STATES OF JERSEY

OFFICIAL REPORT

WEDNESDAY, 11th NOVEMBER 2026

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[9:30]

The Roll was called and the Dean led the Assembly in Prayer.

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

It is just to ask leave of the Assembly to leave the Assembly in about half an hour to accompany a family member to a medical appointment, if that is okay.

The Bailiff:

Yes, thank you very much.

COMMUNICATIONS BY THE PRESIDING OFFICER

1.1 Remembrance Day

I remind Members that at 11 a.m. we will observe a 2-minute silence in the Chamber in the usual way.

Connétable D.G. Curtis of St. Saviour:

Good morning, Sir. Under Standing Order 137, I regret to inform that I am resigning from the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Panel due to time commitments on 2 Scrutiny Panels and a busy Parish unfortunately. Although I can survive on 4 hours of sleep, I have been told I cannot sustain it for very much longer. My thanks to the chair and the panel for their support during this time, albeit brief.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much.

Connétable I. Gardiner of St. Helier:

I would like to just inform the Assembly that I will be leaving at 10.40 a.m. to join veterans and my team at the Cenotaph for 11 a.m.

Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Could I seek clarification from the Chair, in the unfortunate event that Deputy Maltman is not here to propose her amendment, what will the situation be?

The Bailiff:

It will fall unless there is someone nominated to propose it on her behalf.

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

If it helps with the order of business, I have been in conversation with Deputy Maltman and I had offered before the weekend to propose hers as a rapporteur. If the Assembly is happy for me to do that, that would remain the plan.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much.

PUBLIC BUSINESS – RESUMPTION

1. Common Strategic Policy 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): twelfth amendment (P.75/2026 Amd.(12)) - Increase Government transparency, openness and accountability

Senator L.J. Farnham:

Ministers considered overnight their position on amendment 12 of Deputy Alves, and following discussions, on balance, we can move to a supportive position. I thought it would be helpful to let Members know that at the beginning of the day. **[Approbation]**

The Bailiff:

Thank you, Chief Minister. We now resume the debate on the twelfth amendment. The next person due to speak was Deputy Parker.

1.1 Deputy R.J. Parker of St. Saviour:

I very much appreciate the actual what is being put forward regarding the transparency and also keeping the information for electoral in the Parishes. But I see that there is a constitutional issue with the amendment. The issue is that the Council of Ministers are not responsible regarding the States or the Judicial Greffe to deal with the election side. Therefore, though I totally agree that there is a responsibility of the Council of Ministers regarding the transparency and also related to keeping the electoral information up to date, and I believe that this should be made a lot easier with updates to the Social Security I.T. (information technology) solution, the solution at the moment is based on an old platform and it is a priority of the Council of Ministers and of Digital Services to upgrade this, to make it a much more effective and accurate system going forward. Therefore, though I totally agree with the transparency and the first element of Deputy Alves's amendment, I cannot support the rest of it because I think it ends up creating an issue regarding the responsibility, because it is putting a responsibility in the hands of the Council of Ministers, to which I do not think we have the position to be able to enforce. Thank you very much indeed.

1.1.1 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour:

I am really pleased to hear that the Chief Minister has rethought this overnight, so I am just looking at my notes, and I will not speak for very long. I am speaking in support, and I wanted to mention something, which I think the proposer actually mentioned yesterday in terms of broader principles. I have 2 principles that I wanted to emphasise. The first one is good democracy and good-quality democracy, which is standards, is the foundation of the work that P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee) does. I am very proud to be vice-chair of P.P.C., and I am very keen to be adding value to that work, but it is not just for the members of P.P.C. to add value to that area. P.P.C. is a representative group, as much as possible, of the Assembly, but it is the Assembly's body, as it were. Its work is not done in isolation, and indeed the work of the States Greffe is not done in isolation from Government. The States Greffe and P.P.C. are the foundation of our democracy and of everything we do; Government included. Supporting this does no harm, it just underlines and emphasises those first principles, many of which are outlined in our Code of Conduct and should be informing everything that we do as States Members. I support it on that level. The second principle by which I support it is that many speakers in this debate have mentioned that it is not the Government's job to do that, which I believe I have somewhat addressed in my previous point. I think that it is all of our job. But also I think we also need to remember that the C.S.P. (Common Strategic Policy) is not just a Government document. It is, of course, produced by Government, but it is the States Assembly that approves the final document. It should be amended by Back-Benchers and by non-Executive Members, because it should be a document that is owned by the Assembly. From what I know of Senator Farnham, he has historically been good at doing this, of being open to Back-Bencher ideas and being somebody who can see a compromise and can take ideas on board. That is something that I very much respect about him, and I would like to see that principle being continued throughout this political term for this Government. This relates to my first point; it is democratically good to do that, because if we were simply to have propositions and documents from the Government put forward before this Assembly and they could not be amended and improved, then that is not good democracy. This amendment does not do any harm. I think it underlines and emphasises some really important points about the standards of the way that we are working. I think the word "collegiate" has been used; that collegiate approach. Not just within Government but across the Assembly, and I am very pleased to support that approach, and I thank Deputy Alves for bringing it.

1.1.2 Senator M.E. Millar:

I also cannot support this amendment in its entirety.

[9:45]

I think it is unfortunate that it was perhaps not brought forward as parts A and B because the first part about transparency, that is acceptable. Government can deliver that from the perspective of its own operations. The second part, however, is about the Government being proactively engaged with the democracy process. I have serious reservations about how we can accept and deliver on that aspect. It really comes down to practically how we do that, because the bodies that currently run our democratic processes, aside from the P.P.C., and I do agree that this is something that we all have to do as individual Members of this Assembly, whether that is school visits, whether it is Parish Assemblies, we all have a role to play in promoting good and effective democracy. But the people who run those democratic processes are the States Greffe and the Judicial Greffe. Those are non-Ministerial, independent bodies, and Government cannot tell them what to do. Or we can try, and I speak as somebody who was a chief officer in an independent non-Ministerial department, and we really do not like being told what to do by Government. If we go and tell the Greffe to do something, they have every right to say: "No, we are not doing it", and the only way we can force the Greffe to do something, if it came to it, would be to get a law through this Assembly. That then takes a question, if Government is going to get involved, how do we work with the Greffe and the Judicial Greffe? Do we work in conflict? Do we create conflict? Do we create inconsistency with those bodies? If Government is going to be proactively engaged, do we need the Greffe? Can we just bring the Greffe, parts of the Greffe, or perhaps vote.je in particular, into Government? Because I think that only by bringing vote.je into Government, where we can control it, can we deliver on this. That is my big issue. My big concern with this is that as soon as Government starts proactively engaging with the democratic process it will be accused, and I think the irony is, it will be the Deputy's party that will be the biggest accusers of controlling the process, of manipulating the process, of trying to interfere with the process for our own ends. Conspiracy theories will abound, it will be very controversial. Everything we try to do will be about Government trying to manipulate the process for its own end. It is a recipe for disaster and I just do not think we can do that. We are not all aligned. We are not all aligned on our democratic process. Only yesterday, Deputy Tadier made some comments about our democratic process. He does not like it. Reform, I believe, do not like elements of it. How do we then ... Government is promoting that system, which the biggest party does not necessarily like. I think this is setting Government up to fail. It is establishing controversy, and I just do not see how this can work. I think P.P.C. should continue the work, vote.je continue as part of an independent body. Before we do anything further, we should be looking to see, we should be asking for a review as an Assembly as to what vote.je did. I am not suggesting any criticism but we should be asking what they did, what they delivered, what new votes we got, are there better ways? We are right, as an Assembly, to ask those questions, but I do not think that it is for the Government to become involved - closely involved - because the words controlling, manipulating and interfering will be at the front of everybody's mouth, and it will not help the process. Asking Government to become involved risks blurring and confusing lines of independence that are there for good constitutional reason and that have been established for good reason. For those reasons, I cannot support this amendment.

