do not have those figures directly with me. I would like to refer to maybe the Assistant Minister for International Development and the Bailiff himself may be able to help with that.

The Bailiff:

All I can say from the Bailiff's fund was approximately £1.1 million, I think, and so the rest would have come either directly from Government or from the Jersey Overseas Aid budget. I am not able to be of any greater assistance.

Deputy H. Jeune:

Of course, Jersey Overseas Aid is from the Government.

2.4.2 Ms. C. Connor:

Could the Minister state whether refugees are currently going to be accepted? If so, how many and, if not, whether she believes that this is ethically correct for the Government?

Deputy H. Jeune:

Thank you for your question. Jersey had introduced the Ukraine Family Scheme in alignment with the U.K. and this enables family members for Ukraine nationals living in Jersey to apply for a visa to seek refuge in the Island. It applies to extended family and their immediate family members. A decision to continue with the Ukraine Family Scheme and not adopt the U.K.'s Home for Ukraine Scheme at this time but to keep it under review has been made by the Council of Ministers. This is due to the complexity of the ongoing situation which requires further consideration. As to your other question about looking at beyond Ukraine, as I said in the first answer to the original question, it is a very complex matter and one that has been discussed several times within this Assembly when there has been other such crises like Syria and Afghanistan. The decision was to be able to try to support refugees by supporting those internally displaced people within the crisis areas themselves.

2.4.3 Ms. C. Connor:

To what extent do you think that the measures that have already been taken have been successful?

Deputy H. Jeune:

I believe that for Jersey Overseas Aid they give regular updates in their reports and they have been very successful in supporting agencies and the U.N. (United Nations) in supporting internally displaced refugees or refugees from neighbouring countries of where there are crises. For example, I know that they have these pool of funds which they are able to give country based pool funds which means U.N. agencies and N.G.O. (non-governmental organisations) that are on the ground are able to make the decisions quickly and pertinently to the need of the refugees as and when it is needed. These pool funds help to leverage more funding than Jersey giving on its own would be able to do. I think that is very important to the mechanism that we work with.

The Bailiff:

Final supplementary question, Ms. Simpson? Very well, then we come to the next question which Ms. Emily Dudot of Hautlieu will ask of Deputy Steve Ahier, who is the Assistant Minister of International Development.

2.5 Miss. E. Dudot of Hautlieu of the Assistant Minister for International Development regarding Jersey's foreign aid contributions.

Do you believe Jersey's contributions to foreign aid is sufficient?

Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North (Assistant Minister for International Development):

Thank you for the question. Jersey contributes 0.28 per cent of its G.V.A. (Gross Value Added) to overseas aid which this year translates to around £17.7 million. Gross value added is a way to measure the size of the economy. By linking the amount that we spend on overseas aid to the size of our economy, we can be sure that it remains affordable. If the economy grows or shrinks so will the amount that we are able to spend. The aim is to increase the percentage of G.V.A. spent on overseas aid towards 0.3 per cent by 2025. The United Nations target is 0.7 per cent and the O.E.C.D. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) average is around 0.32 per cent, so we are moving closer to international norms. We make a difference in countries where we find our long-term sustainable developments projects in our 3 thematic areas of dairy, conservation livelihoods and financial inclusion. These were chosen as Jersey can offer specialist expertise and add value beyond their financial support. We are already achieving great things around the world through Jersey Overseas Aid in a steady, measured, sustainable way and we hope to build on this.

2.5.1 Ms. E. Dudot:

For highest capita per person Jersey ranks at between seventh and eighth internationally so how can Denmark, which is placed at tenth, contribute 0.8 G.V.A. for foreign aid since 2006 and Jersey is only planning to increase their foreign aid from 0.28 to 0.3 for 2025?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Obviously various countries around the world contribute a great deal of different sums to the international aid. England itself used to donate 0.7, which conformed to the standard but unfortunately during COVID that was reduced 0.55. So we are moving forward each year. It was 0.27 per cent in 2022 and we are expecting to be at 0.3 by 2025. This equates roughly in actual figures from £13 million up to £20 million in 2025. For a small Island I believe we are doing a great deal towards international aid.

2.5.2 Ms. C. Connor:

If there is a disaster overseas, is there an emergency budget designed to be able to give more money. If so, what is it?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

We have allocations for overseas disasters and they will vary year on year depending on how much money is required. Only recently we allocated a further £75,000 to the devastating earthquakes in Syria and Turkey. That increases our donation to that disaster up to £425,000 within the last 6 months. We do have a fair degree of money to be allocated and it is all dependent on what disasters strike.

2.5.3 Ms. C. Connor:

What percentage of the emergency budget was used last year?

Deputy S.M. Ahier:

All the available funding out of the total of £13 million. I believe the amount that was left over at the end of the year was just in the tens of thousands, so all the budget was allocated and that is quite a tricky thing to do.

The Bailiff:

Any other supplementary questions? Final supplementary, Ms. Dudot?

Ms. E. Dudot:

No, thank you.

The Bailiff:

We next have a question from Mr. Carter Bennett of De La Salle who will ask a question of Deputy David Warr of St. Helier South, who is the Minister for Housing and Communities. One moment. So it is not Mr. Bennett it is Mr. Nichols. I beg your pardon, Mr. Edward Nichols is going to ... I will just change the note.

2.6 Mr. E. Nichols of De La Salle of the Minister for Housing and Communities regarding overpopulation in respect of housing supply.

Will the Minister detail his plans to address the possibility of overpopulation in respect to housing supply?

Deputy D. Warr of St. Helier South (The Minister for Housing and Communities):

I thank you for your question. I think the student has asked an interesting and provocative question in 2 areas. As the Minister with responsibility for Housing, I am continually supporting and encouraging the development of new housing supply to meet the needs of our population. I am also a member of the Population and Skills Ministerial Group, which brings together 7 Ministers to ensure that we have joined up policy across these issues. The question uses the term “overpopulation”. That will mean different things to different people, wherever that line is drawn. Ministers today are clear on the need to encourage everyone living in Jersey to play their full part and that means good education, good skills training, good jobs and good housing. As the Minister for Housing and Communities the quality of accommodation is as important to me as the number of units. I support the expansion of our housing stock with modern and well-built homes. That will include the use of innovative building material and methods and also take account of the environmental impact of the buildings.

2.6.1 Mr. E. Nichols:

May I ask the Minister’s opinion on the many unoccupied houses within the Island and what plans there are for these buildings?

Deputy D. Warr:

Thank you for the question again. You are referring there to our vacant homes project, which we are currently running at this moment in time and in which we have identified approximately 900 homes

which are currently vacant or have been long-term empty. One of the policies that I am very keen to do in Jersey here is to make sure we get the best use out of our - what we call - built environment. So what we are doing ... so at the moment we have set up a service which people can refer to and call in on. At this moment in time we have 200 cases have been referred to us. In fact, I believe since this was published we are up to 220 vacant homes and what we are doing is we are engaging with the community to, as I say, tell us where these homes are and then after that what we are doing is - and this is again happening this week, would you believe it of all times - we are going to be sending out follow up letters now we have identified who the owners of these properties are to establish if there anything the Government can do to help. But I am very keen that these properties do come back into use because it is very important that we do not build on more green fields.

2.6.2 Ms. C. Connor:

Could the Minister outline what the Broad Street office will be used for after the move to the new office and if not housing, why?

Deputy D. Warr:

Thank you for the question. Do you know what? I do not know the answer to that question. I need to go away and as we do in this situation get one of my officers to contact you and give you some better information. There we are, we cannot do anything about it because we do not own it. The Government itself does not own it, therefore it is up to somebody else to make that decision. Apologies for that. Thank you, Deputy Morel.

2.6.3 Mr. L. Muir:

The Minister has previously stated that he is not going to step into the private sector and introduce rent caps yet how does he plan to make sure that rent being charged is appropriate and tenants are not exploited?

Deputy D. Warr:

Thank you for one of the hot topics of the current Assembly. What we are doing at this moment in time is we are writing a new up to date residential tenancy law and what we want to achieve in that residential tenancy law is to give more teeth to what I would call a housing tribunal whereby we can have an impact on rent increases. That means getting more up to date contracts so that tenants are better protected so that when that rent increase comes around they are very familiar with whether that will be in line with inflation or below inflation and there is no hint ... I think maybe some of the things you are referring to here is maybe landlords putting up rents above inflation rates and not giving people security of tenure. We are currently developing a new law which we hope, as a Government, will cover that off because I am very conscious that this is a very important issue for many, many people on this Island at this moment in time.

2.6.4 Ms. E. Rouault of Beaulieu:

You previously mentioned quality of housing but is it really fair that there are families with small children living in the ever increasing flats in the Island and we know there is a detrimental effect on their health?

Deputy D. Warr:

Thank you for the question. I do love all these hot topics which come out because they genuinely are, thank you, seriously very relevant to people's thought processes today. When we talk about housing and the size of homes, the Deputy to my right here, the Minister for the Environment, is currently going through a process whereby we set minimum house sizes. That is one area in terms of we do not want to make homes too small for families or people who live in those homes but at the same time we need to recognise that there is what we call a Bridging Island Plan and the Bridging Island Plan basically identifies town as having a higher density of buildings, in other words you

describe them as flats, whichever way you want to describe that, and then out of town being more for family homes. That is what has been determined by previous Assemblies through the Bridging Island Plan. The other point that you make in a lot of ways is about the quality of our built environment and that is how good our public areas are, our green spaces are around town, what we call permeable town is, in other words maybe reduce car usage so it is safer to walk, green corridors and things like that.

[14:15]

So there are lots of things going on in that space, not just simply around about the accommodation itself but also about the environment in which that accommodation is placed.

2.6.5 Ms. E. Rouault:

As you mention, there is the out of town houses available for families but how do you intend to ensure that they are still affordable in this cost of living crisis?

Deputy D. Warr:

These are superbly challenging questions. Thank you very much indeed. What I would say about how do we make ... affordability is a good question because what is affordable to one person is not affordable to another. I find it very difficult to define what we mean by affordability because in the end if someone goes to a bank and applies for a mortgage and the bank agrees to give you that mortgage that means that home is affordable. That is a simple task. Obviously if you are a first-time buyer with little in the way of a deposit, how do you bridge that gap? One of the things we are looking at at the moment is a policy within Government, we have a sum of money, it is £10 million, which is what we call ringfenced, for people trying to get into the housing market and the accommodation market. What we are trying to do is to see if we can help people bridge that gap to the differential between what the bank will lend them and what they can afford to pay. That is what we ... I hate to use the words "policy development", because everybody shouts at me in the Assembly when I use terms like that, but these are policies which we are thinking at the moment. Because the great danger with us putting significant sums of money, as a government, into accommodation, into housing and assisted purchasing schemes, is that we inflate the housing market inadvertently. So homes that may be just about affordable today become totally unaffordable because of the actions of Government. We have got to be very, very careful when we do things like that. Thank you.

The Bailiff:

Mr. Humpleby, and then I will take the final supplementary.

2.6.6 Mr. H. Humpleby of De La Salle College:

Deputy Ahier, in terms of rent controls are review panels is the only way to reduce rent? Surely this cannot protect everyone, why do consecutive Governments continue to reject the idea of rent control?

Deputy D. Warr:

Thank you for the question. I feel like this is a Reform Party question session here. But thank you for such a relevant question, it genuinely is. Rent control is already applied within the social housing sector, and that is through our Andium Homes. We are ... as an A.L.O. or Arm's Length Organisation, they are capped at a rental increase ... an annual rental increase of 4 per cent. So they are significantly below inflation rate, which is currently running at around 11 per cent. So there is capping in that respect. For those people who cannot afford the rent, there is obviously income support in that people are helped out in that area. The one area where, as at this moment in time, we do not want to interfere with - I do not want to interfere with - is the private sector. However, as I originally answered here in the Residential Tenancy Law, what I do want to see is a way in which we can somehow mitigate those increases. In other words, give certainty to tenants that they have a long-term future in the accommodation currently provided. But as you identify, it is a challenging

situation. Just to give you one little bit of encouragement, over the last 12 months rent increases have been significantly below current inflation levels as have been evidenced. So, landlords, also, have to be aware of what tenants can afford, and so therefore they also ... that will also mitigate rent increases.

The Bailiff:

Supplementary question? Very well. Final supplementary, Mr. Nichols.

2.6.7 Mr. E. Nichols:

Has the Minister seen a considerable or stable improvement in the state of the housing situation following the development of many apartment complexes and other houses within the Island?

Deputy D. Warr:

Thank you for the question. I think it is too early to call at this moment in time. We are currently in the process of building something like 3,000 homes by 2030, through our States-owned entity and there is a significant number of buildings going in the private sector. That volume of building has been identified through previous research as to demand. Things like the Gateway, access to social housing and things like that. So, have we met the demand? I think the reality is we are going to keep building until we see a significant fall away in the waiting lists in places like, what we call "The Social Housing Gateway". When we start seeing that decline significantly then I think we will feel like we have got somewhere. But my thought process is that this is going to be a significant project because we have been very slow to build significant amount of accommodation in the previous decade, and now we are in catch-up territory at this moment in time. We have got a way to go yet.

The Bailiff:

The next question is one that Mr. Thomas Waller of Victoria College will ask of Deputy Hilary Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity, the Assistant Minister for Home Affairs. Yes, Mr. Waller.

2.7 Mr. T. Waller of Victoria College of the Assistant Minister for Home Affairs, regarding the criminal justice process for allegations of rape.

Deputy Jeune, regarding recent reports that none of the 113 allegations of rape in 2021 and 2022 resulted in a conviction, will the Minister detail what plans, if any, she has in considering to improve the efficiency of the criminal justice process so that victims retain confidence in it? Thank you.

Deputy H. Jeune (The Assistant Minister for Home Affairs):

Thank you for your question. I share the concern for those who find those statistics shocking. They are simply not good enough. When considering how to make improvements in this area, it is important to recognise the different agencies involved and the different roles they play. While the police conduct the investigations into the allegations of rape, it is for the Law Officers' Department to make decisions about prosecution and to put across the case in court. It is for the courts, who are the ultimate arbiter, as to whether someone is guilty and if they are what their punishment should be. Both the court and the Prosecution Service are independent of Government, and this independent is a real fundamental principle of our democracy. There is existing work, already underway to seek to improve the experience of those who report rape or other serious sexual offences. The States of Jersey Police and Law Officers' Department have a joint action plan, and 68 per cent of those actions are currently complete. It will, however, take a period of time before we see whether it has any impact on prosecutions and convictions. Additionally, the Government has formed a taskforce to look into issues around violence against women and girls. The taskforce has conducted a general survey for Islanders to contribute their views and opinions on violence against women and girls in Jersey, as well as offering the opportunity for anyone with experience of violence against women and girls to share their stories by submitting their testimonies. The taskforce has also conducted a piece of work with schools, where young people were able to share their views, and I am very pleased that this had a very good level of engagement, including from Victoria College. The taskforce are due to

make their recommendations to Government in July this year, and once we have those recommendations we will consider very carefully how Government can initiate change.