1.1.3 Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

Yes, I want to echo Senator Millar's and Deputy Parker's comments. I am very uneasy about the second part of this and, similarly to Senator Millar - and we have not discussed this - I do wish Deputy Alves had brought this in 2 parts because the first part about transparency, *et cetera*, I can support very easily, but the second part I think goes to the heart of the separation of powers really in Government and to the Assembly. I question why you would ever want Government promoting the democratic process in Jersey. The simple reason being that the accusations of propaganda, of

conspiracy, Government is a product of the democratic process. It is not the instigator of the democratic process. Government, we know since the Clothier Report and the 2005 changes to the machinery of government in Jersey, there has been extreme concern about the fact that the States Assembly is no longer holding the Executive through the committees but instead we have set up a separate Government. That has been the matter of concern for many people. I am much more relaxed about it than many people, but there has been a matter of concern for many people for 20-odd years. Having Government then promoting the democratic process, promoting elections, *et cetera*, really does bring the possibility that you would have Ministers being promoted over the democratic process being promoted. I say this not with anyone here in the Assembly in mind, not with current people in the civil service in mind; it is Government knows how to promote Government. I have seen it with my own eyes. Government knows how to protect Government. That is what it does, and when it comes to democratic process it is a part of that democratic process, but it is not the one to show us how to go through that democratic process. Do we want posters of "Vote Today" with Ministers on that? Because I can tell the Assembly now that that is exactly what people would be very worried to see, if Government is now there to talk about it is promoting the democratic process. I see Deputy Alves shaking her head, and I understand, but I think there is a level of idealism in the second part of this which goes beyond the reality, and the reality is people do not want to hear the Government telling them what to do with the voting. The States Assembly, the States Greffe, yes, because that is everybody. The Government is a subset of us and therefore should not be promoting the very thing that brings people into this Assembly. It is quite concerning, and I was surprised that Deputy Alves brought this amendment because I know she constantly is concerned about democracy in the Island and ensuring we have a strong democracy. It is clear that she has not seen a concern where I do see a concern. I do not think Government should be paying for elections. I do not think that is the place of Government to be. I think ultimately it is the Greffe and the Assembly that should be doing this. But if we want Islanders to believe that they have free and fair elections, Government should not play a role in that. I just think the Assembly should really think about it. There is no one person in mind. I am thinking of Government as an entity. It is not there to do elections, it is there to be elected, and that is a really important distinction. I think a lot of people when thinking: "Oh, we should accept this amendment" looked at that first part about transparency and does think: "Oh, Government does not want to be seen as not transparent"; I completely agree. I think a lot of us have looked at that first part and said, yes, we can support this, but look at the second part. Is that really where you want Government to be? In my view it is not, and I really think people should reflect on that before jumping in to support this amendment because I think it does raise some very significant constitutional issues, as Deputy Parker has pointed out. They are issues that I think every Member of the Assembly should wait before choosing to vote for this proposition.

1.1.4 Connétable I. Gardiner of St. Helier:

This is really why I did not plan to speak. First of all, I would like to inquire with the Chief Minister's statement at the opening of this Assembly, was it discussed around the Council of Ministers' table and with the Minister's team? I am a bit confused to follow 3 Members of the Executive actually opposing it. So I am not sure what has happened and I am really wondering. It is a democracy but I believe that if the Chief Minister is making a statement at the Assembly that they were welcoming, I would expect the Council of Ministers to follow, but I might be wrong. I know there is no collective responsibility. Second, 12.4 of the amendment ensures the long-term support, technical upkeep, and funding, funding, funding, funding of the automatic voter registration system. It is not instead, it is ... while the funding, we like it, we do not like it, but funding is coming from the Government. For me, following the 3 speeches, I believe we must adopt it because it has showed that we might not see funding for automatic voter registration if this is the stance. I am not sure, but at least this amendment will ensure that we have a proper system that is working properly and not racing towards the 4 years. As we said, we do have elections to Centeniers; it is a public election and we need voter registration. We do have elections for Procureurs, and it is within the law and it is public elections and it is

happening during the term, not when it will be. Now coming back, A.I. (artificial intelligence), because I did not have a prepared speech I needed to run A.I. in asking if Governments promote election and democracy. It is A.I. I just ran it with the help of my Connétable on the right, very quickly. "Yes, many Governments actively promote election and democracy." And it is depending whether we are a democratic or authoritarian regime. I believe we are a democratic regime, and I believe that we are not telling people how to vote but we are telling people come out and vote and make their voice heard. We all - all 49 of us - are responsible to have this message out in the public: "Come out and vote." It is a cross-Chamber task. It is not Government or Back-Benchers. Executives are Members of this Assembly and I would expect, and I would like to see actually, Executive representative on the Political Awareness and Education Sub-Panel to ensure that we all work together and not just the Back-Benchers and non-Executive running the Political Awareness and Education Sub-Panel. I would encourage appointment from the Executive to that. For me it is not instead Government, while working together with other Members with the Assembly, while working with the Parishes to promote a democratic process. Obviously I will be supporting the amendment.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Sir, may I have a point of clarification, please?

The Bailiff:

Will you give way for a point of clarification?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

Yes, sure.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It is just when the Connétable talked about funding, is it her understanding that when it comes to non-Ministerial funding, requests for funding are never rejected by Government? That the funding is always provided to non-Ministerials?

The Connétable of St. Helier:

First of all, we need the Assembly to agree. Second, request for budget for A.V.R. (automatic voter registration), and we had this conversation on Monday, we need to understand where it is standing and technical support should be provided from the Government ... not from the Government, from the officers, to put a business case together to know what we need to ensure the system is running smoothly. It needs to be done by the technical support together between Greffe and the Government officials who are doing it. For me, I completely agree that the Assembly would vote and we would need all Government support to ensure that funding is in place for the Greffe to ensure that this work will progress and be on time.

1.1.5 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

What I do admire about the Ministers, and we have seen 2 examples of it this morning from the Assistant Minister, Deputy Morel, and Senator Millar, is that I find even just as a non-Minister I am really busy. I barely have time to get home, rest, and then come back into the Assembly, and somehow they have found some time to go out fishing sometime between last night and this morning, because they have come back with a full net of red herrings which they have started **[Laughter]** to share around the Assembly with other Members. It is like they have not got the memo from last night from their own Chief Minister that the Government is now supporting this amendment and seek to wish to continue to point score. We have a bizarre scenario where Senator Millar, in particular, is supposed to be an independent but she has made this debate somehow party political. It is not a party political process.

[10:00]

We have had some very good speeches yesterday from the Constables on this who get the fact that if we look at the base wording that we should be talking to this morning - if indeed we still need to talk because I was not planning to speak, and I will not make it a long speech - let us look at the text that Deputy Alves is trying to put into this C.S.P. as an additional priority. This is what we are talking about. We are talking about high-level priorities that Government is committing to, not the granular detail that the likes of Deputy Morel and other speakers ... I probably should not phrase it like that. That Deputy Morel and other speakers are trying to introduce here, which I think are both spurious and incorrect. Deputy Alves is simply saying increase Government transparency, openness and accountability. Anything wrong so far? Stop me if I say anything that is objectionable. "Proactively support civic and democratic engagement and participation." I think all of those things are things that are axiomatic that we should all be signing up to. "Strengthen public trust in Jersey's democratic institutions." I think that last point is fundamental. I certainly put that in my personal manifesto and it seems to appear every time that we need to keep on working on the trust that the public has or does not have in Government because Government, politicians, for some reason, tend to be at the bottom of people's trust lists. Even other institutions which we should be sceptical about figure higher than us. We cannot be complacent. That is what Deputy Alves is looking for here. If we do a quick search for the times it mentions the Judicial Greffe, for example, which was one of the central planks of Senator Millar's argument, I see 4 references in the text, and they are always in a context where we are not seeking to tell the Judicial Greffe what to do. So 12.4: "Ensure long-term support, technical upkeep and funding of the A.V.R. system, working collaboratively with the Parishes, the Judicial Greffe and relevant departments to maintain accurate secure modern electoral data." There is nothing in there which is dictatorial, it is about collaboration, it is about working together. If we look at the next one, for example, sustain a modern electoral infrastructure. It talks about: "We will work in close partnership with the Parishes and Judicial Greffe and data holding departments to ensure that voter data remains accurate secure and seamless." Who does not want that? I do not need to go and mention the last 2, but I think we have got a very simple, straightforward proposition which the Council of Ministers has looked at, unfortunately at the 11th hour, but at least they came to it late and said: "We can support this." I just wish that the Ministerial Whip would work in both directions. I think we are going to see the Ministerial Whip being faithfully adhered to when it comes to opposing Back-Bench amendments, and when the Whip is withdrawn I think … you know it is fair enough if a few Members want to stand up if they have got personal gripes, but we should be having a straightforward debate here. Look at the context of this week, if nothing else. We have had some serious headlines last week about unfortunate - at best they are unfortunate - statements which have come out from senior leaders in the civil service, one of whom is no longer in post, one of whom is the head of the institution that we use to deal with very sensitive issues, including child abuse, *et cetera*, which I am afraid we have still not passed. The Care Inquiry was over 10 years ago now, I think, was it not? There are only a few of us in this Assembly that remain who were actively campaigning for that. We put in amendments and it was across parties, it was across the political spectrum, and we realised that it was going to be a tough process and that those lessons that were learnt from that could not easily be forgotten. I think this does all tie in; I make no apologies for mentioning that at this stage. The whole transparency, accountability and trust is something that is a responsibility for each of us in this Assembly and, I would say, in wider Government. Wider Government does include the non-Ministerial elements and it is not about us forcing an issue on them, it is about recognising that all of those elements, the separation of those executive, judiciary and the legislature working together, have their own ethics which should be all pulling in the same direction. That is all that Deputy Alves, who knows more than anyone as chair of P.P.C., is trying to do. So let us have, if nothing else, one vote here that we can all get some consensus about and support it.

Senator L.J. Farnham:

The Connétable of St. Helier asked for …

The Bailiff:

I have not called upon you. Is that a point of order?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

Well, I do not think it is but she asked for a belated point of clarification.

The Bailiff:

No, it is too late for that. You are making a speech next, are you not? You can wait for that.

Senator L.J. Farnham:

I have spoken on the debate already.

The Bailiff:

Oh, you have spoken.

Senator L.J. Farnham:

I was just wondering if ...

The Bailiff:

Well, you cannot speak again, sorry.

Senator L.J. Farnham:

No, but I was asked for a point of clarification by ...

The Bailiff:

But she has finished speaking now, so it is too late for that.

1.1.6 Senator I.J. Gorst:

I want to start by recognising that I think, on balance - and the election inspectors or reviewers said this - we had a very good and well-run election only earlier this year. I am always grateful to the colleagues to my left for their good officers and their offices that actually run the elections together with the various Greffiers. I think what could have been quite challenging with the new registration system, I think they managed it well, and where there were issues that arose, I think they managed those issues well. So I can fully understand their element of frustration, where they feel that they put extra effort in and incurred additional costs. I am not quite sure why, but currently they appear to be still waiting for reimbursement for that. I know that those comments have been heard in the Assembly and that appropriate action will be taken. The Government already has an obligation - I say "the Government", but the reality is that it is the Chief Minister and his office that has an obligation - to provide data to the voter registration system. I think that that has, on balance, worked well. I know there was quite a lot of data manipulation required and cross-checking. That did take place and that will need to continue to take place. It is not often I rise to my feet in the Assembly that I am not perfectly aligned with my good friend Senator Millar. But I think today you can always look at an issue from a slightly different perspective. Of course she is right to say that this Assembly without legislation cannot instruct the Judicial Greffier what to do in regard to running an election; that is correct. But for me elections have always been about partnership. I think that if we take this amendment at face value, what the Deputy is seeking to do - perhaps some of us might have drafted it slightly differently, but we are where we are - is to recognise that there ought to be a partnership between the processes and those responsible for encouraging engagement now, and Government as well. As the Constable of St. Helier said, other Governments around the globe support voter turnout and the good, sound running of elections. I take this amendment, having given it further

consideration, as one around partnership, because the comments that Deputy Morel made are risks and situations that we ought to seek to avoid. But I surely cannot be the only one that already has had an element of feeling uncomfortable that the office that runs this Assembly and acts impartially on behalf of all Members has been solely tasked with encouraging voter turnout, and that is the States Greffe. They have done a good job but it is not quite right that that office is responsible in entirety for encouraging voter turnout, because after the election they have to act, and they do act, completely impartially in supporting all Members. Therefore, I think there is a risk in just leaving the system as it currently is, and I think that by pooling that risk and working in partnership, although I personally do not think there needs to be any more funding - that will not come as a surprise to anyone because I think the Greffe is well funded - it is true to say that the Greffe under law puts forward the budget to the Treasury Minister that it thinks … like your own Chambers, Sir, you put forward the amount of money that you think it requires to run your Chambers, in this case the Greffe, for the year and the Minister in most unlikely fashion has to simply say: "Yes, I will add it into the budget" and then it comes here to the Assembly. The Assembly itself could amend it but I have yet to encounter a budget, since those new arrangements were put in place ... I am not sure I was totally in favour of those arrangements in the first place but anyway let us not go down that rabbit hole. I am yet to encounter a budget where they have been amended and changed. So I do think that the funding that the Greffe asked for is sufficient. I do not expect that in accepting this amendment that more funding will be required. But the voter system has to be kept up to date and has to continue to function well. To some extent, if we hope that the Connétables run those processes and the requirements for funding in the same way that they think about their rate systems, I think we can be confident that they will do it carefully and not overspend, otherwise the chair of the Comité is not the man that I know him to be. So I have great confidence in that. Voter turnout is not something that we are proud of. We have kissed many voter turnout frogs and I have yet to see any one of them turn into a voter turnout prince. But we must keep trying. I suppose of late I have stopped kissing frogs, and I have let others do so, but I do think the Constable of St. Helier made a good point. I think she made this point, that maybe somebody from the Executive should sit on the sub-panel to support the work of the sub-panel as well to make sure that this partnership works. So there are risks all around. We are going to have to manage some of those risks in this partnership approach because it is absolutely right that Ministers should not be out getting self-promotion while promoting in the election. But I still think there are some issues to be addressed around that period of sensitivity or that purdah period where Back-Benchers and Ministers can be doing good things for Jersey, but they are not allowed to publicise it and Jersey suffers because of it. I know the framework is quite widely written but I do think that that should also be included in this process. I, for one, am going to take this at face value, that what we are being asked for is partnership working across the Greffe and across Government and therefore, on balance, I will be supporting this amendment.

1.1.7 Senator Sir M.J. Boleat:

I endorse everything that Senator Gorst has said. From outside the Assembly I have been a very keen observer of election turnout over the years and will be publishing my analysis of this when the Jersey Opinions and Lifestyle Survey results are published on 10th December. As Senator Gorst has said, we have a record we are not proud of, we have the lowest rate of voter turnout in the developed world. Because of automatic registration of electors, which is a good thing, our published turnout figure is even lower by about 8 percentage points. We look very bad in comparison with Guernsey, who have a system that is the opposite of ours, they only register about 50 per cent of their electors and therefore they have a high turnout. It is a really good discussion today; I do wonder what much of it has got to do with the Common Strategic Policy and there might be other places where we have that discussion. But from my point of view I do not mind how we do it but we do have to address the issue of a very low turnout, particularly among young people. I have actually asked the chief statistician whether we can have a more detailed breakdown when he publishes the figures.

[10:15]

That, to me, is the issue, and I do not mind who does it. I am very keen to play my part, working with anyone, to ensure that our democracy works better by having more people voting. I am not going to give a view on how it is best to handle it, but I do wonder what this has got to do with the Common Strategic Policy and whether there are other ways in which we might discuss these really important issues.

The Bailiff:

Does anyone else wish to speak on this amendment? If no one else wishes to speak, I invite Deputy Alves to reply.

1.1.8 Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier Central:

I would like to thank all the Members that spoke and the Chief Minister for going back overnight and having those discussions with the Council of Ministers, although it is quite clear that that is not unanimous. I will start by just addressing the negatives, I suppose. One of the things that was brought up, I think it was Deputy Parker said that this could cause a constitutional issue. I want to make Members very clear that when I drafted this amendment I did it by talking with the Greffier. I was very careful with my wording for that reason. I even said it in my speech as well, which makes me wonder whether some Members were actually listening to the speech, because I did say that I would never propose that Government should take over the responsibilities of P.P.C. This amendment is very carefully worded to ensure that that does not happen. However, I did identify an area, for example, embedding political literacy across the school curriculum. We cannot do that, or the Greffier cannot do that, because it is under the power of the Minister. That is why I was very careful with my wording and I did use words such as "commit to the sustained integration". That is a commitment to integrate that does not give ownership to the Government to produce educational material, and I would not want to do that; I do not think any of us would want to do that because we know how inappropriate that would be. It is not the responsibility of Government to deliver these things, to deliver the materials, the initiatives, but it is the responsibility of Government to ensure that we have an informed public. I thank my Constable of St. Helier for making this point and providing examples of where this does happen around the world. I am going to refer back to an email that I sent at the end of May to the Chief Minister about the issue of being very careful what we put out on the Government social media channels. I am just going to provide a couple of examples here, and I am happy to circulate this to Members. In the U.K. (United Kingdom) during the highly restrictive pre-election period called purdah, the Cabinet Office issues instructions to all civil servants and government departments. The rule is while departments cannot launch new initiatives or post political statements, essential public business must continue. So the U.K. Government department accounts for explicitly maintaining public safety, continual service and factual administrative information. They actively repost the U.K. Electoral Commission's non-partisan instructions on how and where to vote, which is categorised as basic administrative function. In Canada we have another example, the Government of Canada's social media guidelines dictate that institutional accounts must remain strictly neutral. However, the policy explicitly dictates that sharing non-partisan, objective, public interest information does not violate this neutrality. Federal departments routinely share or retweet the Elections Canada official reminders regarding voting days. I am not asking the Government - and there is nothing in my amendment that suggests that - to actually take on the responsibility to put together those kind of resources. All I am asking the Government to do here is to support and to therefore reshare things that are already happening. The fact I had to fight for it last election is completely ludicrous, to be honest. I should not have had to have sent those emails just asking for things to be reshared, and that is the point of this amendment. I am not going to go on any longer because I think all the points have pretty much been made. I think one other thing I would also like to say as to why in the C.S.P.; well I think Deputy Renouf with his contributions has shown the positive changes that he has made and that he has embraced it. I think it is important that, whether we like it or not, sometimes Ministers do change and portfolios change as well but this, the

need for open accountable and accessible democracy, does not. By including this as a strategic priority we are providing a clear direction, policy direction, that extends beyond individuals initiatives, and that is precisely why priority 12 belongs in this Strategic Plan. This debate I think has shown clearly that nobody here disagrees with transparency, openness and accountability. What we might agree with or disagree with is about whether to promise it or to assume it. Therefore, I am asking Members to make that promise in writing, to make that commitment so that Islanders can see and hold us to it. I maintain the amendment and ask Members to support it.

The Bailiff:

Is the appel called for? The appel has been called for. I invite Members to return to their seats. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members have cast their votes, I will ask the Greffier to close the voting. The amendment has been adopted:

POUR: 42	**CONTRE: 3**	**ABSTAINED: 0**
Senator L.J. Farnham	Senator M.E. Millar	
Senator A. Maclean	Deputy R. Parker	
Senator M.R. Le Hegarat	Deputy G. Raimondo	
Senator T.J.A. Binet		
Senator H.M. Miles		
Senator Sir M.J. Boleat		
Senator S. Kersten		
Connétable of St. Mary		
Connétable of St. Martin		
Connétable of St. Peter		
Connétable of St. Brelade		
Connétable of St. Helier		
Connétable of St. John		
Connétable of St. Clement		
Connétable of St. Ouen		
Connétable of Trinity		
Connétable of Grouville		
Connétable of St. Saviour		
Connétable of St. Lawrence		
Deputy M. Tadier		
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet		
Deputy C.S. Alves		
Deputy G. Voisin		
Deputy M.B. Andrews		
Deputy R.E. Binet		
Deputy T.A. Coles		

Deputy A.F. Curtis

Deputy C.D. Curtis

Deputy L.V. Feltham

Deputy M.R. Ferey

Deputy H.L. Jeune

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée

Deputy J. Renouf

Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson

Deputy B. Ward

Deputy K.M. Wilson

Deputy L. Carpenter

Deputy S. Gleave

Deputy C. Leck

Deputy V. Li

Deputy C. Rebindaine

Deputy P.J. Romeril

1.2 Common Strategic Policy 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): sixth amendment (P.75/2026 Amd.(6)) - Lasting affordability and household support

The Bailiff:

We now move on to the sixth amendment lodged by Deputy Feltham. I ask the Greffier to read the amendment.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Page 2 - After the words "report accompanying this Proposition" insert the words – ", except that, on page 6 of the report, action 1.6 should be substituted with the following – "1.6 Deliver sustained improvements in household affordability, through measures including the reduction of essential living costs, and the improvement of financial support for families and other households under financial pressure".

1.2.1 Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central:

I propose this amendment because Islanders need a commitment to sustained improvement in household affordability over this term of office. Unfortunately, for 2028 onwards, the C.S.P. as lodged only commits to reviewing affordability. While a review can help Ministers decide what to do, it does not by itself commit them to making life more affordable. My amendment makes the intended result clear. It asks Government to improve household affordability over time, including addressing essential living costs and financial support for households under pressure. It leaves Ministers to develop the measures. It does not set benefit rates, prescribe a particular scheme or ask the Assembly to approve spending without examining it through the proper Budget process. The Government's comments on this amendment point to immediate relief proposed for 2027 and work on policy for 2028 onwards. I do welcome help which reaches people who need it, but this is a 4-year strategic document. Its commitment should extend beyond a payment in one year and a review for the next. That simply is not good enough and it should be more ambitious than that. For a household struggling with rent, food and bills, the question is whether it can meet those costs month

after month, week by week or even, in some circumstances, day by day. While a welcome one-off payment can provide some relief, the underlying pressures still remain. We need to consider the relationship between income and unavoidable expenditure. A parent may be able to take on more work only if childcare is available and affordable. A disabled Islander may face additional costs. A pensioner or unpaid carer may have little scope to increase their earnings. Those circumstances should shape the choices Ministers make and the way success is measured. The Council of Ministers also says that Jersey cannot control international price pressures. That is true. We cannot set the world price of fuel or prevent every increase in imported costs, but we do make decisions here about taxes, charges, support and services. Those decisions affect what households have left to live on. The existence of pressures beyond our control makes it more important to use the powers we do have effectively. In the Chief Minister's answer to Written Question 248 he says that the household and distributional analysis informed the proposed cost-of-living measures. I welcome that, but I would like Ministers to publish the results of actions in a form that allows us to understand the combined effects on different households. Which households gain? How much of an improvement remains once their essential costs and other policy changes are taken into account? How will Ministers know whether support is reaching the people under the greatest strain? Those are questions about the outcomes rather than simply the amount that Government spends. Reform Jersey's manifesto places the cost of living and reducing inequality at the centre of our programme of work. My amendment reflects that approach while leaving room for the Assembly to consider the detail of individual proposals on their merits. The Council of Ministers says that affordability is already central to the C.S.P. If that is the shared intention, I ask Ministers and the Assembly to support wording which makes it clear that our objective is to improve affordability throughout this term and not just to review it. Islanders should be able to judge this Government by whether their household finances become more secure. I propose the amendment and ask Members to support it.

The Bailiff:

Is the amendment seconded? **[Seconded]**

1.2.2 Senator Sir M.J. Boleat

I sympathise with much of what the Member has said, and appreciate the way that she has expressed her points. Ministers absolutely agree that affordability is a big challenge for many households today. The proposed 2027 Budget does include some targeted measures to help families, in particular the additional payment to Community Cost Bonus recipients in 2027; a £250 payment per school-aged child in 2027 for families with incomes below £80,000 a year; the extension of preschool meals to all Jersey Premium students in secondary schools; extending nursery and childcare funding for 2 to 3 year-olds, equivalent to an increase of 15 to 20 hours; and doubling the parental grant to £1,800. Because these are targeted, the cost is relatively modest. More generous support would have to be paid for by increasing taxes or reducing expenditure in other areas. There is no disagreement across the Assembly about the challenge. We all recognise that far too many households are struggling with the cost of living, and we all want to improve affordability for Islanders. The question before us is not whether action is needed. The question is whether this amendment would genuinely help to deliver that outcome. Ministers do not believe that it would. The amendment asks Ministers to introduce measures to reduce essential living costs. If I heard the Member correctly, I think she referred to an objective to improve affordability. We would absolutely agree with that. That indeed is what we want to do. But to actually introduce measures to reduce essential living costs is a very different matter. As the Member has acknowledged, many of the high costs now facing Islanders are caused by pressures external to Jersey, in particular the rise in fuel costs and the rise in interest costs. Indeed, there are households now who are going to have to roll over their 5-year fixed-rate mortgages at a substantially higher rate than when they took them out 5 years ago.