2.7.1 Mr. T. Waller:

Thank you for your response. You mentioned that once you have received the responses from the Violence Against Women and Girls Focus Group, Government would then be able to initiate changes. What specific strategies do you, or Government as a whole, have to continually solve this issue?

Deputy H. Jeune:

Thank you for your question. I would not want to pre-empt what the taskforce report will be in recommendations. Until we have that I think it is very important that we support the police and The Law Office in completing their action plans as well, 68 per cent has been completed. There is, of course, still to get to that 100 per cent. We would urge them to carry on that important work. But for the taskforce, we would like to get it right, and so to hear from them and the survey that they have done. They have engaged a huge range of stakeholders, and it will be important to let them finish their work to give us the recommendations, and from that be able to deliver a good action plan that we will be able put within the Government Plan for 2024 and beyond so we can see those real changes.

2.7.2 Ms. C. Connor:

With the clear issues regarding the Courts and Prosecution Service, in relation to the low conviction rates, why has the Government not taken action before now?

Deputy H. Jeune:

Thank you for your question. I think it is important to reiterate that the courts and Prosecution Service are independent of Government, and this is really a fundamental principle of our democracy. However, a role of the Minister for Home Affairs is really important to give the necessary resources, for example, to the police to be able to support the police in their role in gathering evidence and supporting victims. That is something that the Minister for Home Affairs ensures and regularly pushes for. Not only the police but all emergency services. Also the Government has given ... invested heavily in support for victims. For example, over £200,000 has been given to fund a Victims First for Jersey in 2023. Because a third of victims in Jersey do not support a prosecution and we have to understand that. They do not necessarily seek for a criminal justice outcome. So it is very important that we have invested in our Sexual Assault Referral Centre and our independent sexual violence advisers over recent years, and both these services ensure victims receive medical care as well as other therapeutic interventions. Both these services provide victims with options and choices and the advisers provide support to victims through the criminal justice process, should they wish to go and to support a prosecution.

2.7.3 Ms. C. Connor:

How much money has the Government put into prevention rather than post-assault prosecution of the perpetrator and/or post-assault help for the victim?

Deputy H. Jeune:

Thank you for your question. That is very important. It is something that is very important to our Minister for Home Affairs and the ministerial team throughout all the work of the Home Affairs is to look at prevention and whether it is on these serious issues of rape and sexual offences, as well as all crime. So the taskforce have been looking at this and I think it will be important to wait for their recommendations. They will come up with recommendations, especially for prevention and we will be able to integrate that. We are developing at the moment, a Community Safety Strategy which will look at prevention from that whole range of criminal issues to be able to make sure that we look at prevention.

2.7.4 Ms. L. Miller of Jersey College for Girls:

Does the Minister plan to allow for any of the 113 victims to retry their claims, as statistically they cannot all be false?

Deputy H. Juene:

Thank you for your question. I think, again, that is something that is for ... not necessarily for the Government to encourage. But, I think, where the Government is supported is the independent sexual violence advisers, who will be able to support victims of sexual offences and of rape to ... if they decide they would like to go to retrial or any further on any prosecution where they have not necessarily before. These advisers would help advise them and help them through this process. I think that is important so they are independent advisers, because that is really important to keep it that way.

2.7.5 Mr. L. Muir:

Aside from the recommendations of the taskforce, what role can Government play in shifting culture around violence against women and girls within the Island?

Deputy H. Juene:

Thank you for your question. It is a very good question. It is something that we are grappling with a lot in relation to these questions and the wider issue of the fact that the Minister for Home Affairs has now been given the responsibility of diversity, inclusion and equality. It is something that we have even discussed yesterday about that cultural change and where Government's levers can help to develop culture change within the Island, both from the issue of gender-based violence, but also in that wider inclusion, equalities and diversity that we all aspire to in this Island and would want to support. I cannot give a definite answer because it is something that is really complicated, and it is something that I think, when we were talking about it yesterday, is that kind of cultural change has to be throughout the whole of Government. So that is something that is really important that we take away and see how we, ourselves, can do that and make sure that we are upholding those values as a government. Then see what we can do to support in the wider community. I know that within education, for example, this is really important. The Minister for Children and Education has talked about this as well, and in other areas. It is definitely cross-policy and across ministerial teams, but it is something that is really important and it is within the Government Plan, and it has been identified as something important to make sure that we take diversity and inclusion importantly in the Government.

The Bailiff:

Supplemental questions, Mr. Muir? Very well, I have Ms. McGurty and then final supplementary questions. Go ahead.

2.7.6 Ms. A. McGurty:

Do you think the lack of successful convictions could lead people, in the future, to be hesitant to confide and report their sexual assault?

[14:30]

Deputy H. Juene:

Thank you for your question. It is a worry and it is something that, as I said, we are really concerned about this statistic. The Minister for Home Affairs also said this within the States Assembly, I think it was last week as well. We do take this very seriously as a ministerial team but we have put money to try to support those who have experienced these shocking crimes to help them decide how they would like to go forward and to also to help them from the case of medical care but also therapeutic

interventions as well. So we hope that with these type of ... providing these wider services we will be able to support victims in how they would like to proceed.

The Bailiff:

Supplemental question? Someone indicated a desire to ask a question. I had already called the last question, so I am afraid the chance has passed for that. Final supplementary question, Mr. Waller?

2.7.7 Mr. T. Waller:

Thank you for your responses. With all these changes and plans in place to solve this issue, what would you consider an evident success as these solutions for working in 5 years' time? Thank you.

Deputy H. Juene:

Thank you very much for your question, also a very good question. I think I would say it comes back to some of the questions that have been asked of me already. I think what would be evidence of success would be that cultural change, would be the reduction in violence against women. So having some of those action points that would be identified by the taskforce that they are absolutely implemented as swiftly as we can, and we have measured results to show that we have a reduction in any violence, we have that cultural change and we start really building on prevention as was asked earlier. I think the biggest thing is to try to get to a point where we do not have to get to this discussion but meanwhile we are really focusing on prevention and, as I said, multi-policy, multi-agency and multi-ministerial teams support on that is really important.

The Bailiff:

Very well, we now come to the next question that Ms. Amber McGurty of Hautlieu will ask of Deputy Gorst, Minister for Treasury and Resources.

2.8 Ms. A. McGurty of the Minister for Treasury and Resources, regarding GST on essential items.

Does the Minister consider it appropriate to continue charging G.S.T. (Goods and Services Tax) on essential items and if so, why?

Deputy I.J. Gorst (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

It is quite a long answer. Goods and Services Tax was introduced to bolster Government finances at the time when Jersey's tax system was undergoing significant shifts in the way it taxed businesses. Since its introduction in 2008, G.S.T. has become an important source of revenue for the Government. In 2021, G.S.T. raised around £106 million which represented approximately 10 per cent of Government revenue, and just over 11 per cent of Government spending for that year. At the time of its introduction, the then Minister for Treasury and Resources developed Jersey's G.S.T. system in such a way to avoid the pitfalls of similar taxes in other jurisdictions, such as the U.K.'s value-added system. These taxes typically have exemptions and reliefs for essential items designed to benefit those on lower income. In practice, however, they complicate the tax system by introducing arbitrary distinctions, making it hard for tax authorities to administer and for businesses to comply with. For instance, in the U.K. a jaffa-type cake would be zero-rated for V.A.T. (Value Added Tax) purposes but a chocolate digestive biscuit would be taxed at 5 per cent. In addition, essential items, by definition, are universally consumed. They will be purchased by consumers regardless of where they fall on the income distribution. This means that tax relief, or exemptions, for essential items creates an unnecessary benefit for those on higher incomes. It is for these reasons that Jersey has pursued a low, broad and simple G.S.T. with few reliefs and exemptions. However, the consequences of this is that G.S.T. is charged on commercial supplies of many every day goods. This tension in the G.S.T. system was recognised at the time of introduction by providing compensation, both inside the tax system by significantly increasing personal income tax allowances and outside the tax system targeted to those on lower incomes through income support. This includes the Community Cost

Bonus, which at the time compensated households who did not pay income tax and thereby benefit from increased tax allowances, and did not receive income support against the cost of G.S.T. on food. These compensatory mechanisms continue to provide support to Islanders and the Council of Ministers remains committed to maintaining and enhancing, where appropriate, targeted financial support for those who need it most in preference to G.S.T. reliefs and exemptions. It should also be noted that evidence from the U.K. suggests that where the U.K. Government has in recent times reduced V.A.T. that those reductions have not necessarily been reflected in consumer prices.

2.8.1 Ms. A. McGurty:

You stated that taxes typically have exemptions and reliefs for essential items designed to benefit those on lower incomes. May I ask why you consider menstrual products a luxury item and charge a 5 per cent G.S.T. on them but postal, financial services and medical supplies are exempt from this G.S.T.

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I thank you for that question. The Government, since coming into office, has introduced for a trial period - I think, now, we are getting to the end of that trial - a free menstrual products provision which seeks to alleviate the difficulties that those on low incomes may have in ensuring that they have sufficient and correct menstrual products available to themselves.

2.8.2 Ms. C. Connor:

The Minister mentioned that tax relief, or exemptions, for essential items create an unnecessary benefit for those on higher incomes, but does the Jersey income tax not already do this?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

Of course the Jersey income tax is ... there are 2 systems. There is the marginal rate and there is the standard rate, and we know that one does both calculations and one is allowed to pay the lower of the 2 tax calculations. This is a Goods and Services Tax, which mirrors the Value Added Tax system. The basic choice is to either have a very complicated high tax rate or a low, broad, uncomplicated tax rate. We follow the example of New Zealand where they have that and then provide offsetting provisions for those on low income. That was the decision that the States Assembly took at the time. I supported it and I continue to support it.

2.8.3 Ms. C. Connor:

Do you think that given the cost of living crisis at the moment that Jersey income taxes are still fair?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

Yes, I think they are. The incoming Government introduced a cost of living Mini Budget within a few short weeks of being sworn into office, elected into office as well, so I should not forget that bit. One of the measures that we did was introduce the thresholds for income tax by 12 per cent. What we did in that Mini Budget was say to Islanders each one of you, as an individual or as a family, would be suffering the cost of living and increasing prices in different ways and what we were doing was facilitating more money in Islanders' pockets for them to then decide themselves how they could best use that money to offset the cost of living crisis. We did that on tax thresholds. We reduced social security contributions but we also increased substantially a number of benefits as well.

2.8.4 Ms. L. Miller:

To what extent does the Minister believe that the compensatory mechanisms put in place are effective in supporting those who need it most?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

The original compensating measures that were put in place have never been taken away, so they are still in place. But what the new Government did, as I say, in the cost of living Mini Budget was substantially increase those compensatory measures again. It used the mechanisms available to it to help offset the growing inflation in the economy. The original compensatory measures basically compensated for the introduction of G.S.T. and the subsequent compensatory measures have substantially put more money into Islanders' pockets over the period as well.

2.8.5 Mr. D. Riley:

Will the Minister make the exemption from G.S.T. for menstrual products permanent at the end of the current trial?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

There are 2 things happening, there was a decision by the previous States Assembly to remove G.S.T. or zero rate them on menstrual products. What the incoming Government has done as an alternative policy is to provide, as I say, for this trial period free provision. The Government believes that the continuation of the free provision is better than the zero-rating proposal and it will, if it has not already - I look to the Greffier - be shortly lodging a proposition to overturn, I am not sure what the word, we are about to then rescind the decision around G.S.T. but to maintain the free provision.

The Bailiff:

Final supplementary then ... no, I beg your pardon, Ms. Connor, did you want to ask a second question?

Ms. C. Connor:

Am I allowed to?

The Bailiff:

Yes, very well.

2.8.6 Ms. C. Connor:

Do you think that we would need the emergency budget, Minister, if we had not wasted so much money on a hospital that has not yet been built?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

It is a very good political question. The reality is of course they are 2 very, very different things because the emergency budget was recognising the difficulty that Islanders were facing with the cost of living crisis and growing inflation. The Government came in and said we are going to produce a Mini Budget which allowed Islanders to have more money in their pockets to deal with individual and family circumstances and the effect that the cost of living crisis was having on them. Totally separate to that is any expenditure from general decisions of the States to allocate money towards - and I use this term lightheartedly - building a hospital. The challenge for this Government is to get on and build something.

The Bailiff:

Ms. Dudot, do you have a question? That will be the last before we move to the final supplementary.

2.8.7 Ms. E. Dudot:

Do you think a system could be put in place based on one's wage which could attribute to the tax they pay on essential items, even if it was to be deemed complicated?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

The choice is basically you have a higher rate of consumption tax, which is what the European Union has chosen. But we will note that they keep and continually have to adjust that higher rate of consumption tax, where you have all of these various exemptions. I would point out that we look at places like France and Germany and other Member States where they want to support low income. They reduced their V.A.T. (Value Added Tax) rate in many instances to around 5 per cent or 7 per cent. Surely it is far better to have a simple, broad, non-complicated consumption tax that you can keep low, because what you are trying to do is, yes, raise revenue but at the same time keep it as low as possible. I think the system that we have works incredibly well, as long as it is alongside those compensatory payments that I have talked about, the Government at the introduction and the current Government has given to Islanders; you have to have both.

2.8.8 Ms. E. Dudot:

But with a higher rate of housing costs, would it not be fair for those on a lower income to be able to have a more adjusted G.S.T.?

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

I do not think that the answer to the high cost of housing is to adjust G.S.T., which is only at 5 per cent. The cost of housing is a far more substantial matter than reductions to 5 per cent of G.S.T. The Minister for Housing and Communities told us earlier about the pieces of work that he is doing in that regard.

2.8.9 Ms. A. McGurty:

You mentioned a public menstrual products scheme but these would only be available in public places, like toilets in schools, however, most people need them at home. Would you go about making them free in shops and places that are accessible for everyone and not certain people? **[Approbation]**

Deputy I.J. Gorst:

That is not the current proposal, as I understand it. It is to continue the current provision in public places. I am not aware that there is any restriction that those who are availing themselves of those facilities cannot take those items and use them at home as well.

The Bailiff:

Very well. We now come to a question that Ms. Amilie McCulloch of Beaulieu will ask of Deputy Jonathan Renouf, the Minister for the Environment. Yes, Ms. McCulloch.

[14:45]

2.9 Ms. A. McCulloch of Beaulieu of the Minister for the Environment regarding changes to planning regulations.

Given the ongoing increases in population, is the Minister considering any changes in relation to planning regulations to ensure sufficient available properties?

Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade (The Minister for the Environment):

In Jersey the main way that these tensions are managed between population and housing are through the Island Plan. That Island Plan is a hugely important document for Jersey, it sets out how as a community we will create homes, strengthen our economy, protect and improve our environment, provide for a good quality of life and enhance what is special about our Island. Given its importance for the Island, the Island Plan is debated and approved by the States Assembly and not, you will be relieved to know, just by me as the Minister. It also needs to be the subject of public consultation and independent external examination by planning inspectors and these requirements are set out in law. Normally the Island Plan would provide a 10-year planning framework but because many issues

have been uncertain in recent times as a result of the pandemic and Brexit, the latest Bridging Island Plan covers a shorter 3-year plan period from 2022 until 2025. The Bridging Island Plan was only approved in March last year and it is based on some assumptions about what changes will happen to the Island's population over this shorter plan period. The plan makes provision for the need for homes and other community needs, such as hospitals and schools, during this time. It is my job to work with fellow Ministers and other States Members to implement the proposals and policies in the Bridging Island Plan to deliver what the Island needs. The Bridging Island Plan was, however, prepared before the Island's latest census, which took place in 2021. The next Island Plan will need to have regard to the findings of the census and consider how best to meet the Island's changing needs in the future. We have one Island Plan in place now, which will deal with some of the population issues but we need to think as we prepare the next Island Plan how that will respond to those pressures.

2.9.1 Ms. A. McCulloch:

When the building of these facilities the Minister has mentioned are planned, is increasing parking access and availability also going to be taken into consideration?

Deputy J. Renouf:

That is a very timely question because I have just issued consultation, which you are welcome to take part in, to do with parking standards in residential developments. We have a set of what is called supplementary planning guidance to help decision-makers when they decide planning applications to decide whether or not to approve them or refuse them. One of those pieces of supplementary planning guidance relates to parking standards. How much parking should there be per number of units of accommodation? Those standards were put in place a very long time ago and are very out of date. We are reducing the parking requirements and the reason for that is because - one of the many reasons - we have a net zero carbon strategy, the aim of which is to reduce dependence on private motor vehicles. We are trying to encourage other forms of transport; active travel, shared travel, public transport and so on. The number of units of parking per place of accommodation, if this new supplementary planning guidance is adopted, will be less than in the past.

2.9.2 Ms. C. Connor:

Could you outline if teachers' pay will increase if class sizes will continue to increase with the population, as you have claimed you want to provide a good quality of life for all?

Deputy J. Renouf:

Can you repeat the question? I thought you said something about teachers.

Ms. C. Connor:

Could you outline if teachers' pay will be increased if class sizes will continue to increase with the population, as you have claimed you want to provide a good quality of life for all?

Deputy J. Renouf:

That is not in my gift as Minister for the Environment. The Minister for Children and Education is possibly better placed to answer that question. But it is also a question for the Government as a whole to consider because we have to consider pay rises for teachers, alongside pay rises for nurses, alongside pay rises indeed for civil servants, such as our Bailiff here and indeed us I suppose. I think the question is we have to consider it in relation to all those competing demands for resources. It is certainly the desire of Government to ensure that the teachers are given the kind of income that will encourage them to stay in the profession and indeed to attract new people to the profession. How we do that is within the envelope of the financial resources that we have, given slight reluctance for people to pay more in taxes and so on, is a tricky thing that we have to balance over the course of the year.

2.9.3 Ms. C. Connor:

Do you think the increase in population is putting a strain on resources?

Deputy J. Renouf:

The question about population is a very, very interesting one. I have had a longstanding interest in it, in fact I have a yellowing *Jersey Evening Post* clip from well before you were born when I was at school, when I was interviewed as a bunch of students before we had Youth Parliaments, to ask what would people think the big issues of the day were? I said population. I have some history in this subject. Of course the problem with population, first of all, is we are slightly in the dark, even though we have had a census from 2021; that is now well out of date. Anecdotally we hear about people leaving the Island quite a lot but we also have other evidence that suggests that there are still people coming to the Island. School rolls have not fallen dramatically, so we do not think that there is a huge number of people going out. We would like more data to know. But the whole job of the Island Plan is to balance those changes in population with all the different resources that are needed to support an increased population. It is not just teachers, we need lots of other things to reach capacity. All sorts of things have to change, water supply and so on all change. My view is that we need to be very cautious about net increases in population without having had a plan in place for dealing with them.

2.9.4 Ms. E. Robins of Beaulieu:

As you mentioned earlier, by reducing parking for an aim of net zero carbon emissions, are you forgetting to take into consideration jobs that rely on owning vans, for example? Where would you expect them to park?

Deputy J. Renouf:

I think the key point here is that we are reducing and not eliminating parking. The key thing we have to do is to make sure that within those general reductions we are not reducing access to vehicles for those who absolutely need it. But that does not mean to say we have to keep provision at exactly the same level as it is now. We have other ambitions, we want to free up road space, we want to be able to make the roads better for pedestrians, better for cyclists, maybe to have some more trees in them. We need to humanise the urban environment and that means less on-street parking. We also have other solutions in terms of things that would give people access to private vehicles without them having to own their own private vehicle, for example, through shared ownership. People will be aware of EVie, I am sure. There is the potential to expand schemes like that so that people have vehicles available on demand, rather than just one vehicle sitting outside their home not being used most of the time and so on. I think we can accommodate both reductions in parking standards and still meet the needs of those people who particularly, for whatever reason, maybe elderly, maybe disabled, maybe tradespeople, we can in this case have our cake and eat it.

2.9.5 Ms. A. McCulloch:

Would reducing parking not create more problems than it would solve, as reducing parking may not affect whether or not people drive?

Deputy J. Renouf:

Do not worry, I lose my place all the time as well. What I am trying to get at is a balance and I fundamentally believe that we have to reduce the number of private vehicle journeys in Jersey and we need to do that to meet our carbon emissions targets. There are many different ways of doing that. I have tried to outline some of them. I think that we are not going to try and deny anyone what they need. What we are trying to do is make clear that as a society we are doing that reduction and we are trying to make available other options, support other options that will mean that people can achieve their mobility, for want of a better word, through a method that might be more

environmentally friendly where they are able to. We will encourage those options, support those options financially through various incentive schemes. But, as I say, hopefully not withdraw from people who need their vehicle for whatever reason it might be. We will not be withdrawing that by diktat.

The Bailiff:

Very well. We come now to the last question, which Ms. Jemimah Kalule of Jersey College for Girls will ask of Deputy Gardiner, the Minister for Children and Education.

2.10 Ms. J. Kalule of the Jersey College for Girls of the Minister for Children and Education regarding the current provision for mental health care for under-18s by CAMHS.

Will the Minister detail the current provision of mental health care for under 18s by C.A.M.H.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service)?

Deputy I. Gardiner (The Minister for Children and Education):

Thank you for your question. The focus for health and well-being in 2022 was implementation of the Children and Young People's Emotional Well-being and Mental Health Strategy and redesign of C.A.M.H.S.'s services. The implementation of the strategy and redesign of C.A.M.H.S. progressed well and service developed from a small C.A.M.H.S. team of around 21 staff in 2021 to 5 integrated services within C.A.M.H.S. itself and now we have a team of 65, so the staff and provision grows. In 2022 we launched our new Duty and Assessment Service, Early Intervention Service, Specialist C.A.M.H.S. Service, C.A.M.H.S. Looked after Children Service and quality and assurance overnight, all led by service managers. These services did not exist before 2022 and they are very, very important. The Duty and Assessment Service has ensured that there is a C.A.M.H.S. nurse in the children and family hub working with other agencies to triage and respond to referrals. This has allowed a quick allocation of a C.A.M.H.S. practitioner upon referral. The Early Intervention Service is working closely with education and other providers to develop earlier and more co-ordinated support for emerging mental health issues. We have expanded a number of psychiatrists, psychologists and therapists in specialist C.A.M.H.S. and we have invested in our quality and assurance team to improve our governance, data and performance oversight.

2.10.1 Ms. J. Kalule:

May the Minister please specify the additional provisions provided by the other Government departments, third sector and charitable organisations, as referred to at the end of that answer?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I thank you for your question. I will give some, maybe I will not mention all, and I would refer you also to the Government website. We also recently distributed leaflets to schools. I hope the leaflets are available in schools and I will double-check they are available. On top of C.A.M.H.S. we have a youth well-being drop-in session, which takes place every Saturday and it is free of charge. Everyone, children, young people, parents and carers can come and ask any question in a private space with a specialist. We have the Youth Enquiry Service, which is, yes, again open. We have the L.G.B.T.Q. (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning) youth project. We have My Time 4 Young Carers. Obviously G.P.s (general practitioners), doctors and the Emergency Department all will provide necessary support. Also Kooth offers online counselling and support for anyone aged 11 to 25 and this is an online service available 24 hours. We have E.L.S.A. (Emotional Literacy Support Assistants) co-ordinators in each school and I would welcome feedback on what we can improve in this space. We work with Mind Jersey groups. I have probably not mentioned them all but they are providing well-being support and mental health support for young people.

2.10.2 Ms. C. Connor:

Does the Minister believe anything needs to change in schools or indeed even wider society to prevent under-18s having to access C.A.M.H.S.?

[15:00]

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Thank you for your question, because this is something that we are trying to understand why young people do not always engage with C.A.M.H.S. earlier. I have been told about the stigma around mental health and we are looking at how we can ... all of us can have moments, all of us can feel anxiety - even myself while I am answering the question - so it is how we are dealing with what is coming up and how openly we can speak. This is the reason that we have these services, like I mentioned, the drop-in session on Saturday, that nobody needs to know to which room, just between 10.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m. anytime. Confidentially you can come in, share and a specialist can provide the support. We have also started to look into extending hours for the first time, just to make a telephone call and to share currently it is available from 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m., and we are going to extend it overnight because we know that sometimes during the late hours in the evening the thoughts are coming together and we always need to be there to be able to support people who come forward.

2.10.3 Ms. C. Connor:

Are there currently any plans to change anything in schools to prevent under 18s having to access these different ...

Deputy I. Gardiner:

There is what we call inclusion extra budget that we will put in place this year. An inclusion budget where we have a special education co-ordinator, we have a mental health and well-being support co-ordinator. We need to make sure that we increase support within the school and we are looking at how we can have ... because school feels like a safe environment for most people, known environment, rather to have go into some places that children and young people do not know. We need to see how this provision will be extended within schools, how specialists come into schools more than coming out of schools.

2.10.4 Ms. Z. Holt of Jersey College for Girls:

Is the Government looking at still increasing the amount of staff at C.A.M.H.S. and, if so, what training will they receive?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Absolutely, we are recruiting, we continue to recruit. First of all, in 2023 we will be concentrating on the extension of the Duty and Assessment Team hours, moving overnight from 8.00 p.m. to 8.00 a.m. and obviously we need staff that will support this provision. There was additional recruitment that currently we are looking to mental health practitioners, psychologists, paediatricians, occupational therapists, learning disability nurse, healthcare assistant, family support worker and officer manager and administrator post. All these posts are in some stages of recruitment.

2.10.5 Ms. E. Dudot:

How many therapist staff have been planned to be implemented, as there still remains a long waiting list, which can sometimes exceed 9 months?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

The waiting list, first of all we introduced recently the Early Intervention, this is the new service that has been introduced. I will take a step back, we need to understand what has happened with C.A.M.H.S. over the last 2 years. In 2022 we had 1,210 referrals, compared to 2020 when we had

only 684 referrals; it jumped, it has doubled. If we are looking into A.D.H.D. (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) assessment, from 51 in 2020 we have gone to 351 referrals in 2022; it is 7 times more than were previously. For the autism assessment we also go from 81 in 2020 to 2,017. We have now put services in to catch up with the waiting lists and now waiting lists have decreased. First of all, despite a significant increase in neurodevelopmental referrals, assessments are completed on average now in 18 weeks. This is how the extra recruitment in 2022 and extra buy-in services speed up the referral. We still would like to improve it but we are in a much, much better position than the U.K. Another thing which is important that since the new process began we have a C.A.M.H.S. nurse in the family hub, so within a maximum of 2 weeks any referral will be triaged and a full assessment may not be done but support will be provided, support will be in place.

2.10.6 Ms. J. Cadiou of Beaulieu:

This is similar to the previous question, you commented that the services allow a quick allocation of a C.A.M.H.S. practitioner upon referral. However, when looking at the data from both 2020 and 2019 the average number of days from referral to first attended initial assessment was 67 days. This information was sourced from the gov.je website. Do you know if these concerning long waiting list numbers have improved with your new services and would you say it would remain successful with the new service that you have provided?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Thank you for mentioning that. I realise that we must update the website because since 2022 significant investment and growing the staff from 21 to 65 staff members and increased staff, we have reduced substantially the waiting time. What I found out is there is lots of stuff on the gov.je website that needs to be updated. This is one of them and it is important to really emphasise we have now an early intervention team and we have a family children hub that do triage within 2 weeks. If yourself or your friends or members of the family did not have this response and support from C.A.M.H.S. I would welcome feedback to me personally.

2.10.7 Ms. J. Kalule:

Could the Minister please specify why it has taken until 2021 to redesign C.A.M.H.S., despite mental health in under-18s being a prevalent issue for many years?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Thank you for your question. I was not Minister then but I was a States Member and I remember that during the previous term and through the pandemic I think the need and also the conversation in the society in Jersey raised the profile, we put a strategy together and we have gone on the way. I cannot tell what has happened before but I agree with the view that we must put more funding and more support into mental health, and this is what is happening.

3. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Chief Minister

The Bailiff:

Very well. That ends the series of pre-set questions. We now move on questions to the Chief Minister without notice. There is an approximate period of 15 minutes available for that. The questions without notice will be taken by Deputy Kirsten Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity, who is the Deputy Chief Minister. Who would like to ask the first question? Mr. Waters.

3.1 Mr. C. Waters of Hautlieu:

Deputy Morel, why is Jersey not reducing the use of non-renewable energy sources and moving to renewable energy methods?

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (Deputy Chief Minister):

It is a very interesting question but one in which I would partly take issue with the premise of the question, which is that Jersey does not use renewable energy; 30 per cent of our energy comes directly from renewable sources from France. That includes the use of the Rance Barrage across the river Rance. The second element, which is perhaps more debatable, is that 60 per cent of the other 70 per cent comes from nuclear power. While nuclear power has its own issue of controversy, nuclear power is perhaps not quite renewable but it does not produce carbon emissions and as such is seen as more sustainable. Indeed, people like Professor James Lovelock, the author of Gaia theory or the creator of Gaia theory suggests that we use renewable energy as a transition means of energy generation. The last 10 per cent of our energy comes from the Energy for Waste plant and so while also not renewable is to some extent, limited I admit, sustainable. In that sense Jersey has got incredibly low carbon energy and I am really proud of that because that was due to decisions that were taken in the 1990s, which was quite some time ago. But we are, as an Island, looking to increase our energy security and we are also looking to increase the amount of self-generated renewable energy, including, for instance, wind farms in our local waters. That is something which is not only about energy but also about driving the economy. We believe that will create an export industry for the Island, exporting energy most likely to Europe. I think it is important to remember, and all Islanders should be proud, that we have incredibly low carbon energy in Jersey but that does not stop us moving forward into a greater renewable energy future.

3.2 Mr. D. Riley:

In the past week in relation to the resignation of the Government Chief Executive, the Minister for Infrastructure described the atmosphere in the Office of the Chief Executive leading up to her resignation as tense and less than happy and stated that in his view: “A happy working environment was in short supply.” Does the Deputy Chief Minister agree with the Minister for Infrastructure’s view that a happy working environment is in short supply in the Office of the Chief Executive?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Absolutely not. I completely disagree and fully refute the Minister for Infrastructure’s words. I also point out that at no point did he speak to the Chief Executive before coming up with those words. Did he ask the Chief Executive herself what she thought? No, he did not. What I see is a case of a man putting words into a woman’s mouth and that is not appropriate either.