[10:30]

That is going to be really tough for those households, and we acknowledge that. What the Government can do and what Ministers are already doing is focusing on measures that can make a real difference, and that means targeted support for those under the greatest financial pressure. It means carefully considering the impact that taxation, charges, regulation and public policy decisions have on household budgets, and it means addressing not only the symptoms of affordability but the underlying causes. Here it is worth noting that over the last 20 years in Jersey and in the U.K. real living standards have hardly changed, and that follows periods when people were accustomed to increases in living standards year to year. That helps to explain why people feel they are under so much pressure. As part of the work, I am chairing the Affordability Advisory Forum, including representatives from organisations that support Islanders. A joined-up approach is needed to tackle the growing pressures, and in this forum I am delighted to say we have valuable knowledge and experience around the table to not only consider complex cost-of-living issues but to help formulate meaningful Government policy. Importantly, the Assembly should recognise that the Common Strategic Policy does not treat affordability as an isolated issue. It places economic growth at the heart of our long-term strategy. This is because a stronger economy is the foundation of higher incomes, better employment opportunities, greater business confidence and stronger public services. We have already seen some modest progress, but Ministers recognise that more needs to be done. Sustained economic growth, job creation and support for entrepreneurship are not distractions from the affordability agenda. They are absolutely central to it if we want families to be better off in 5 years' time. We must create the conditions in which incomes can rise and opportunity flourish. This amendment, as drafted, would require additional public expenditure that has not been costed, has not been budgeted for, and has not been demonstrated to be achievable. At a time of continuing global economic uncertainty, this is not a responsible basis on which to set strategic policy. Members should support a plan that is funded, deliverable and already in motion, rather than replacing it not just with an aspiration but with a commitment to do things that actually cannot be delivered. The work to improve affordability has already started. The focus should now be on developing that work, implementing the results of it successfully and ensuring that it achieves meaningful results for Islanders. I ask the Assembly to reject the amendment.

1.2.3 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South:

I just want to come back on a couple of points that the Senator just made in regards to work that is already in motion, because my question comes as we are discussing the Common Strategic Policy which outlines the Government's strategy over the next 4 years, that some of these policies have got no basis of which to be started. Is it continued from the previous Government because this is a new Government? There are new faces on the Council of Ministers that are responsible for delivering the priorities which they are setting out in this document. This document is not just about setting out work that is in train but it is supposed to be the strategic direction that the Council of Ministers wants to follow over the next 4 years. Yes, some of that work will already be in train; yes, there will be stuff that they are choosing to continue from the previous term and that rightly can sit in this document. I am also quite concerned, and I was thinking whether I said this to Deputy Rebindaine's first amendment or whether I said it at the end of this debate on the C.S.P. as a whole, that the point that Deputy Feltham is trying to amend is a very short-term vision. Because all the items 1 to 5 are all being delivered within the first Budget. The first Budget which was published at the same time as the Common Strategic Policy. This was not a document that was developed to then sound out how the Budget was done, they were done at the same time. The rest of this Common Strategic Policy is 3 years of unbudgeted development work. It is supposed to be that strategy that moves everything forward. When we look at some of the content of what is being proposed in the first Budget, I do not disagree with anything. I think it is very good. I think it is all very useful to people with children. But what about the people and families out there that are struggling that do not have children; where is the targeted affordability for people who either want to start a family but cannot afford one that some of these elements in here might not actually be the thing that comes to their mind? They actually

worry about putting food on the table, keeping lights on at night. I mention these 2 particularly because one thing is that our Government does control are ports. We have our arm's-length company of Ports of Jersey. We can discuss with them about the landing fees on essential food items. We can also speak to the electricity company that we are a majority shareholder in about standing charges. The U.K. Government has just banned standing charges which help reduce energy costs. So when people try to reduce their energy consumption at home, they can actually see deliverable savings rather than still facing that standing charge that exists. Now these are just a couple of ideas. These are not budgeted. I absolutely agree with that, because obviously there would be a decrease in tax revenue that comes from that. But this amendment proposed by Deputy Feltham mentions about these essential living costs. Lighting and heating are essential living costs that people face day-to-day. But we do not have any mention of that within this Common Strategic Policy. We own the electricity company. They have just fixed their rates again with EDF Energy in France. We know what is stable over the coming years. Yes, they have their investment programme, and that can all be considered. This amendment does not give direction and says that the Council of Ministers must do item A or item B. It sets out a pathway for them to consider ways to which they can reduce the essential living costs for Islanders because there are pensioners who are not going to benefit from child benefits, who are still struggling, who need to find a way through and need Government support and assistance. But these people might be above the threshold, they might own their own property so they have an asset, so they start to have those elements where they will struggle to gain income support benefits, because there is always that gap, that point, where someone just tips over the edge where they still struggle even though they do not meet the criteria for income support. It can be a knife edge. I think what the Deputy has proposed in her amendment broadens out that point 6 where they just want to look at the 2028, especially as we have heard this Government wants to talk about 3-year budgeting going forward. So if they are going to review their affordability, what they want to do with taxes, how they want to influence how people can afford the essential living items, it needs to be forward thinking for the entirety of that 3-year budgeting system, if that is what they want to achieve. I recommend that all Members support the amendment, because it simply gives the Government the incentive to look beyond that 2028 and look a bit more broader than just things around child expenses, which I will admit are a cost that many do face. I will stop there and say thank you, but please support the amendment.

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

I am happy to give way to the Minister if he wants to.

The Bailiff:

Well, in a moment I will close the debate if no one stands up. Yes, Deputy Voisin.

1.2.4 Deputy F.G. Voisin of St. Helier North:

I am pleased to be able to respond to this because the amendment is just impossible to achieve. It is calling for the reduction of essential living costs. We are not going to be able to reduce the living costs. What we can do is take mitigation action to allow - as Deputy Tadier will pick me up on - us to put more money into the pockets of people so that they can afford the increased costs. I have talked to the Assembly before about structural changes that are affecting our economy. The 2 biggest ones being the unwinding of globalisation and the other one, of course, is the increase in the cost of living … sorry, the increase in the cost of borrowing which is being driven by extremely high levels of sovereign and corporation debt. So interest rates are not going to come down any time soon and inflation, I am afraid, is only going to go up. So the idea that we are going to be able to reduce essential living costs, I am afraid, is unachievable. Picking up on the issue of this Common Strategic Plan being a 4-year plan, and some of the items that are listed under section 1 are just for next year. Yes, that is right, but then again, the problem is that the Council of Ministers came into office in July and it was essential that we lodged the Budget in September. We did not have time to address some

of the more structural solutions so what we have come up with are some very good, I think, tactical solutions for next year. But if Members please turn to page 6 of the Common Strategic Policy, you will see the bottom paragraph that says: "Our objective will be not simply to provide short-term relief, but to more broadly review affordability and identify how we can increase household resilience and improve Islanders' real living standards over the course of the term." There is definitely a long-term commitment here and I urge Members to reject this amendment, which is going to be impossible to achieve.

1.2.5 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Did I just hear the Minister say that we cannot do anything to bring down the prices in Jersey? That is not what Value Jersey was saying during the election, was it? They were promising the public all sorts; cheaper taxis, cheaper supermarkets, discount supermarkets. It seems like all we have got is discount politicians from Value Jersey. Now, the issue I have got here, I think, is quite straightforward, is that we have got a proposition from Deputy Feltham to put a central tenet, which I think pretty much all of us were campaigning on. The aspiration to make Jersey more affordable for people is one that I think we all aspire to. Some more than others. We certainly put it central in our manifesto, as Deputy Feltham has already said. One of the areas I want to focus on is that we have this mantra that we have had no growth for 10 years or longer. We have heard it from Senator Boleat this morning. But what the stats show in the longer term is that the pain has not been distributed equally among the public. While there has perhaps been general stagnation in terms of real earnings when we take it across the board, what the Stats Unit shows us is that those … and I am using slightly old figures now because, of course, the census data and the comparatives were from 2011-12 to 2021-22. But from my understanding is we see that the top 20 per cent of households received 49 per cent of the total equivalised household income after housing costs. The bottom 20 per cent received just 5 per cent. But, more specifically, the headline point that we are talking about is the fact that the income has actually gone down for the lowest households, the lowest quintiles. So those who are lower earners have seen their incomes go down by 21 per cent in real terms, while those at the top have actually seen their incomes increased. So we have to get back to the point of economic growth. So this mantra we are talking about, economic growth, which is something we all aspire to as political economic orthodoxy, we have to recognise that economic growth is not felt equally by the population. So I think that it is really important that this Government does commit, not just in its day-to-day working but actually now in its C.S.P. priority document to make sure that we are putting that at the heart of everything we do. I certainly would like to see a proper commitment from this Government in terms of an additional priority being put in here. It does not need to just be words, of course, it needs to be followed up by action from the Council of Ministers, which goes through all of those departments.