3.2.1 Mr. D. Riley:

Does the Deputy Chief Minister agree that the challenging culture of the office of the Chief Executive was in part to blame for the resignation of the Government Chief Executive?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I do not believe there is a challenging culture in the office of the Chief Executive and in terms of a negatively challenging culture. I do believe that the role of Chief Executive is possibly the toughest job in this Island and, therefore, it is right that we look at whether it is structured in the right way and indeed that is something that we are doing with the Chief Executive herself. Because I believe the scale and scope of the role need to be looked at.

3.3 Ms. E. Dudot:

How come we are depending 60 per cent on nuclear power when we have the world’s third largest tides and wind power and hydroelectric power would be available for us?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I have to refer back to my previous answer, which is that we are exploring greater renewable options and believe that not only will that help us gain levels of energy security but will also help us develop an energy export element to our economy. I think it is really exciting times on the energy front but I

also think it is really important, as I have said before, that we all stand proudly behind the fact that we have extremely low carbon energy today.

3.3.1 Ms. E. Dudot:

(inaudible) 3:12:51.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am really pleased to tell you that my colleague, the Minister for the Environment and his colleague, the Minister for Energy, are working on this right now but it is something which will take time because the myriad complexities around a project of the scale of a large offshore wind farm in Jersey waters. When you look at other wind farms in offshore waters around the world, it is likely that the project in its whole will take 10 to 15 years.

3.4 Ms. E. Robbins:

How do you plan to help diversify the politicians of Jersey with the majority of them being either male or more prominently over 55?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am pleased that I come under the over-55 bracket; I am not there yet. In that sense I help diversify from an age perspective. I personally will not diversify anything but the Island voters are the people who diversify the States Assembly. It is not the politicians inside. But I think, again, we need to sometimes look at our own achievements in this area and the last election [**Approbation**] - exactly, as my colleagues are quite rightly stamping their feet about - returned more female Deputies than male Deputies. In the Connétables we have still perhaps a challenge. I think we have 2 female Connétables, I may be wrong, just quickly going off the top of my head, and 10 male. The balance in the Assembly because of that is a slight majority of men but on the Deputy seats it is a majority of women. In that sense we made great strides in the last election and I am really, really proud of that and I think we all should be as well.

3.5 Ms. J. Simpson:

Has the Government done any research into Jersey's police force, given the current issues regarding abuse of power with Sarah Everard's murder in the U.K.?

[15:15]

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I would have to say I honestly do not know what research has been done but I also think it is important not to conflate issues that happen in the United Kingdom with issues in Jersey. We are not the same place. We are not the same country. Unfortunately, there are issues, particularly in that police force, which seem to be longstanding but I will not comment on those. I have complete faith in our Minister for Home Affairs that she and the police authority are holding our police chief and the police force to account. But it is a question that I do ask myself when I read those stories from the U.K. paper, so I will take it upon myself to ask the Minister for Home Affairs when she returns to find out what she is doing in that area to ensure. I have to say I do not believe there is a problem as it stands. I have no evidence that says there is a problem of that nature but I think it is only right to check.

3.6 Ms. J. Simpson:

Could you think that there might be a relationship between the conviction rates that we discussed about earlier with rape and the police force?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I cannot see that that would necessarily be the case and, again, I have no evidence. I think it is a dangerous area for me to stray in with opinion. I think it is something which needs to be evidence-

based. That sort of understanding needs to be gained through the gathering of evidence and that would show us. Again, I have to, unfortunately, refer to my previous answer where I would need to speak to the Minister for Home Affairs to understand the work she is doing in that area.

3.7 Ms. C. Connor:

Does the Jersey Government plan to follow the U.K.'s lead on making laughing gas illegal?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

This is new news from the U.K. and as with anything political I have also read an article saying that in the U.K. this is classic political grandstanding which will achieve very, very little. I do not know the ins and outs of the issue. I know of no plans locally to do that. But I do know that the Minister for Health and Social Services, in conjunction with other Ministers, is bringing out a substance abuse strategy in the coming months. I have not fully read it but that may reference this issue but I have heard no plans for a prohibition.

3.7.1 Ms. C. Connor:

Do you think there is currently an issue with over substance abuse in young people at the moment?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I think there are issues with substance abuse and by substance abuse I put that into its widest category. From legally-available products such as nicotine in its many forms, through alcohol, through to prohibited substances, such as the wide variety of drugs that can be available, I am concerned. I think we are always concerned, I think every generation is concerned about substance abuse among young people. I know some countries have done incredibly good work in helping to alleviate that and enable young people to choose different paths. I think there could be a problem with vaping in the Island in the sense that that is nicotine and that does, as a smoker I can tell you, create a lifelong habit, which is incredibly difficult to break and I can tell you that now. I advise all young Islanders not to start vaping because you will be at 48 years old still doing it, so please do not do that.

3.8 Ms. L. Miller:

What would the Minister say in response to the rumours that Jersey does not truly recycle?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I would agree. I came with my colleagues who came from the Council of Ministers earlier talking about waste and various aspects of waste; this is waste on an industrial scale, building waste and things like this. One of the questions that was in my head throughout was, what is it we do to recycle? We do recycle, the last I understood which was before the election when I was on the Environment Scrutiny Panel, it was about 30 per cent to 40 per cent of domestic waste, I believe, was recycled but that is still clearly a minority of domestic waste. We do know that Guernsey has gone a long way forward in recycling its waste. I do not know how successful it has or has not been. But I do believe there is still a large job to be done in Jersey of not just recycling waste but as far as the waste hierarchy is concerned, first of all minimising waste, then seeing what you can do to reuse waste, then looking at recycling. But I think we can do a lot more.

3.8.1 Ms. L. Miller:

Why do you think there has been no notion to improve this system?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It is interesting, I think there have been notions to improve this system and I have seen improvements. When I was on the Environment Scrutiny Panel 3 or 4 years ago I remember going on a visit to La Collette waste recycling site and the then Connétable of St. Saviour, the late Sadie Rennard, she said how they did not have recycling in St. Saviour and they were not planning to bring it in. By the end

of the year she had brought recycling in because what she saw and what she learnt really impressed her. She did that and I am for ever grateful that she did. But there is an issue and I believe it is an issue with regard to recycling, that recycling and waste collection are the domain, for want of a better word, of the 12 parishes. Effectively, you have 12 different recycling schemes in the Island. It is, I have to admit and understand, slightly absurd that we are in a situation of a small island having 12 different recycling schemes. I would hazard a guess that therein lies the problem.

The Bailiff:

I am going to only call on those people who have not yet had the opportunity of asking questions because we have a large number of people now who are indicating for the first time a desire to ask a question. I am afraid those who have already asked a question I will not call on you and will not take any second questions I am afraid. I think, yes, so next is Ms. McGurty.

3.9 Ms. A. McGurty:

Jersey has a low population of young people at adult age, so do you think it is beneficial to remove facilities like the waterfront that could encourage young people and are a useful facility for them?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am not sure that the waterfront and increasing the number of young people in the Island go hand in hand necessarily. But what I do believe is that we need to accept and address the demographic problems that we have. They are twofold, and you have touched on one end of them. The demographic problems we have are an ageing population, which at the end of the day will need greater healthcare costs and will need a working population to fund those healthcare costs. But the other side of the demographic problem, which makes it much harder, is that we have, as you have quite rightly said, we have a decreasing number of young people. We have a slowly decreasing birth rate and therefore we need people perhaps from the ages of 18 to 30, we do need to attract these people to the Island. The only way I see of doing that - and with my other hat on as the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture, I am absolutely focused, and it is the underlying mantra of our future economy programme - is to create an Island that young people can see and envisage living their lives in; that they want to live their lives in this Island. We do that possibly by creating facilities such as at the waterfront, but also by creating an economy that has a diverse range of careers that young people can sit there and think: "I can do what I want to do in Jersey. I do not have to go off somewhere else to do that." We can already see this, it is happening in arts and culture we put out an Arts and Culture Strategy, which now means that people are already being able to see that they can start to make films here. There is now a ballet here. There are different things that they can do, which just 3 years ago it was not possible to do. Our Farming Strategy is encouraging young people into farming in a way that it had not done for 20 or 30 years. So my view is that we make Jersey an exciting place for young people by enabling them to see their lives being lived here. That is what I really want to achieve.

The Bailiff:

Supplementary question, Ms. McGurty? Very well, I have Mr. Oldridge then Ms. Yates, Ms. Rouault, and Mr. Humpleby, and Mr. Muir, and no further questions. Very well, Mr. Oldridge.

3.10 Mr. S. Oldridge:

With a growing population, healthcare strain is obviously inevitably going to increase. So how can the Government contribute to recruitment or reinvestment in expanding our healthcare services so that there can be more than just 2 ambulances on patrol every Friday night where statistically more 999 calls will come in for various incidents?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Healthcare funding is one of the big problems that we have due to the demographic problems that I outlined in relation to Ms. McGurty's question just earlier. It is because of the demographic bulge we have, so as I proudly said before I am not quite 50, so it is the 50 age group up currently, which I sit slightly outside of, where we have this big increase in the number of people. And, as a result of that, we know we have to find a new way of funding our healthcare facilities, which will include ambulance provision as well. But that is a work in progress because we have to ask the population, we have to come up with options, and then ask the population which they believe is the better way forward. But we need to find a sustainable way to fund healthcare over the next 20 or 30 years, otherwise Jersey will have some very difficult economic problems to deal with.

3.10.1 Mr. S. Oldridge:

So with the limited funding and obviously trying to promote the funding towards healthcare, is there any way that we could possibly consider bringing ambulance courses into Jersey, unless that already exists, so there is more university students who wish to go into healthcare have to move off to the U.K. to pursue paramedic science degree courses and then that would then prevent them from coming back to Jersey due to the limited availability in jobs themselves? Is there any way in which we can incorporate local recruitment so that students are not forced to leave Jersey to then become a paramedic in the U.K.?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Your question touched on a couple of issues. The first one is perhaps Islanders having to leave the Island to get training in a wide variety of occupations. It is a double-edged sword. The wonderful thing about leaving the Island is you gain different experience and, as someone who went to university outside the Island, I am really pleased that I did so and I would be happy for other people to do so as well. The difficulty is, it is attracting people back, and we know at the moment that 50 per cent of our graduates have not returned to Jersey within 6 months. That effectively means we are funding other people's economies. I am not a fan of funding other people's economies, it is difficult enough to fund our own. So I do believe that, the more training provision we can do on the Island, the better. The Minister for Children and Education leads on our skills, training, and development, but as the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture she also includes me in understanding and helping guide that development. But it is work that, over the next 3 years, is something that we are going to be looking to do. I cannot though promise whether ambulance training or paramedic training would be a part of that, but I am sure it is something that can be looked at.

3.11 Ms. D. Yates of Jersey College for Girls:

How does the Government plan to support farmers during the cost-of-living crisis?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

This is a subject, which has been very close to my heart, because I have, and I did have before the election as well, responsibility for farming and the rural economy in Jersey. There was a decision taken during the pandemic itself, which meant that farmers were not directly supported in the way that other businesses were, and that has in itself caused problems. But we have seen, since then, that the cost-of-living crisis, which we are all experiencing, and all households are experiencing, has really hit farming hard. The cost of fertiliser has increased by 25 per cent, if not more. The cost of various inputs, the cost of animal feed has increased by a similar amount. When you are a farm, which is operating on very thin, if any, profit levels, to suddenly have your input costs rise by 25 per cent or more, it puts you in a really dangerous and precarious position. But I mentioned earlier that I want to see more young people coming into farming and so it is my stated intention, in both my manifesto, but also my ministerial plan, to support the rural economy to help it grow. Since I was Assistant Minister, and now as Minister, we have doubled the amount of money being, not diverted

... we have doubled the amount of money available for farming and we have also widened out the rural economy support scheme so that, not only does it support the larger-scale farmers but also now that it supports smallholders as well. That is the entry group that we are seeing for younger people to come into farming is by starting off with a smallholding and over time hopefully growing that. That increased money is not just money handed out. Really importantly, the increase in the funding that we have created for the rural economy, for agriculture, is linked very heavily to environmental outcomes and lands management as well. So it is everything from reducing the amount of chemical inputs to increasing and managing hedgerows properly, all the way down to soil nutrition. Farmers getting credit for the work they do in those areas and those credits are then transferred into cash. So we have transformed the way we fund farming in Jersey and I really hope over the next 5 to 10 years we will see the benefits of that.

3.12 Mr. H. Humpleby:

Deputy Morel, despite citing the success of turnout in the previous election, what are the Government's plans to address youth voter turnout, which currently sits at 17 per cent, which I believe is the lowest in the world?

[15:30]

Deputy K.F. Morel:

A slight correction, I did not celebrate the turnout in the last election; I celebrated the outcomes of the last election in terms of diversity and the increase in the number of women particularly in the Assembly. The issue of increasing turnout is one that I, my colleagues here, and I know the States Greffe, take really seriously and have not cracked, that is to be honest. Jersey has a low voter turnout. We do not really understand the reasons for that, so just approximately 40 per cent of Islanders turn out to vote. It is absolutely correct to say that, among people under 30, the turnout is extremely low. I remember one hustings in Trinity where I was there was a question from a young woman, who was 17, because I asked her and I found out her age afterwards, but she was the only person of that age, anywhere near that age, in the hustings. Everyone else was at least over my age. So I am really sorry, I do not have an answer, but I can say that the States Greffe and, not just the Government, but the whole States Assembly do work constantly to try to understand how we can increase both voter turnout and young voter turnout as well.

3.12.1 Mr. H. Humpleby:

Deputy Morel, I understand that there may be some issues with implementing e-voting, but surely that would be a solution for some of the main issues with youth voter turnout?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am not convinced it would be. I think it is really simple to look at technology and to say: "There is your solution." I think there are issues around security. I think there are issues around taking away a sense of the occasion of voting. I am a strong believer myself ... this comes all the way down to when I was much younger and seeing South Africa's first elections and seeing the incredible turnout on that first day for democracy in South Africa and realising how important it is that people take a moment in their lives to go and vote and decide the Government that they want together as a community. When you are voting electronically, yes, you could do it as they do in the U.S. (United States) with voter kiosks, but they have already been subject to claims of fraud and other issues, which have made them lack transparency or created a lack of transparency around the elections. All the way through to just voting while you are sitting there between cooking dinner and going to bed, you just think: "You know what, I will just press the button and vote," which I then think takes away any sense of what it is you are doing. So I am not convinced that electronic voting is a panacea. It is something that should be looked at, but it is other things that will get people out to vote, and I think it is much more about understanding what it is you are doing and taking seriously the democracy we

have in Jersey. I still think a lot of people think it is such a small Island, why does it matter, it is what happens in London or Paris or Washington or Warsaw that matters. No, this is where we live. This is where it matters. This is where we should be choosing our politicians.

The Bailiff:

Which is perfect because that is exactly half-past, which is what we were aiming for. Very well. Then that concludes the questions without notice to the Deputy Chief Minister. Thank you, Deputy Chief Minister. That is question time brought to an end. On behalf of Members of the Assembly, could I thank you, Deputy Chief Minister, and all of your ministerial colleagues from the Council of Ministers, for making the time to join us all this afternoon. Ministers are of course extremely busy, as we all know, and I am sure they have a great deal to be getting on with, but it is also very important, and I know they are very keen, to hear about your concerns, the concerns of the Youth Assembly, and what you consider to be important. So I think the questions that we have had this afternoon have been, to a great extent, excellent and can have left no one in any doubt what the concerns were. Thank you all very much.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

May I take a word, just on behalf of my colleagues, I would just like to thank everyone for excellent questions. I believe we have both enjoyed and been challenged here, so on behalf of my colleagues I would really like to thank you all for taking the time. [Approbation]

The Bailiff:

We are going to take a very small break. That does not mean anyone can move. That simply means that I am going to now step down from the Chair. Deputy Rob Ward is going to take over for the purposes of the propositions. So thank you all very much indeed for your participation and I wish you well for the afternoon.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central (in the Chair):

Before we start the main public business, I just want to go quickly through the process, so that we are aware of it. The propositions will be read out by the Greffier of the States and at which time the proposer of the proposition will give a speech to propose their proposition, after which every Member of this Assembly has the opportunity to speak should they wish. If you do wish to speak, please signify with your light, but wait for me to give you a little nod so you know I have your name, because they are done in light order. Then after all speeches are made, the proposer has the opportunity to sum up. I remind you, you can only speak once in the debate apart from the proposer. With that, I think the first order of business is Ms. Horgan from Beaulieu and the Greffier of the States will read your proposal.

4. The banning of smartphones

The Greffier of the States:

The Assembly is asked whether it is of opinion that smartphones should be banned.

4.1 Ms. C. Horgan of Beaulieu:

Smartphones have undeniably become a significant aspect of modern life, providing convenience, communication, and accessibility like never before. While their impact on society is apparent, there are growing concerns about their harmful effects. We argue that smartphones should be banned due to their negative consequences on mental and physical health, sleep quality, as well as the environment. Mira Miller, a mental health expert, has said that people with underdeveloped brains are most at risk of developing mental health issues due to smartphones. This could lead to poor social skills, relationships, health, and overall ability to focus. This is due to the constant use of technology

and the dependency on short-form content. We are beginning to see the harmful long-term effects of having constant exposure to bursts of dopamine-inducing entertainment. As a result, children are now having trouble focusing on longer activities due to developing low attention spans. In a study in 2015, the average attention span was only 8.25 seconds and in the space of 15 years our attention spans had gone down by nearly 4 seconds. However, this was before the popularity of TikTok where the rise of short-form content has been taking place and now most social media platforms are pushing this video style to us. On top of this, people are starting to develop nomophobia and this is a fear of being away from phones. The U.K. tech site Uswitch states that, on average, people in the U.K. check their phones once every 12 minutes, resulting in a loss of over 3 hours every day spent on their phones, and over 22 hours weekly. In relation to this, 47 per cent of smartphone users find the need to spend any momentary boredom on their smartphones. In a recent study published in *Addictive Behaviours*, M.R.I.s (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) were taken of 18 to 30 year-olds who have met the criteria for smartphone addiction. The results showed that the same physical changes in the brain are present in people who suffer from substance addiction. Moreover, some people have developed O.C.D. (obsessive-compulsive disorder) as a result of constantly checking their phones, which can later lead to social isolation. Another aspect to consider is the effect smartphones have on our physical health. 30 per cent of parents worry that their children are not getting enough physical exercise due to excessive screen time. Too much sedentary time has been linked to an increased risk of a range of health conditions, including obesity, heart disease, cancer and diabetes. Scientists have found that an overuse of technology and social media in particular creates stimulation patterns similar to that created by other addictive behaviours. A study by Newport Academy shows that receiving likes on social media activates the same circuits in the teenage brain that are activated by eating chocolate or winning money. Overall, the negative impacts our smartphones are having on us is clear and our proposition would aim to resolve these issues.

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

Thank you, Ms. Horgan, I will open up the floor to debate. Would anybody like to speak on this proposition? Ms. Robins.

4.1.1 Ms. E. Robins:

(inaudible) 3:39:59 daytime alertness. Adding to this, it disrupts the natural production of melatonin, a hormone that facilitates sleep and can throw you off your circadian rhythm. Your circadian rhythm is the 24-hour cycles that are part of the body's internal clock. When properly aligned, circadian rhythm can promote consistent and restorative sleep. However, when it is disrupted, it can create significant sleeping problems, including insomnia. It is also found that late-night texting and phone use were linked to depressed moods and lower academic performance, actively validating our argument that we would be better off without the distraction of smartphones. Another issue is that there is a major societal pressure on having the latest smartphone, but we all know that these can be extremely expensive. Uswitch released an article about the rising prices of smartphones in July 2020. According to this, the average mobile phone cost £355 but that goes up quite a bit when you look at the top-end, premium devices. This is a large sum of money and if families are pressured into purchasing the latest and most up-to-date version, which of course is the most expensive, families living in poverty will seriously struggle to achieve this. This sort of material deprivation has an effect on children's mental health, as their lack of a smartphone, or one that is deemed acceptable, can result in bullying and isolation. This can be seen with sociologist Hall's study in 1980, which found that the cost of free schooling, of which a smartphone can now be included within, can lead to stigmatisation, if the child's peers are aware that they lack a smartphone or have a second-hand or old one. Hall went on to say that the stress this can cause leads to poor concentration within school. If some families feel they need to comply with society's demands and buy their children a smartphone, this can mean that the rest of their finances are suffering and therefore the children too. According to the 2004 study by sociologist Flaherty, money problems are a serious factor in

attendance issues at school, as children from poorer families are more likely to be excluded from school or have poor attendance than children with the latest technology, such as smartphones. Therefore we propose that smartphones need to be banned so that these pressures will be eradicated and this could result in children's education improving, alongside their families' finances. Because it is our duty to ensure that the next generation can succeed without any hindrances caused by us. A final important aspect to consider is that, from the mines their components come from, to the landfill sites they end up in, our smartphones leave deep ethical and environmental footprints on our planet. One key example is that in politically-unstable areas armed groups often force labour to mine minerals. They then sell those minerals to fund their activities, for example to buy weapons. These so-called conflict materials such as tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold can find their way into our smartphones. Additionally, recycling smartphones can also be a tricky process and many end up in illegal electronic waste dumps with dangerous toxic conditions. Even when they are not burned, they end up in the soil, slowly contaminating water resources and the landfill. Recent statistics suggest the average American replaces their smartphone roughly every 18 months, the result is that the BBC and I.W.E.E.E. (International Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) estimate that nearly 5.3 billion mobile phones will be discarded every year, meaning the toxic materials pile up, destroying the environment even faster. To conclude, our points clearly demonstrate the massive impact and drawbacks of smartphones and we implore you to look past your reliance on your phones and really consider the facts.

4.1.2 Ms. A. McGurty:

The proposer mentioned that smartphones reduce physical activity of people. However, I would disagree with this as, in the COVID-19 lockdown, online fitness videos became super popular and enabled young people to stay fit at home. There would be no way of accessing these without smartphones.

4.1.3 Mr. S. Oldridge:

I am pretty sure I can say that most of us have smartphones in our possession, therefore, and I can say this is the case for many in society, smartphones have a very large industry around the world. Therefore we can see the production of these smartphones is incredibly high, namely in low-income countries, so therefore a really large impact on the economy. Can you suggest any sort of solution, which may come forward? Should we ban smartphones? Then the economy for hundreds of millions of employees in manufacturers of phones, what solution will that be to their loss of jobs and the subsequent crash of the economy in these low-income countries where employment is already quite low for low-qualified people?

4.1.4 Mr. D. Riley:

I have a few things I would like to say on this proposition. Firstly, this proposal does not take into account the massive reliance on smartphones in Jersey's economy and thus the impact that banning them would have on the productivity of Jersey's economy. I do not see how a proposition, which proposes a change with such widespread impact on Jersey's economy should be considered fit for purpose when it does not even begin to address these issues in its report.

[15:45]

Secondly, I think that it is immediately obvious that this proposal is transparently a massive overreach of Government regulation. We can all agree that tobacco and alcohol are both far more damaging for individuals than smartphones, so there is no logical sense to smartphones being banned when both smoking and drinking remain legal. Additionally, a significant number of the limited points raised in the proposition's accompanying report only relate to smartphones' impact on young people, yet the proposition calls for smartphones to be banned for all people regardless of age. I do not see how the impact of smartphone use on children is justification for them to be banned for people over the

age of 18. Finally, and most damning, not only does the report not provide sufficient evidence as to why smartphones should be banned for people over the age of 18, but the evidence it provides is not fully correct. The report claims that 50 per cent of smartphone holders have psychological issues. However, according to the mental health charity Mind, only 25 per cent of people experience mental health problems in a given year. Given that there are 107 smartphones for every 100 people in Jersey, I think it would be fair to say that very close to everyone in Jersey is in possession of a smartphone. Given this, I can see no feasible way for the report to have arrived at a figure of 50 per cent through empirical evidence based means.

4.1.5 Mr. C. Waters:

I partially agree with the speaker's proposition. Although dopamine deficiency disorder is definitely a serious issue, which our youth faces, it is also unethical to completely take away the option of having a phone, which opens up social opportunities for a lot of youth and can even allow them to make friends in the process. Removing that opportunity is unethical.

4.1.6 Ms. C. Connor:

Firstly, do you not believe that a regulation of phone usage would be better than a total ban, given that 75 per cent of 12 year-olds in our society already have phones? Furthermore, how would you suggest the Government would regulate this motion? Would you not agree that a total ban on smartphones would be an example of Government censorship, especially if we were the only jurisdiction to do so?

4.1.7 Ms. J. Simpson:

Like Chloe suggested, the other regulations around short-form content that you mentioned in the proposition, or screen times, would be preferred rather than the extremeness of banning phones altogether, due to the importance of phones for a range of activities that some people mentioned as well, like schoolwork, the news, communication with friends or family, and lot of things in society.

4.1.8 Mr. L. Muir:

If I was to tell you of a country banning smartphones, which one would it remind you of?

4.1.9 Ms. L. Miller:

You mentioned parental concern with their children's lack of exercise. Is it not a parent's responsibility to ensure their child does exercise? If you are blaming a mobile phone, are you suggesting a mobile phone has more authority than a parent does and thus that is why it should be banned?

4.1.10 Ms. E. Dudot:

Referring back to the point that Charlie had made just before, it allows for safe spaces among minority groups and allows for further inclusivity, which may not be offered especially on a small Island where there is not a lot of diversity.

4.1.11 Ms. E. Rouault:

I would just like to point out that our statement specifically said: "Should smartphones be banned?" A lot of the issues raised here are indicating that you would need it for every activity, which you would not, for example, with schoolwork you can use a laptop as well as the physical activities we did in lockdown, you used your T.V. (television), your laptop and iPad. These you do not need a smartphone for. Also, for communicating with friends, we do have things such as telephones.

4.1.12 Mr. C. Yau of Hautlieu:

You mentioned that we have alternatives such as laptops for performing other tasks, right, and telephones, for example, for communicating with friends. However, have you not considered the

ethical and environmental footprints of those products? Additionally, would a smartphone not just be able to be a solution to all of those problems in one, rather than having to create multiple products with many different footprints?

4.1.13 Mr. H. Humpleby:

I think it is important to recognise the merit of this proposition overall. Obviously there will be some issues with the proposition, but I think in terms of the environment this is generally beneficial, because smartphones overall have had a massive negative impact on the environment, particularly in terms of lithium mining in, for example, areas like Taiwan. That will have a large impact on the natural environment as a whole and it is important to consider this proposition.

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

Thank you. Unless there is anybody else who wants to speak in the debate, your final chance, I will give you a final moment. Mr. Waller.

4.1.14 Mr. T. Waller:

This is an interesting proposition, but one in which I have several reservations. Firstly, I agree, there are lots of negatives to smartphones, which you have clearly stated, and none of which I really think I disagree with. However, I do have some reservations. Firstly, in order to ban smartphones, there would be a significant oversight and overreaching role of the Government. Phones are often used as a way to voice a person's views, and in doing so people would be restricting the way for people to make their voices heard. There are certainly far worse things for the environment, as Mr. Humpleby mentioned, plane fuel emissions are far worse for the environment than phones, as well as numerous coal, plantations, and other gas facilities.

4.1.15 Ms. D. Yates:

Would a laptop or T.V. not have the same effect on sleep and mental health as it is the same screen, if not bigger than the smartphone?

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

Unless there is anyone else who wants to speak, then I call the debate closed and ask Ms. Horgan to reply.

4.1.16 Ms. C. Horgan:

Evidently the use of smartphones and the applications that come with them can be extremely damaging in some cases, having an impact on both physical and mental health, as I mentioned before. Screen saturation leads to a risk of being exploited by advertisers and a decline of listening, language, and communication skills, as well as reduced face-to-face interactions. Checking smartphones constantly has become an addiction for many people. When we compare this to a laptop or a television, you are not carrying that around with you in your pocket all of the time. In addition, smartphones are always being discarded and this is having a detrimental impact on the environment. The production of them is very clearly unethical. As our attention span is being shortened, particularly for children, this is causing them to be disengaged from education, which will negatively impact their futures. We accept the argument that technology and mobile phones were particularly useful during COVID, but once again, as Ms. Rouault mentioned before, we are only arguing that smartphones should be banned, implying that a phone without apps, like an old flip-phone, could still be used and communication can be maintained perfectly well through them. In terms of work life revolving a lot around technology, we do agree, but however our argument revolves around smartphones and not laptops. Both of these, you have access to the same equipment by having separation from constant technology, such as emails, this would avoid stress and create more work and life balance. Throughout our argument, we have been arguing against smartphones, just to

reiterate, and for the sake of our safety, health, and well-being, the excessive use of smartphones should be prevented as, quite frankly, we would be much better off without them.

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

Thank you. Would you like to call for the *appel*, for the vote? The *appel* has been called for. Can I remind you, if you are voting in favour of the proposition you press P for *pour*, if you are voting against, it is C for *contre*. If you want to abstain that is the A button in the middle. So when the Greffier is ready, the vote is open, so please vote now. Everybody has voted, so we will close the vote. When the Greffier is ready I can announce the result. I can announce that the proposition has been defeated. Thank you. That is the first vote over, very exciting first vote. Thank you very much, Ms. Horgan.

POUR:10	CONTRE:18	ABSTAIN:0
Mr Edward Nichols	Mr Theo Dorey	
Mr Henry Humpleby	Mr Lachlan Muir	
Miss Emily Robins	Mr Sam Oldridge	
Miss Jessica Cadiou	Miss Emily Dutot	
Miss Isla Snowie	Mr Charlie Yau	
Miss Amilie McCulloch	Miss Chloe Connor	
Miss Amelia Turner	Miss Zara Holt	
Miss Eloise Rouault	Mr Daniel Riley	
Miss Pippa Clarke	Mr Thomas Waller	
Miss Tilly Ward	Miss Amber McGurty	
	Mr Charlie Waters	
	Miss Jemimah Kalule	
	Miss Lucie Miller	
	Miss Ciara Horgan	
	Miss Emily Jewell	
	Miss Jaimie Simpson	
	Miss Darcy Yates	
	Miss Georgie Smith	

5. Free bus transport for everyone in Jersey

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

We move on to the second proposition, which is from Daniel Riley of Victoria College and I ask the Greffier to read the proposition.