1.2.6 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Yes, very briefly. I understand exactly where this amendment is coming from, but I do want to focus on a point that has been made by my Ministerial colleagues, and that is this idea of introducing measures to reduce essential living costs. Because I do think there is a real difference of principle here, which it is important to acknowledge. It is about where we target very limited resources. So, yes, this amendment asks us to target something that we cannot control, or if we can, that introduces considerable complications. But the bigger point for me is it asks us to target blanket reductions in prices. That, of course, is not just helping the less well-off, it is effectively spending money either by denying Government income through taxes or fees or raising taxes, it is spending money on everyone.

[10:45]

We have to acknowledge that if we were to effectively reduce essential living costs, that can only be done by spending taxpayers' money in one way or another. It is spraying money at everyone when

the better solution by far is to target limited resources at those in greatest need. We can argue, of course, as Deputy Coles did, about whether the targeting is accurate. That is something we can debate and, potentially through the Budget, Members can modify the targeting, but I think the principle is vital. We have limited resources. Deputy Tadier says the pain has not been distributed evenly. Exactly the point. If it has not been distributed evenly, then that is a very strong argument for why we should target support in the areas where it is most needed and where the demand is greatest. That is why it does make sense to target support and that is why I think we should support the Council of Ministers in its more targeted approach and reject the amendment, acknowledging the good intentions that lie behind it.

1.2.7 Deputy S.J. Gleave of St. Helier South:

I am not going to repeat everything that the Ministers have so ably said. I am very pleased that Deputy Tadier has taken on board and memorised points in my manifesto so well. One of the things that I would like to see is a cheaper supermarket. Just picking up on my colleague's point: we have to be realistic, a cheaper supermarket here is not going to make Jersey … because of global inflation, it cannot make it cheaper. I think that is the point that Deputy Voisin was making, but relatively it can. We are more expensive than Greater London at the moment, but we can keep inflation under control with a cheaper supermarket here, and that has to be a goal for us. One of the reasons why I cannot support this amendment is … I celebrate its ambition, however, by knitting in the fact that one of our goals is to support people financially with direct payments, what we should be aiming for is to make life more affordable here relative to the U.K. and everything else, so that support is not required in the first place. It absolutely should be one of the tools we use - absolutely - and we must not withdraw it from people who need it, and in the short term, we need to provide that support. However, our aim should be to fix the structural issues so that fewer people need that support and we should not be knitting it in as that is the solution.

1.2.8 Senator M.E. Millar:

The Minister for Planning and Regulation has set out very clearly the views of the Council of Ministers, which I fully endorse. Affordability is a key issue for this Common Strategic Policy. The first of our 4 pillars within the C.S.P. is to take targeted action on the cost of living. In opposing this amendment, Ministers are by no means minimising the importance of affordability issues for everyone in Jersey. Our intention is very clear from the wording set out in our C.S.P. document. The measures set out in the C.S.P. indicate our overall strategy, which is to take targeted action to support those who need it most and to address affordability. None of us have a crystal ball, and we remain in a period of unusual geopolitical volatility. As well as longer-term strategy, which we have, and we have committed to doing that, we need flexibility to respond to changing circumstances. That is what we propose to do, and we will start work from very early in 2027 to lay out plans for 2028 onwards. We also have to recognise that affordability is not something that can be improved overnight. I would like to pick on a couple of things that have been said earlier. Deputy Coles, we cannot control electricity prices because we do not wholly own Jersey Electricity. I think we do have to reflect that while Jersey Electricity have made an increase, that increase is below inflation, and energy prices in Jersey are significantly lower than are being seen in other parts of the world. Someone also mentioned fuel costs, and we have to bear in mind carefully the impact of decisions that are made in this Assembly. For example, towards the end of last term this Assembly supported a proposition to mandate the use of cash from the providers of goods and services on the Island. The petrol station closest to me is one of the cheapest on the Island. It is probably the cheapest because it has invested in automation and productivity measures. It is not manned. You go in, you put your credit card or debit card in the machine, and you take your petrol and you get cheaper petrol than you do elsewhere. If the impact of that proposition means that that petrol station has to pay for a person to be there for 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, that will increase the cost in that petrol station and for its customers. That is the impact. All those businesses that are now having to accept cash that did

not do so previously will be putting up their prices, so we always need to think about the impact of decisions we make in this Assembly. As Minister for Social Security, I am taking actions across a number of areas to support Islanders in 2027. Many pensioners will benefit from an additional £200 payment being made early in 2027 to those who received the 2026 Community Cost Bonus. For new parents, and we are told that the cost of a baby is increasing all the time, the parental grant will be doubled from January to £1,800. Parents of school-age children will receive a payment of £250 for each school-age child in an eligible house, and we have increased the salary criteria there as well. Later this week, we will be debating an increase of 3.6 per cent across income support components, matching the R.P.I. (retail price index) increase experienced by low-income groups over the last year. As well as an increase in the basic rates of income support, we will also increase the incentive within the income support scheme for earned income, strengthening the message that you will always be better off in work. We will do that by increasing the disregard from 26 per cent to 27.5 per cent, which will keep more earnings or pension or maintenance income in people's pockets. The old age pension has increased by 4.7 per cent, reflecting the increase in prices relevant to pensioners from 1st October. Each of those changes are fully costed and provided for in the 2027 Budget, and it is vital that the Government continue to control spending in this way. Ministers cannot sign up to an open-ended commitment to future increases in financial support, as set out in the amendment. The Deputy, as she says herself, does not set out specific areas and does not put forward a plan to meet these additional costs, but the money would have to come from somewhere. At the same time, Ministers cannot control external economic conditions and Islanders may be subject to price increases that lie outside Government influence. What Ministers can and will do is to create an environment that supports an increase in confidence in the Jersey economy. We can encourage local businesses and, through their success, improve living standards for all. We have delivered, or will deliver, a package of measures for 2027 and have committed clearly to work on affordability for 2028 onwards. I hope that Members will see that Ministers, as we all are, are committed to improving affordability and dealing with cost-of-living issues and that the original wording in the C.S.P. sets this out clearly. The wording of the amendment commits Ministers to outcomes that may not be achievable and to spending that may not be affordable. I fully expect Members to hold Ministers to account over the next 4 years in terms of their commitment to address affordability issues, but I do ask them to reject this amendment today.

1.2.9 Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour:

I am listening to this debate and finding myself a bit confused because the same arguments seem to be used both for and against. When I look at the wording of this, it seems completely, first of all, harmless, and secondly, in alignment with Government priorities and also with priorities from manifestos across the Assembly from all political groupings and independents. I am really confused as to why we are arguing with this, and I would like Members to really reflect on that. I do not see why it should not be approved. Some speakers have mentioned that it is too broad and that targeted measures are necessary rather than a broad approach. Well, I have looked again at the wording, and I think it does allow for targeted measures. It does not discount them, so I think it does include that. It is broad enough to emphasise the issue, which is a really important issue and probably one of the most important issues. It seems like if we do not include this in the C.S.P., it is like admitting failure before we have even started the process. I know that Government take this issue seriously. They have set up an affordability advisory forum, which I have been invited to join. I am taking part in that with interest at the moment and with a level of hope. I think that this is a hopeful amendment and that it is aspirational. It gives something to aim for. I would counter something that Senator Millar said, and she said: "Cost of living is not something that can be impacted overnight." That is not true because the early years funding has done exactly this for parents who have children in nursery. It has helped with their cost of living overnight. The parental grant, that the Government are proposing to double, will overnight improve the cost of living for families with new babies. The uniform grants are doing this as well, and I think we should be ambitious. I think that this is a sensible

statement. It is aligned with Government priorities, and I really do not see what the problem is in supporting this. I will be supporting it.