The Greffier of the States:

The Assembly is asked whether it is of opinion that fares for bus passengers should be eliminated allowing free bus transport for everyone in Jersey.

5.1 Mr. D. Riley:

Jersey and the rest of the world stand in the midst of a climate emergency. The Government has set a target for Jersey to become fully carbon neutral by 2050 at the latest with an ambitious plan to reach that status by 2030. But we have not yet seen any major changes needed for Jersey to reach such critical goals. Transportation accounted for an eye-watering 42 per cent of Jersey's carbon emissions pre-pandemic. But the only action taken in this sector so far is the publication of a Sustainable Transport Framework, which states the obvious, provides no schemes to create sustainable transport, and merely spawns further plans, which will no doubt do the same. It is apparent that the Government's plan to reach net-zero is lacking decisive action. This proposal intends to remedy this failure within a particular area of Jersey's carbon emissions, making Jersey's public transport

network free to use. Jersey must end its reliance on private motor vehicles as the dominant method of intra-Island transportation if it is to succeed in reaching its approaching climate target. Jersey has an abnormally high rate of car ownership in the world. To change that, we must take radical action to make public transport a more effective method of transportation for all. Removing fares entirely for buses in Jersey would make it a global leader in tackling carbon emissions via public transport. This proposal would make Jersey one of the first jurisdictions to make public transport entirely free, promoting the Island as a capital for green innovation. Reducing Jersey's climate emissions is only one of the many improvements this proposal would bring. It would make buses easier to use for new riders, reducing confusion over fares or payment methods, increasingly so for visitors to the Island. It would make the general operation of public transport infrastructure more streamlined, without needing to maintain ticket machines and travelcards. It would decrease journey times by reducing time spent by buses at bus stops. It would allow lower-income citizens to travel more by removing the financial barrier to public transportation. Supplementing its role in moving away from private motor vehicles, it would reduce road congestion for individuals who need to drive for their occupation. Making public transport free is a real-world, tested, and proven model for improving the quality of systems involving it. It has been proven to work in Luxembourg, a similar jurisdiction to Jersey in terms of size, where all methods of public transport were made free in 2020. The initiative received considerable amounts of positive feedback from citizens due to how it has made public transport much more frictionless, streamlined, and convenient. It has also improved access to facilities for younger people in a territory with few things for them to do. A situation that I am sure we here today certainly can all relate to. The cost for all these benefits, the removal of fares costs Luxembourg the equivalent of £35 million annually. However, this cost is 12 times smaller than their total annual public transportation budget. Considering the size and complexity of Luxembourg's public transport system, including many trams and bus services compared to Jersey, the cost of this proposal would be even smaller. This proposal will not solve the challenge of getting Jersey's carbon emissions from transport to net-zero alone. However, it is a decisive step towards making Jersey a carbon-neutral Island and will pave the way to creating a better, greener future for Jersey.

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

Thank you, Mr. Riley. Do we have a seconder for that proposition? **[Seconded]** Would anyone like to speak on the proposition? Ms. McGurty.

5.1.1 Ms. A. McGurty:

I agree with your proposition but I do not think everyone's reason for not using public transport is the case of fares as many people are wealthy enough in Jersey to pay the fares but will not. But instead the busyness of buses and the time that they take.

[16:00]

5.1.2 Ms. E. Rouault:

I understand your idea and appreciate the thought gone into it. However, if your idea is to aid in the mission to become net-zero by 2030 and therefore feel that increasing the ridership of buses will achieve this, please could you clarify how making the buses free will increase ridership, if the demographic you are targeting are the ones who can afford the fare. The people who are suffering due to cost-of-living crisis are the ones on the buses already as it is the cheapest motor vehicle service that is available. Surely a better solution would be to provide a funding service for bikes or e-bikes, the e-bike scheme already in place, to encourage people to cycle to work and use that mode of transport instead.

5.1.3 Ms. C. Connor:

Upon hearing your argument, it sounds overwhelmingly positive and something I would thoroughly support. However, I also believe that it has some flaws. I do not believe that buses should come under a national service as people choose to use the bus rather than having an illness, which is something that we support the N.H.S. (National Health Service) for. Furthermore, I would also like to point out a contradiction in your argument as you stated that, in your motion, this would increase ridership. However, in your example of a free public transport scheme, it is stated that there is no evidence to support this in your chosen jurisdiction, Luxembourg. Therefore, while I believe if we lived in a perfect world this would be a fantastic approach to the climate disaster, I believe that in reality it would sadly have very little impact.

5.1.4 Ms. L. Miller:

You mentioned it would allow for people on lower incomes to travel more often but does not take into account how the only way in which we would be able to afford this is by increasing tax, which would directly affect those on lower incomes. In order to fund a large company like the bus station, you would need to pay for pensions, fares, and by making it free and increasing ridership you would then need to account for the increased amount of people then getting the bus. So how would you increase the amount of buses and bus routes and availability of the bus without directly affecting the taxpayer?

5.1.5 Ms. E. Dudot:

Instead of removing the bus fare entirely, it seems like a more sensible option to perhaps remove the fare for people in the working class or people who do regularly take the bus instead of completely making it free for all who will not be using the transportation.

5.1.6 Mr. L. Muir:

So of course it is important that the environment in fact was probably one of the most discussed things we had today, Hautlieu mentioned energy, J.C.G. (Jersey College for Girls) mentioned recyclables, and we also discussed over-population and its relation to the environment. So we seem so keen to reduce our emissions, yet at the same time we seem very keen to boo down an idea that would help. By promoting free bus services, we can also include other ways of increasing the use of the bus. Just because the bus is free does not mean we could not, for instance, spend more on more buses, more bus routes, and more efficiency. We must not consider the fact that just because the buses are free we cannot improve them elsewhere. It was also said that the taxes and the notation of the taxes would fall on working people. Yet currently in the Island there are 184 individuals who receive property and tax exemptions and preferences due to the fact they are super-wealthy, high classified individuals. Just because this is going to cost more does not mean we need to make it fall on working people. Rather, we can help working people and foot the bill by those who have more. The proposition is increasingly important, given the climate catastrophe that we have also discussed. So by voting against, we are not just voting against a system that will decrease inequality, it will prevent the move to a more carbon-neutral world. That is why you will be not contributing to our society's positive nature.

5.1.7 Mr. T. Waller:

Just quickly addressing Ms. Connor's observation of the contradiction with Luxembourg. These figures came from during COVID-19 and therefore cannot be wholly relied on.

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

Would anyone else like to speak on this debate? Final opportunity, final call. Then I close the debate and I ask Mr. Riley to respond.

5.1.8 Mr. D. Riley:

Firstly, I would like to thank all of my colleagues for the broad vote of support I have seemed to have received in their replies, in their speeches. Secondly, I would like to re-emphasise that this proposition is vital for Jersey to become carbon-neutral by 2030. I know there have been some disagreements over the implementation of it, but I believe all of these have been answered by us. So with that I call for the *appel*.

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

Thank you. The *appel* has been called for. I ask the Greffier in a moment to open the voting. Are you ready? I open the voting, so please vote. I think we have all voted, so I close the voting. I can announce with total objectivity that the proposition has been passed. Well done, Mr. Riley.

POUR:18	CONTRE:4	ABSTAIN:6
Mr Edward Nichols	Miss Zara Holt	Mr Charlie Yau
Mr Henry Humpleby	Miss Amelia Turner	Miss Emily Robins
Mr Theo Dorey	Miss Georgie Smith	Miss Jessica Cadiou
Mr Lachlan Muir	Miss Eloise Rouault	Miss Lucie Miller
Mr Sam Oldridge		Miss Isla Snowie
Miss Emily Dutot		Miss Darcy Yates
Miss Chloe Connor		
Mr Daniel Riley		
Mr Thomas Waller		
Miss Amber McGurty		
Mr Charlie Waters		
Miss Jemimah Kalule		
Miss Amilie McCulloch		
Miss Ciara Horgan		
Miss Emily Jewell		
Miss Jaimie Simpson		
Miss Pippa Clarke		
Miss Tilly Ward		

6. The abolition of private schools

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

We move on to the next proposition, which is from Mr. Waters. I ask the Greffier to read the proposition.

The Greffier of the States:

The Assembly is asked whether it is of opinion that private schools should be abolished.

6.1 Mr. C. Waters of Hautlieu:

The poverty cycle is a vicious, systemic issue that our own society has made hard to break through the means of private education and elitist attitudes. The main concern of parents towards state schools is that their child will not receive a well-off education compared to that offer in private schools. If such teachers with higher qualifications and better teaching methods were implemented or nationalised through all Jersey schools, then all students would have the same opportunity at a cohesively better education. In clarification, Jersey offers 3 private secondary schools, Beaulieu, De La Salle, and St. Michael's, with J.C.G. and Vic instead belonging under the Government-run fee-paying classification. Instead of consistently benefiting those with economic privileges, Jersey's education system should reward all equally. Just because a parent does not have the money to give their child a private school education does not mean they deserve the disadvantage. Private schools

lead to increased chances at higher education and higher employability rates. Please explain how this outdated classist system is fair? The disadvantages perpetuated through the private versus state schooling system facilitate social and economic inequalities and divides our community further. Although it was noted that the universities in the Russell Group, such as Exeter, Durham, Bristol, U.C.L. (University College London), and Nottingham, enrolled less privately educated pupils in their usual intake, there is still a larger number of privately educated students being accepted compared to mainstream educated students. More money needs to be invested in giving everyone an equal education leading to equal opportunities. Only 7 per cent of U.K. students are privately educated, while a staggering 19 per cent of Jersey's secondary school students are educated privately. Why does Jersey allow this elitist pattern to linger? I will conclude my proposition with a few forcible statistics. The large majority, around 87 per cent, of all pupils at private schools come from parents who are business owners or have professional and managerial backgrounds. The proportions have not changed much since the report concluded in 2014. Only 1 per cent of private school pupils receive full bursaries and go free. What is the gap in resources for private and state school pupils? The private/state resources gap is approximately 3 to one on average. In other words, a privately-educated pupil will have 3 times the amount of money spent on their education as a pupil in a state school. Fees have risen by an average of 6.6 per cent each year over 2000 to 2010 and by 3.9 each year since then. This increases the opportunity divide between the wealthy and less well off as private tuitions are ever-increasing in cost. The pupil/teacher ratio is 8.5 to one in private schools, less than half the ratio in state schools, which is 17.9 in England. In other words, a privately-educated pupil will have double the number of teachers as a state-educated pupil. To take one example study, private schooling in England at age 13 is found to be associated with a 12 per cent greater probability of obtaining work in a professional or managerial role by the age of 25, compared with someone from a similar social background who attended a state school. Thank you for listening to my proposition.

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

Thank you, Mr. Waters. Can we have a seconder for that proposition? **[Seconded]** Thank you very much. Would anyone like to speak? Ms. Dudot.

6.1.1 Ms. E. Dudot:

Supporting the proposer's proposition, there has been numerous reasons why people have argued that private schools are justified, and which can be dismantled to have little value. One being that parents at elite private schools sometimes grumble about taking nothing from public schools, having to support them in their taxes, so for that they are entitled to their elitest education. For one thing, they are simply providing the same tax that everyone else pays towards public school education as a means to a free education for all. Furthermore, if they can afford tuition upwards of £14,940 per annum on average, when in comparison for that amount they are educating multiple people instead of just one child. So while they are supporting the public schools, a larger amount of support could be given and arguably they are taking away an opportunity for equilibrium in the education system and equal chances for all. Advancing the class divide examined by the proposer is showing our need to abolish private schools.

6.1.2 Ms. C. Connor:

I believe this is an extremely controversial proposition. I completely agree that equal opportunities should be allowed for all and equity should almost be enforced. I think the only problem with this argument is that we live in an overwhelmingly capitalist society and I believe that for this proposition to work we would almost need a systemic upheaval. First, I believe that this proposition is entirely justified and has complete merit, however may struggle to find societal support, especially in Jersey.

6.1.3 Ms. L. Miller:

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge a direct contradiction in your debate. You say that private schools lead to increased chances of higher education but then say only 4.3 per cent of privately-educated students get into Oxford. Surely this shows a greater opportunity to students in public education? You also mentioned a 3 to one ratio of private/state resources. You may wish to take into account that fee-paying schools are subsidised, meaning the money the parents pay goes back into their education. By abolishing private schools and making all schools free and equal, that money is not necessarily equally split into all children's education and benefit all students equally.

6.1.4 Ms. E. Rouault:

Your leading argument was that the main concern is the lower teaching standards in state schools, as you said. However, if you then tried to merge private schools along with all the other schools, the money that it would take in order to do this would be better spent improving the schools that you say have lower teaching standards, for example by employing more teachers.

6.1.5 Mr. H. Humpleby:

I understand the merit of the proposition. But what is the purpose of cutting off our nose to spite our face? Why would we get rid of private schools when we can also have them as well as public schools? There are clear benefits of private schools, as you mentioned, a large number of people who go to private schools also go to university. Lots of people in Jersey can afford private schools. I understand that there will obviously be issues with some people who cannot, but I do not think it is necessary to get rid of private schools entirely. Why do we not have a mixed system of both?

6.1.6 Mr. L. Muir:

While I am not necessarily against your argument, you do seem to suggest, drawing on the point of the colleague from Beaulieu, that teachers in private schools are inherently better in some way than teachers of state schools. I will just point that out in the report as it does certainly have a slightly peculiar air to it.

6.1.7 Ms. J. Simpson:

With your proposition, where would you then draw the line with abolishing like private healthcare as well as private schools?

[16:15]

6.1.8 Ms. E. Robins:

We can see through recent strikes around the world, as well as our own teachers strikes a few years prior to COVID, that the Government is already struggling to give adequate wages to teachers. If all schools were made public, then would there not be more teachers who need payment from the Government, which would therefore increase the tax payment for everyone?

6.1.9 Mr. T. Waller:

This is a very interesting discussion but again I have a few reservations with this. Firstly, people should be allowed to pay for what they want. With this, as with any citizens, parents should be allowed to pay for whatever they want. If this means a different education for their children, then so be it. In banning private schools, it would be a complete breach of their freedoms to spend their money on what they want. Secondly, private schools have bursaries that are constantly underapplied for and they need to be promoted more. This is a common weakness of private schools but something that they do need to promote more of and they need to be taken advantage of more. Within all private schools there is a common anti-elitist attitude. Private schools certainly are not aiming to promote this and most, if not all, are looking to destroy this attitude because it truly is not encouraging or a more diverse society. I agree with the seconder that parents should not grumble about the taxes they

are required to pay that go towards public schools. However, I do not think this is a common attitude at all among parents and this discussion around the attitudes of parents to pay taxes is not really relevant to this discussion around private schools. Finally, there are several problems with private schools, as there is with every education system, however I feel the solution is by no means to ban it outright, but probably more changes within all the educational systems.

6.1.10 Mr. D. Riley:

Yes, I would like to start by saying that I do in principle agree with the proposal. I think that abolishing private schools would mean that all parents have a stake in the quality of state schools. However, I do have some reservations about it. Abolishing private schools would naturally increase enrolment in state schools and I was wondering if you could comment on how you would propose to fund the increased education budget required to maintain the same standard of teaching for a larger number of state school students. Additionally, I would like to ask would this proposal make the quality of education in state schools worse, as there would be a larger number of pupils joining with the same level of budget. So the budget of the Education Department would be stretched across a larger number of students.

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

Thank you, Mr. Riley. Would anyone else like to speak in this debate? Otherwise I close the debate and I ask Mr. Waters to sum up.

6.1.11 Mr. C. Waters:

Thank you, everyone, for your replies to my proposition. Firstly, only focusing on the public schools and trying to benefit them, throwing more money into their direction is not going to fix the elitist attitudes, which is still going to be forwarded by this split between the schools. Also, a mixed system is not an equal system. A privately-educated person would still be prioritised as everyone would still be together. It would not be seen as a merit to this application. More enrolment in state schools would not diminish the overall education of everyone as the funds put into private schools could then be put into state schools for everyone's advantage. Thank you.

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

Thank you, Mr. Waters. Do you call for the *appel*? Thank you. So the *appel* has been called for. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. The voting is open so please cast your votes. I close the voting because everyone has voted. I can announce that the proposition has been lost. Mr. Waters, thank you very much for voting.

POUR:6	CONTRE:16	ABSTAIN:6
Miss Emily Dutot	Mr Edward Nichols	Mr Lachlan Muir
Mr Charlie Yau	Mr Henry Humpleby	Miss Isla Snowie
Miss Chloe Connor	Mr Theo Dorey	Miss Amilie McCulloch
Mr Daniel Riley	Mr Sam Oldridge	Miss Ciara Horgan
Miss Amber McGurty	Miss Zara Holt	Miss Jaimie Simpson
Mr Charlie Waters	Miss Emily Robins	Miss Darcy Yates
	Miss Jessica Cadiou	
	Mr Thomas Waller	
	Miss Jemimah Kalule	
	Miss Lucie Miller	
	Miss Emily Jewell	
	Miss Amelia Turner	
	Miss Georgie Smith	
	Miss Eloise Rouault	
	Miss Pippa Clarke	
	Miss Tilly Ward	

7. Regulation of access to pornographic materials by young people

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

We move on to the next proposition, which is from Chloe Connor from Jersey College for Girls, and I ask the Greffier to read the proposition.

The Greffier of the States:

The Assembly is asked whether greater regulation should be implemented in relation to access to online pornographic materials by young people.

7.1 Ms. C. Connor:

Today we put forward the idea that increased misogyny and sexual violence in society is being exacerbated by the effects of pornography on men, especially from a young age. Due to the advances in technology, porn is easier to find than ever before, especially for young people, with 10 per cent of boys having watched porn before the age of 9 and over half of 11 to 13 year-olds having consumed porn. This is due to the lack of regulations on porn with no countries having taken steps to regulate the online consumption of porn by people this young. Furthermore, the societal effect imprinted by porn being available from such a young age is that the majority of porn being watched by younger individuals does not use or encourage the use of consent, which makes people believe that it is unimportant to do or not understand it fully, which leads to increased levels of sexual assault. In addition, the majority of porn consumed is also extremely violent with 88 per cent of porn available online being classed as, at best, aggressive in a 2010 study by British psychologists, which not only increases the amount of sexual violence in the bedroom but also domestic abuse levels. Moreover, in a recent report by the English Government it has been shown that consumption of this material, especially from a young age, results in the increased levels of objectification of women, unhealthy sexual expectations of women, perpetration of sexual aggression, and propensity of sexual aggression. However, even when these issues are reported, the low conviction rates make people feel powerless against the systematic and hostile sexism, which has even been shown to be within the police force with the death of Sarah Everard. Specifically, in Jersey, in the last 2 years there have been 113 rape allegations. Of the 5 that went to court, one was discontinued, and the other 4 resulted in non-guilty verdicts. I would like to add that a minimum of two-thirds of sexual assaults go unreported. Globally, sexual assault has increased 1,500 per cent since 2006, which is arguably when the internet went mainstream. This is backed up by a study by one of the major pornographic websites, which states that 75 per cent of porn is consumed on a mobile phone, up from 1 per cent in 2008, and with over 75 per cent of children having phones by the age of 12, it is obvious why the sexual assault levels are increasing. As these issues are not highlighted within the P.S.H.E. curriculum in the majority of schools, everyone is having a harder time distinguishing between what is okay and what is not okay. Our motion is that there should be action taken to both make regulations around creating an age where porn should not be allowed to be consumed from and educating secondary school children around consent and sexual violence more thoroughly. In my opinion, the easiest method of regulation would be for the Government to regulate pornography from an internet service level provider, which would create an opt-in system for adults, while removing the chance for younger people to be exposed to pornography. Thank you.

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

Thank you, Ms. Connor. Do we have a seconder for this proposition first of all? **[Seconded]** Thank you very much. Who would like to speak in the debate? Thank you very much, Ms. Simpson.

7.1.2 Ms. J. Simpson:

I am in strong agreement with Ms. Connor that unfortunately the consumption of pornographic material online has a detrimental effect on society's views on women and especially with young men who consume such content from a very early age. There is a proven link between boys watching porn and violent behaviour or sexual assault. Aggressive acts like mentioned by Ms. Connor against women in pornography occur in roughly 88 per cent of the scenes and 95 per cent of that time the response is one of neutrality. Teaching young, impressionable boys and girls that this is acceptable and tolerable behaviour. We believe that there should be more to be done to prevent the easy viewing of porn online, as discussed in the proposition. However, it is also understood that this is not a simple job. With that, I am also emphasising the need for more education on the effects of pornography on young people. Since 9 out of 10 boys and 6 out of 10 girls are exposed to pornography online before the age of 18, this content becomes a form of sex education for many young people and it teaches the wrong lessons, ones of violence and non-consensual acts. Our P.S.H.E. curriculum does not make it mandatory to cover pornography in any detail and most students do not get any education on it until they are in the upper parts of the school. By this point the damage is already done. So part of our motion is to update the P.S.H.E. curriculum to educate young people on the harmful effects of porn as well as debunking the many myths and beliefs around sexual relationships that are built from watching porn. We strongly believe that this would have a positive impact on young people on the Island and start a domino effect to reduce sexual violence and misogynistic behaviour, which is very topical discussion due to the current taskforce the Government commissioned to investigate violence against women and girls on the Island. It would be a positive step to reduce these behaviours by improving the sex education of young people and would prevent porn becoming a significant factor in their developmental years if they are aware of the awful effects on both physical and mental well-being. Improved sex education could also reduce the need for young people to watch porn as a learning tool, therefore stopping the encouragement of violence, inappropriate views on women, and unrealistic representation. While we believe regulation is really important in controlling consumption, we also believe the Government could take steps to educate people on those negative effects in that content in order to increase the impact of the regulations.

7.1.3 Mr. D. Riley:

I would like start by saying that I definitely agree with this proposal. I agree with the conclusions of the report and the spirit of this proposal. However, I do have some concerns over the implementation of it. The proposition calls for greater regulation of pornography. However, it does not specify what measures this would entail. I do not think it would be suitable to pass a proposition with such little detail of what it would ensue. Additionally, this proposal would only apply to internet traffic from Jersey, however it would be trivial for anyone to bypass any regulations implemented by using a virtual private network to hide their location from websites. Given the above, and the fact that a proposal similar to this was rejected as unworkable by the U.K. Government in 2019, it is clear that the measures needed to greater regulate access to online pornography would be impossible to effectively enforce and thus that this proposal is therefore impossible to implement in practice. Therefore, I cannot support such an unworkable proposal.

7.1.4 Ms. C. Horgan:

While I completely agree with your proposition, I think there may be a concern that if it becomes more restricted we increase the risk of people searching out and also in places that they are not supposed to.

7.1.5 Ms. E. Rouault:

Similarly to Ms. Horgan's point, as a woman and decent human being I could never discount your argument. However, I do fear that if you then regulate normal porn there is the risk of child pornography coming more used and there are obviously much bigger risks with that.

7.1.6 Ms. G. Smith:

I see that you are wanting to restrict more access to online pornography, which I completely agree with. However, I just see some issues with other areas, not just online, for instance in the film industry. As films that are rated 15 and above can also include both nudity and sexual scenes, so I was just wondering how you would deal with situations such as that.

7.1.7 Ms. E. Dudot:

In agreement with the proposition. Not only does porn negatively impact the individual, it harms the self-esteem in partners of those who consume it, creating unhealthy and harmful relationships, which gives further reason for it to be banned and to stop violence in relationships.

7.1.8 Ms. J. Cadiou:

While I agree with the majority of your proposition, would it not be better to regulate the contacts and the accessibility to porn, and it could be used to break the taboo around this sex and show what people think consensual and equal sex looks like? I believe this is as idealistic as regulating its distribution, as they are both extremely difficult. Have you also considered the facts that individuals may use such sites like Pornhub as stress relief? If restricting this, do you not think people would in turn result to more harmful coping mechanisms?

7.1.9 Ms. L. Miller:

I would just like to respond to the idea that there will be an increase in porn in children. Our proposition refers to all porn, not just what is referred to as normal porn.

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

Is there anyone else who would like to speak in the debate? I do not see anyone else, so I will close the debate and ask Ms. Connor to give her final thoughts.

[16:30]

7.1.10 Ms. C. Connor:

In summary, it is clear that both from a scientific and societal perspective there is clear evidence to show an association between pornography usage, both in general and from a young age, which results in harmful attitudes towards women and girls. To address Mr. Riley's point, we did cover how we would regulate it and we would use IPS (intrusion prevention system). I would also like to comment on your further point. I really do not believe that many under-18s would know how to use such intense computer skills as to hide their address to use porn. If they do, I think that they should receive some help. Furthermore, to cover Beaulieu's point, the aggressive sexual porn is not permitted in films and where it is the box office highlights it. Also it is between actors and that is safe, which is easier to regulate. Furthermore, as Ms. Miller mentioned, child porn comes under normal porn. I would also like to add that these investigations were conducted by Dr. Fiona Vera-Gray, fellow at the Department of Law at Durham, Dr. Maria Garner, who is a published author on these issues, such as gender and sexuality, and Dr. Max Waterman, who is a published author on post-doctoral research on legal challenges to porn and its association to gender-based violence. I think that, as a woman myself, and someone who has been part of the taskforce, it is really clear that we should be doing anything in our power to try to limit the violence against women. **[Approbation]**

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

Thank you, Ms. Connor, do you call for the *appel*? The *appel* has been called for, so I would ask the Greffier to open the voting. The vote is complete, so I close the voting. I can announce that the proposition has been adopted.

POUR: 24		CONTRE: 1		ABSTAIN: 3
Mr Henry Humpleby		Mr Daniel Riley		Mr Charlie Yau
Mr Theo Dorey				Miss Emily Robins
Mr Lachlan Muir				Miss Amilie McCulloch
Mr Sam Oldridge				
Miss Emily Dutot				
Miss Chloe Connor				
Miss Zara Holt				
Miss Jessica Cadiou				
Mr Thomas Waller				
Miss Amber McGurty				
Mr Charlie Waters				
Miss Jemimah Kalule				
Miss Lucie Miller				
Miss Isla Snowie				
Miss Ciara Horgan				
Miss Emily Jewell				
Miss Jaimie Simpson				
Miss Darcy Yates				
Miss Amelia Turner				
Miss Georgie Smith				
Miss Eloise Rouault				
Miss Pippa Clarke				
Miss Tilly Ward				

8. Introduction of a mandatory national service scheme

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

Thank you very much. So we come on to what I believe is the last proposition of the day from Mr. Henry Humpleby at De La Salle College and I ask the Greffier to read the proposition.

The Greffier of the States:

The Assembly is asked whether it is of opinion that Jersey should introduce a mandatory national service scheme with both civic and military functions.

8.1 Mr. H. Humpleby:

I would like to begin our debate on the implementation of mandatory national service with a quote from American business magnate John D. Rockefeller: “Every right implies a responsibility. Every opportunity an obligation. Every possession a duty.” These words were true when they were spoken and they remain true today. Mandatory national service is based on these very principles and seeks to establish that there must be a fair exchange between the individual and the state. For the state to function it must forge a contract with its population and the population must forge a contract with it. What exactly is mandatory national service and how does it play this role? Mandatory national service would be a requirement, one that, as based on the Singaporean conscription system, we believe should be essential for those who are born on Island in order to gain full citizenship. Each person would be required to commit to a year’s military, public sector, or in some cases private sector work, on a basic national service salary. Therefore demonstrating a person’s devotion to their community and acting as a contractual link to both citizenship and society. During a person’s period of national service, they may be required to work with the Royal Militia, police, fire service, ambulance sector, and other organisations, bringing much needed employees into sectors that seem to be continuing to struggle to keep up with demand and the size of the employment force, especially as the population continues to grow. Mandatory national service in this respect also brings

overwhelming reward for individuals and the Government as a whole. For the Government the strengths of such a system are clear, unity, maturity, retention, and economic efficiency. Mandatory national service would be a programme designed for all and a person's gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, and so on, would not matter. Mandatory national service is a commitment shared by all and barring none. It aims to foster a common identity and does so by encouraging people of all different backgrounds to work together. As cited in our report, Switzerland has 4 languages and 4 distinct cultural groups, but its national service programme has helped it become one of the happiest and most united nations on earth. Similarly, in Finland, which is in fact the happiest nation on earth, national service is mandatory. According to U.S. Army veteran Tom Wolfe, this sense of unity is because there is nothing that can approximate the bonding that occurs in the wardroom, ready room, or foxhole, because they are all in it together, they get through it. New German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius argues that while national service existed there was always a connection to civic society at large, a connection that Pistorius believes is also necessary in the maturation of a young population, acting as a bridge to adulthood. The wholesale requirement to work and contribute to society with strength and resilience and allows for self-improvement, while also preventing young people from being left behind without employment. In terms of retention of workers, a national service programme would likely be the ultimate redress of this growing crisis. According to the Singaporean Government, 3,400 men register for national service to gain their citizenship. If Jersey had a similar system, it is safe to assume that a number of Islanders would stay on and do national service rather than move abroad and forsake the opportunity to return home. Most crucial of all is the programme's value for economic efficiency. Mandatory national service would be of significant benefit to the Government's purse, saving money by reducing overall cost to the Government in terms of recruitment and outsourcing. According to cost-benefit studies in the United States, youth national service programmes cost roughly 2 billion annually and produce a total return of roughly 5.9 billion. Additionally, a national service programme can act as a pipeline into Government service and establish contacts with many people across the Island, broadening the Government's network. Also acting as an effective counterbalance against Jersey's dependency ratio of more than 50 per cent, by helping to fill gaps in overstretched areas such as the care sector. For Jersey's population, national service would also undoubtedly have strong advantages. In particular, in terms of positive experience and skills enhancement. According to Michael Caine, his national service gave him a sense of belonging, while for Prince Harry he claimed that the Army saved him. It has been argued by columnists in the Sydney Morning Herald similarly that service programmes could offer meaning, purpose and social connectiveness. A survey of the impacts of national service in Ethiopia indicated the experience may significantly influence the future experiences of its participants, likely beneficially. It is clear therefore that national service shapes the path of a person's life almost certainly in a positive manner. For young people, the greatest benefit is skills that it helps to create. According to a study of employers in the U.S. who hosted volunteers from AmeriCorps, which is a volunteer service group, 48 per cent believed this service developed accountability, 45 per cent believed it developed leadership, and 41 per cent believed it developed responsibility. While a similar study of AmeriCorps members and volunteers revealed that 39 per cent of those studied believed it fulfilled their personal life-skills needs, 16 per cent believed it fulfilled their interpersonal communication skills needs, while 12 per cent believed it satisfied their need for academic progress and basic skills. It is clear national service would be advantageous in creating a technical workforce and one that could satisfy increasing demands for skilled young workers amid a general right and the age of the population as a whole. Mandatory national service is a system that, if introduced, would have a clear and significant impact on the quality of the workforce in Jersey, the overall happiness of the population, and the effectiveness of the function of Government. National service is an exchange of value from one group to another that serves to create a bond of tolerance, respect and dedication. "Everyone can be great because everyone can serve", Martin Luther King.