1.2.10 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

In fact, Deputy Doublet has taken my thunder because I was going to stand and just question what we are arguing about, and she said it very eloquently. I probably would just add that my concern is that the language of 1.6, which says: "Commit to reviewing affordability for 2028 onwards", which is the language at the moment, says the Ministers will just be reviewing. Yes, this forum has been set up and that is fantastic, but we are talking about a 3-year Budget that we have heard will be presented to us before the summer, so only in a few months' time. My question is: will the Government be ready to present what they would consider to support household resilience or being able to improve real living standards in that time? Because I am not hearing at the moment any ideas around that. It still seems very, very top level and vague, which of course, that is what we are hearing the Common Strategic Policy should be, it should be a bit vague, but that is not. That is saying it is very specific, that 1.6. It is saying it is going to review affordability, and I would like to understand what has come out so far of the work around affordability and what are the kind of measures that potentially will be put because that should be put into the Budget that comes in a few months' time and we need to be scrutinising that at Scrutiny level as well. I am a bit worried that we will not have any measures …

The Bailiff:

Deputy Jeune, I am interrupting you to say that like many workplaces throughout the British Isles, the Chamber will fall silent in a few seconds' time. It will be 11.00 a.m. and the Greffier is going to tell me when that is.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Absolutely happy to pause.

The Bailiff:

Yes, thank you. I invite Members to rise and observe silence. **[Silence]**

[11:00]

The Bailiff:

Thank you all very much.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Just to pick up where I was looking at the current wording of 1.6, where we are only talking about reviewing. I am concerned about the timing before the 3-year Budget to be able to hear what are the measures that the Council will want to put in place? I just think back to the last term where there was even a cost-of-living working group in the last 2 years of Senator Farnham's Government then, there was a working group on cost of living. I am not sure what measures came out of that so I would like to hear a little bit more about whether the Ministers think they will be going with that. Therefore, I turn to the amendment and I feel that there is a concern from the Ministers around the words: "Reduction of essential living costs", but is that not what the measures are that the Minister for Social Security was talking about when she was talking about support to families through Social Security is trying to help them reduce their essential living costs, for example, as Deputy Doublet said, around uniforms or around childcare? We, of course, know that there are families and pensioners who get support for energy and for food as well, which is taken very much as those essential living costs. Again, coming back to my first point, I do not see why we are arguing over this. I feel that this amendment absolutely aligns with what is being said by Ministers. It gives more detail and it gives more commitment that something will happen. We do not know what yet, we have not heard from

the Ministers, but it takes that away from just reviewing because what is there now in 1.6 is they could do nothing at the end of that. They could just review and decide not to do anything. This amendment means that there will be something at the end of it. For us who went through the elections and heard from many Islanders they need something to happen. 1.6 gives us that the Council of Ministers, at the end of reviewing and at the end listening to the forum, will give us measures that will help Islanders with essential cost of living and will support them, whether it is specific, measured and targeted response, or with that wider push for growing the economy, which we know will not happen by 2028. It is a longer-term commitment. It is really important to cover the gap between what is going to be supported in 2027 and that longer-term aim of supporting all families and the issues of essential costs and reducing those essential costs. I will be supporting this amendment, and I do not, as Deputy Doublet says, understand why we are arguing over this.

The Bailiff:

Thank you, Deputy. Does anyone else wish to speak on this amendment? If no one else wishes to speak, I call upon Deputy Feltham to reply.

1.2.11 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I am pleased to speak after the previous 2 speakers because I too share their confusion about why we are arguing about this. I would particularly like to thank Deputy Doublet and Deputy Jeune for reading the wording of the amendment and looking at what it does and does not do. I think we have had, again, some red herrings from Ministers around what this wording does, what it commits us to do and even possible costs in relation to that. Deputy Renouf talked about spraying money at everyone. There is nothing in this amendment that suggests that money will be sprayed at everyone. We talk about sustained improvements in household affordability, and we talk about improved financial support. That may well mean using the money that we have in the most effective, targeted way possible. It does not suggest that financial support should increase; it does not commit the Government to any particular budget increases in this area. It talks about improvements. Senator Boleat started with talking about how he sympathised with this amendment. Well, from the chair of the Cost of Living Ministerial Group, sympathy just is not good enough for those people that are struggling on a day-to-day basis. They need to see real action, and they need to see more than a review being promised by the Council of Ministers. Again, to come back to the points that Deputy Jeune and Doublet made so eloquently, Senator Boleat said that there was no disagreement about the challenge. We all want to improve affordability. I really do remain perplexed as to why Ministers continue to argue against this amendment. I wonder if they got themselves into a bit of a conversation circle where they forgot what the wording of the amendment was and they just kept on talking about why they should disagree with it. I thank Deputy Coles for reminding us that while the Chief Minister had talked a lot when he took office about continuity and this being a continuity Government, we do have very new faces in C.O.M. (Council of Ministers) and new people in key positions. That is exactly why it is really important that we take this opportunity, as an Assembly, to set what is effectively a new strategic direction for this 4-year term of office. Deputy Coles, I thank him for reminding the Assembly that what this amendment does is it takes what is a very short-term vision and makes it into more of a 4-year commitment to undertaking action. Deputy Voisin mentioned that this was impossible to achieve. I thank Deputy Tadier for reminding people what was in their manifestos, and I think that perhaps manifestos should carry a buyer-beware sign if Members are not going to follow through on them once they are elected. Deputy Gleave said that she thought that, yes, we do need to make life more affordable, as her manifesto said, but we needed some structural change. There is absolutely nothing in this amendment that suggests that there should not be structural change. There is nothing that is prescriptive in this amendment that would prevent the types of changes that Deputy Gleave said that she wanted in her manifesto. Then we have the Minister for Social Security. I am not sure how this became an argument about petrol stations and how they are manned. I was quite disappointed that we are not hearing more vision from Ministers

in relation to this really important matter for Islanders. I just want to bring us back to what we are debating. This Common Strategic Policy is a 4-year strategic commitment, and I think it is important that that commitment includes a real commitment to improving household finances. I remind the Assembly that despite what Ministers have said in this debate, Ministers would absolutely retain under the wording of this amendment responsibility for developing any measures, assessing costs and bringing proposals through the Budget for further debate in this Assembly. The amendment absolutely leaves that flexibility, but most importantly it makes the intended outcome clear. If we are going to be an Assembly that takes outcomes-based accountability seriously, then we need to be clear about what outcomes we are aiming for, and the place to be clear about those outcomes is this document. The Government said that improvements in affordability are already their intention and this amendment makes it clear that that is not only the intention of the Government but the intention of this Assembly as a whole. It says that we are going to act on what we said during the election. I welcome the immediate assistance that Ministers have put forward for 2027, but households need more confidence about what is going to happen after that short-term assistance has been spent. The question that I have brought through this amendment is about whether we are willing now to commit to sustained improvements in affordability throughout this term. Ministers can absolutely determine the measures, and the Assembly can still examine the costs and effects, but Islanders should be able to judge us by whether we are meeting our own commitments through our manifestos and what we said. Absolutely, that is why I brought this amendment because I want to stand by what I said during the election and I wanted to give other Members of the Assembly the opportunity to do the same. I maintain the amendment.

The Bailiff:

Is the appel asked for?

Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Yes, Sir.

The Bailiff:

The appel has been asked for. Members are invited to return to their seats. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce that the amendment has been rejected:

POUR: 17	**CONTRE: 25**	**ABSTAINED: 0**
Connétable of St. Martin	Senator L.J. Farnham	
Connétable of St. Brelade	Senator I.J. Gorst	
Connétable of St. John	Senator A. Maclean	
Connétable of St. Clement	Senator M.R. Le Hegarat	
Connétable of St. Saviour	Senator T.J.A. Binet	
Connétable of St. Lawrence	Senator H.M. Miles	
Deputy M. Tadier	Senator M.E. Millar	
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet	Senator Sir M.J. Boleat	
Deputy C.S. Alves	Senator S. Kersten	
Deputy M.B. Andrews	Connétable of St. Mary	
Deputy T.A. Coles	Connétable of St. Ouen	
Deputy L.V. Feltham	Connétable of Trinity	
Deputy H.L. Jeune	Connétable of Grouville	

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée	Deputy R.E. Binet
Deputy K.M. Wilson	Deputy A.F. Curtis
Deputy L. Carpenter	Deputy M.R. Ferey
Deputy V. Li	Deputy J. Renouf
	Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson
	Deputy B. Ward
	Deputy S. Gleave
	Deputy C. Leck
	Deputy R. Parker
	Deputy G. Raimondo
	Deputy C. Rebindaine
	Deputy P.J. Romeril

1.3 Common Strategic Policy 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): amendment. (P.75/2026 Amd.) - Better pay and working conditions

The Bailiff:

The next amendment is the first amendment lodged by Deputy Feltham. I ask the Greffier to read the amendment.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

Page 2 - after the words "report accompanying this Proposition" insert the words - ", except that, on page 9 of the report, after action 3.3 there should be inserted the following action - '3.4. Improve employment security and working conditions by strengthening employment protections and access to effective remedies, while supporting sustainable employment.'"