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

Thank you, Mr. Humpleby. I already have some lights that went on. Would somebody like to second the proposition? [**Seconded**] I call on, first of all, Mr. Waters.

8.1.1 Mr. E. Nichols:

I would like to second the proposer. For an Island like Jersey, the best way to create a competent workforce with applied skills is through a national service programme. By creating opportunities and testing the drive and motivation of the Island's population, mandatory national service would be the ultimate vehicle for societal progression. National service helps fill in the gaps of the public sector with the best and the brightest of our future. It will help provide young people with an opportunity to participate in our Island's development and could potentially inspire a long-term commitment to community service. Additionally, national service can bring people together from diverse backgrounds and help bridge social divides. Why is this necessary? Because it can lead to a greater understanding and social cohesion, which can help benefit society as a whole. Working with this diverse community means they can develop qualities such as empathy and adaptability through these transformational experiences. Lastly, and most importantly, national service gives younger people an opportunity to develop new skills, learn, and gain valuable work experience that looks good on a résumé and can increase the competitiveness of our job market. Why would we not want a labour force with skills such as leadership, teamwork and communication? Mandatory national service is a policy that unites and ties together a population in order to face potential challenges. In Jersey, these challenges are a rising dependency ratio and the growing cost of service sectors. By developing a permanent contingent of young workers, Jersey may finally have a catchall opportunity for profitable, economic, and social advancement. It is time to embrace the solution.

8.1.2 Mr. C. Waters:

I completely disagree with the speaker's proposition. The proposer's use of Switzerland as a perfect example of a mandatory service scheme is extremely biased. The overall happiness levels of Switzerland cannot be attributed to this system. On the other hand, countries such as Colombia also enforce the mandatory national service while being labelled the 7th highest country in terms of murder rate in the world. Therefore, the advantages of one country, which applies this service, cannot be universalised or based upon this scheme itself. There was also 2 examples of Michael Caine and Prince Harry who were both members of the upper class and extremely wealthy, so their opinions about the scheme are not going to apply to every citizen in our society. Thank you. [**Approbation**]

8.1.3 Ms. A. McGurty:

I also disagree with the proposition. The proposer stated how the issue of emigration away from the Island could be cut through the mandatory service scheme. However, I believe this logic is counterintuitive as many Jersey citizens would rather leave the Island to work towards their own personal career aspirations instead of staying to work in a mandatory scheme that they may not enjoy at all. This will not curb the issue but instead contribute to it.

8.1.4 Mr. S. Oldridge:

I would also like to completely disagree with this proposition. Apart from the dire idea of conscription, which this proposition touches upon, I would also like to highlight the impracticality of this proposition. Especially since one year mandatory service would not be practical in terms of combat deployments lasting at least 6 months, and that is only short deployments. Not only that, but specialist skills within the military that people would have to be trained on would last 37 weeks at a minimum, which exceeds well beyond the one year maximum service for conscription. Not only that, but also to aid ambulance crews and to try to staff up the healthcare scheme, which we have already touched upon, this idea is good, however would you really think that someone's motive to do a job well would really be 100 per cent if you are being forced to do it? Would you seriously

believe that people in ambulance crews, in fire service, police, or the military, would really want to do their job 100 per cent if they were being forced into that job and instead not doing a job that you want to do. It is shown that in conscripted military, such as the North Korean Army, militaries are much less disciplined than those who do it voluntarily. The implementation of bad discipline comes a lot from people being forced into doing it and, not only that, but atrocities committed between male and female members of the military, which we all know where I am coming from, and also the incidents of friendly fire comes quite commonly under less-disciplined militaries, which stems from being conscripted. Overall, you can see how this is an impractical scheme and how, while it does on the short term seem beneficial towards the lack of staffing we have in our healthcare and military, it just simply does not make sense, especially with a one-year service, when training in itself would take over a year. [Approbation]

8.1.5 Ms. A. McCulloch:

I also completely disagree with this proposition. As you mention in your proposition that it would be mandatory service. Examples of this in other countries like in South Korea have shown drawbacks such as large chunks of social and academic life being stripped away from their citizens and I believe that this proposition goes against the human free will.

8.1.6 Ms. E. Robins:

I do understand the principle of your argument, but should the Government budget not be used on more important problems actively affecting the Island, like rising property prices and the crisis of migration away from the Island? Jointly, with the topic of migration, would the mandatory service like this with very limited options for creative and academic individuals not push more people to leave the Island in search of more fitting alternatives like university?

[16:45]

8.1.7 Ms. E. Rouault:

I completely agree with your idea on paper. However, what about the individuals in society who are disabled and therefore would not be able to complete the jobs that you are putting forward? Would this not increase the gap that you have already mentioned in society and make it more difficult for them? Would this not then mean that they are a full citizen in our society simply because of disability they could not help? [Approbation]

8.1.8 Ms. G. Smith of Beaulieu:

You briefly mentioned about how this would make you stand out on your C.V. (curriculum vitae) and how it would look good. However, by making it mandatory for everyone in the Island, would it not do the exact opposite? Would it not take away from people who put all their time and effort into things such as Air Cadets or Duke of Edinburgh?

8.1.9 Ms. C. Connor:

Unfortunately, I would have to disagree with the proposition. In my opinion, your proposition almost has an air of communism, which has been shown to be unsuccessful. I fear that in this way it would almost be the Government overstepping, especially when there is no real need for an enforced national service, and that national service in an opt-in system is effective. However, in the way you describe it, it almost feels as if it is teetering on the brink of impropriety in line with forced work, when not spoken under a euphemism is called slavery.

8.1.10 Ms. E. Dudot:

The enforcing of mandatory national service as a condition for permanent citizenship impinges on the freedom of the immigrants entering the Island even further. Immigrants to the Island are already subject to 10 years of continuous residence to achieve full resident status. Furthermore, it will

enhance nationalism, which would not create a sense of unity and enforce xenophobia. The addition of the proposer's scheme would make this process even lengthier and laboursome. Do we really wish to subject our Island's immigrants to further hardships?

8.1.11 Mr. L. Muir:

While this argument has merit, I am also not in agreement. Your idea seems to omit the fact that activities taken outside or instead of work placements do not give back to society and grow skills, which therefore fit the opening quote you were giving just as appropriately. Furthermore, it can be hardly claimed to reduce unemployment as at the end of the scheme no further employment is guaranteed and thus this is only invisible unemployment. Lastly, even your stats seem to suggest that the proposal is quite weak, with 54 per cent of people not saying that it increases leadership skills, how are we meant to buy into this idea when your own statistics seem to go against it?

8.1.12 Mr. D. Riley:

I would like to start by saying that I believe I am in the minority of people who are opposed to this proposition. I would like to start with a technical dispute. You state that people serving national service would potentially be able to join the Royal Engineers, however I do not believe the U.K. military would accept people who were forcibly conscripted to join the military. I would like to refer to my colleague from Hautlieu and that happy countries having national service does not necessarily mean that national service is the cause of that happiness. As we know, correlation does not equal causation. Additionally, sectors in need of more workers that could receive some from national service, such as healthcare, as you outlined, are in need of more educated workers. I do not believe something that should be done by someone with a medical degree can be done by someone fresh out of sixth form. The report claims that national service will save money. Does this mean that people serving national service will be forced to pay for their own living costs, thereby making this a form of indentured servitude? I refer back again to my other colleague from Hautlieu by saying that the report claims that national service will improve the retention of educated people and potentially be mandatory to keep citizenship. Myself certainly, and I am sure many others, would prefer to rescind their resident status in Jersey rather than stay here for another year.

8.1.13 Mr. C. Yau:

I would also like to completely and utterly disagree with the proposition, as this involuntary service scheme would also heavily infringe upon the free will of all Jersey citizens who are forced to comply. Additionally, it neglects many Jersey citizens' interests and future career aspirations by forcing them to go through a year of service, which they do not wish to do. Furthermore, relating back to what Mr. Oldridge of Victoria College said, who would you rather were fighting for you, a team of dedicated, skilled citizens, or a group of unwilling and disgruntled people? I know what I would choose.

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

Thank you, Mr. Yau. Is there anyone else who would like to speak in the debate? Is there anyone left who has not spoken in the debate? It was a very, very good debate. Last opportunity. In that case I close the debate and I ask Mr. Humpleby to sum up.

8.1.14 Mr. H. Humpleby:

A number of issues seem to have been raised with the possibility of mandatory national service and I would just like to counter a few of them. I would just like to argue that obviously the issues with military service have been considered, but this would not just be a military programme. I would also like to point out that, while the training required, for example, 37 weeks, would be required specifically, that is not necessarily the case. You do not need full training for specific background roles and in a large number of areas it would not be military. That 37 weeks does not fully apply. For example, if you look at Singapore, I think it is 16 weeks to become a lieutenant in the fire service

during their conscription scheme. So you could do 4 weeks and become a basic fire service personnel and still apply during mandatory national service. There is also special provisions, for example in Singapore and South Korea, where you are allowed to defer, as you will see with people like Son Heung-min, who are allowed to defer for specific reasons. So if you wanted to come back and then do your citizenship, you could do it, or you could defer if you wanted to go to university for example. In terms of North Korea, I would just like to point out that is a 10-year service programme, which is 5 times the next closest, which is South Korea, which is I would argue a ridiculous statement to make that it is possible to compare Jersey, which would be one year, to 10 years in North Korea. It is clear for us that mandatory national service is a fantastic solution to a number of the Island's most pressing concerns. Especially concerning economic development and social cohesion. In order for society to function organically, citizens must contribute to it. This is exactly what national service is for.

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

Thank you, Mr. Humpleby. Would you like to call for the *appel*? The *appel* has been called for so we open the voting. Please vote now. I close the voting and I can say that the proposition has been rejected.

POUR: 3		CONTRE: 24		ABSTAIN:1
Mr Edward Nichols		Mr Lachlan Muir		Miss Eloise Rouault
Mr Henry Humpleby		Mr Sam Oldridge		
Mr Theo Dorey		Miss Emily Dutot		
		Mr Charlie Yau		
		Miss Chloe Connor		
		Miss Zara Holt		
		Miss Emily Robins		
		Miss Jessica Cadiou		
		Mr Daniel Riley		
		Mr Thomas Waller		
		Miss Amber McGurty		
		Mr Charlie Waters		
		Miss Jemimah Kalule		
		Miss Lucie Miller		
		Miss Isla Snowie		
		Miss Amilie McCulloch		
		Miss Ciara Horgan		
		Miss Emily Jewell		
		Miss Jaimie Simpson		
		Miss Darcy Yates		
		Miss Amelia Turner		
		Miss Georgie Smith		
		Miss Pippa Clarke		
		Miss Tilly Ward		

With that final one I close the public business. I want to say a few words if I can. Before I go any further, I would say to Mr. Humpleby I myself have brought things to this Assembly and not necessarily had the Assembly on side, but you kept going and I think that is a really important part of our democracy. So congratulations, young man. **[Approbation]** Today, I really enjoyed myself today, not just sitting in the big chair but being in this Assembly with you all. There are some thank-yous that need to be made. This event has run really smoothly today and that would not happen without the work of the States Greffe and in particular Rebecca and Molly, who have done so much work to work with this, and the Greffier herself, so thank you to them. **[Approbation]** This is the 25th Youth Assembly since it has been running, and in that time I have one Members name written

on here, but I know there were 2 Members of the Assembly who were in the Youth Assembly, Deputy Mézec and Deputy Alex Curtis, I believe was in the Youth Assembly. So there is a future there. We must thank the Ministers who took part in the event today and some statistics, although I will not question the statistics, I would never question the statistics with the Greffier. There were 38 questions asked today, including supplementaries, and 22 questions to the Chief Minister. That is a really healthy sitting and a really healthy debate. Sitting over there it was quite enjoyable to watch some of those questions being asked, so well done to you all for that. In total, I counted 63 speeches made for the propositions, which was an excellent outcome. We had 3 rejected, so we did not want to have national service, we did not want to abolish private schools or smartphones, but you did want to regulate pornography and provide free buses. So there is an interesting overview from the Assembly today. From my point of view, sat here watching this debate go on, some of the things that I jotted down was I have to commend ... and lots of things are said when young people come to the Assembly and it is taken for granted that everyone will say: "Well done". So let us talk about what went really well today and for me the quality of the research that you brought to your propositions and to your speeches was absolutely superb and really must be commended. The clarity of the presentation that you brought forward was excellent and I know the Greffier needs to be absolutely neutral, but the fact that when you did debate you stuck to the topic and you talked about the issues themselves, and they were very focused on the issues that were going forward, I think shows a real quality in what happened today in this Assembly. It makes me extremely proud as Chair of the C.P.A. (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association) to go and represent us in other jurisdictions and say how well that our Youth Assembly is doing in terms of the promotion of democracy. The reference to statistics, which is often debated a lot in this Assembly, and to sum up the depth of the arguments that went forward today, so congratulations to everybody who was here today, I hope you stay around and have a few refreshments and a chat, because you certainly deserve it. It is boiling in this Assembly. With that I would just say again thank you very much. I think you should give yourself a good foot-stamp. **[Approbation]** Mr. Humpleby.

Mr. H. Humpleby:

I would just like to say thank you, Deputy Ward, for chairing this. I understand this is your first time. If we could all just show a bit of appreciation for Deputy Ward. **[Approbation]** Thank you very much.

Deputy R.J. Ward (in the Chair):

I must say I will not be critical of the Bailiff in the future if he misses my name out. Unfortunately, that has gone on the public record now, but there we go. With that, is there anything else, Mdm. Greffier? I call the Assembly to a finish and say thank you very much to everyone.

ADJOURNMENT

[16:57]