[11:15]

1.3.1 Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central:

This amendment seeks to ensure that improving employment security and working conditions forms part of the Government's strategic priorities. I do welcome the existing commitment in the Common Strategic Policy to progressing towards a living wage, but good employment is far more than about just pay. It is also about security, fair treatment and effective protection if things happen to go wrong. I have read the Council of Ministers' comments opposing my amendments. They provide Members with a lengthy list of employment rights that already exist in Jersey, and I am very familiar with those rights, having been the Minister responsible for progressing improvements to employment legislation during the previous term, but I think the Government have missed a very important point. Having employment legislation does not necessarily mean that those protections are sufficient. The comments contain no meaningful comparison with the protections available in other jurisdictions, and that is a significant omission by the Council of Ministers. We operate in an international marketplace for working-age people, and we need to attract and retain skilled workers to sustain our economy, our public services and our ageing population. Those workers have choices about where they live and work, and so do young Islanders deciding whether to build their futures here or not. The quality and security of employment should be part of what makes Jersey an attractive place to live. Now, the Government say that they are unclear what further employment protections I have in mind. Well, I can give some examples, and Deputy Jeune also gave some examples yesterday during States Question Time. One of the next reforms that I had intended to progress as Minister was

legislation equivalent to the U.K.'s T.U.P.E. (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006) protections. Jersey has provisions concerning continuity of employment but not the same comprehensive protections for employees when businesses change hands. Another issue is access to the Employment Tribunal. In Jersey, most claims must be brought within 8 weeks. In most of the U.K., the normal deadline for new claims is now 6 months. That is a considerable difference for somebody who has lost their job and is trying to obtain advice, understand their rights and decide whether to pursue a claim. There are also concerns about our employment legislation raised by the International Labour Organization. In observations published earlier this year, its committee of experts repeated long-standing concerns under Conventions 87 and 98, including calls for legislative review. Those concerns deserve examination. What I am not suggesting is that Jersey should automatically adopt every provision of U.K. law or every international recommendation, but surely, we should at least be prepared to examine where our protections fall behind. The Government say they would rather improve compliance with existing legislation. I also agree that enforcement is important. Employers must meet their existing legal obligations, including things like providing written employment terms and itemised pay slips, but enforcement cannot address protections that do not yet exist. I do not understand why improving enforcement and improving legislation should be treated as alternatives. We should be prepared to do both. Reform Jersey's manifesto makes specific commitments on protecting workers during company takeovers, extending tribunal claim deadlines and introducing whistleblowing legislation. Those are practical reforms that would be developed through consultation and proper consideration of their impact. I know from experience how important that process is, and my amendment does not prescribe a package of immediate legislation. It simply asks the Government to include improving employment protections and access to effective remedies among its priorities. Following from our discussion on affordability, I would like to make one further point: good jobs are not simply about having work; they are about having work that provides security and a reasonable standard of living. Supporting businesses and protecting workers should not be competing objectives. We need an economy in which businesses can succeed and one in which people want to live and work in. I ask Members to support this amendment.

The Bailiff:

Is amendment seconded? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak on the amendment?

1.3.2 Senator M.E. Millar:

I am a strong supporter of the need for effective and proportionate and workable employment legislation. I remember arriving in Jersey in 1996 and being quite astonished by the lack of employment protection by the fact that a well-known business could put an advert in the window for older ladies to work in the shop. That would not have happened in Scotland at that time. I was working at a law firm in Jersey just over 20 years ago when the Employment Law was introduced in July 2005. I do not by any means claim to be an expert, but the Employment Law has touched on my practice as a lawyer since then. Since 2005, we have seen the progressive introduction of further laws in employment and also discrimination rights, with the last element covering disability discrimination happening in September 2020. We have come a long way in those 2 decades and now have employment and discrimination rights that provide workers with a wide range of protections that are comparable with other developed countries. Our Employment Law provides rights applying equally to all employees, and the great majority of rights are available from the first day of employment. I will touch on some just to remind Members. Day one rights include statutory minimum wage, annual paid leave, mandatory rest breaks, paid parental leave for both parents, and the right to return to the same job after parental leave. Unfair dismissal rights apply in some cases from day one and in all cases after a year of employment. Redundancy pay is available after 2 years of employment. We also have the statutory insolvency benefit in the Social Security Department, where a business becomes insolvent. As she says, the Deputy's amendment asks us to: "Improve employment security and working conditions by strengthening employment protections and access

to effective remedies, while supporting sustainable employment." It asks us to continue to add to our existing protections and to provide additional protection to employees. Her report does not, however, indicate specific gaps in protection from employees, although she has just given us details of what those might be, for which I am grateful for that steer. The Deputy does raise the issue of the information that is available to employees and compliance with existing legislation. Ministers agree with this point, and we will continue to work with employer and employee organisations as well as other groups to make sure that there is clear understanding of the local legislation and that we support and encourage compliance across all sectors. For example, the full introduction of disability discrimination has led to an increase in claims to the tribunal. Many of these claims relate to the employer making, or having failed to make, reasonable adjustments in the workplace. Ministers understand that this is a complicated area, and we will shortly be publishing additional guidance to help employees and employers understand what reasonable adjustments cover and what they do not cover. I also hope that this guidance, as well as making matters clearer, will help employers to have more confidence in employing people with disabilities and increase the availability of roles for people with disabilities. I absolutely agree that it is important that we ensure compliance with the law. I will also be taking steps to ensure that employers comply with the most basic provisions of our Employment Law, such as the provision of a statement of employment and payslips. Those may seem like very minor matters if you are an employer, but failure to provide them can have a serious impact on the employee. If you are an employee trying to get income support or fill a tax return, the absence of that paperwork can be very damaging. It is not acceptable, and this will be an area of focus. We do have some ideas, but they will be, I suspect, controversial. We will be bringing something forward to ensure that level of compliance. That is one of the biggest areas, I believe, of claim incidents at the tribunal, the very basics. People should not have to go to tribunal to get a wage slip or an employment contract. We do need to do more, and I will be doing that. It is important that we recognise that Jersey's labour market is very different from many other neighbouring countries. We have virtually full employment, and we do need people to come here to take up the jobs and fill essential roles. For that reason, we all need to encourage good employment practice and deter bad employers. Word will travel quickly about bad employers, and being a good employer will make it easier to recruit. The Deputy is absolutely right, if we want people to come to Jersey we need to make sure we do have adequate protection. We can have all the protection we want, but if employers do not deliver on them, then adding more will not help, so ensuring compliance, I think, is our immediate starting point. T.U.P.E., we may differ about the need for that. I have worked in the field of mergers and acquisitions and outsourcing for many years, and there are mechanisms in Jersey that mean T.U.P.E. is less of a problem than people think. T.U.P.E., I do not believe, is such a problem, but I am sure we can discuss that. I am sure the employment lawyers will also say that there are mechanisms around it. In fact, I will not bore you with all that. At a broader level, this C.S.P. is very much about supporting and encouraging a growing economy. To achieve that, Government do need to look carefully at the regulations and controls that they impose on businesses to make sure that they are necessary and proportionate and, crucially, that they are right for Jersey. It would be entirely counterproductive if we brought in legislation that dissuaded employers from employing people with disabilities, or young people who may have families, or young workers. We need to be cautious about adopting legislation just because someone else has it. We need to think about local need, our local economy and the impact. Against this overarching ambition, our priority is to ensure that the employment protections we have now are easy to understand and are followed by all employers. My emphasis is on making sure that the current system works better rather than extending it in the short term. To conclude, Ministers do take employment protection seriously. Our economy will only grow if we have a workforce that feels valued and protected, as well as businesses that can take opportunities to grow and thrive and recruit more people and create more jobs. That is in everyone's interest. We will work actively to encourage employers and employees to understand the current laws, and we will support effective compliance with those laws. Ministers cannot commit now to extending the current comprehensive set of employment protections as part of the C.S.P. Where

there is clear evidence that such amendments are needed, we will, of course, consider them, but that has to be on the basis of clear evidence and clear beneficial impact for everyone. I ask Ministers to reject this amendment.

1.3.3 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

I am rising to speak because I am sympathetic and I want to almost have some assurance as to the intent behind this from the Deputy who brought it. My main question goes to what she did raise in her opening speech, which is the latitude and interpretation on which Government should be measured on for their success in delivering this. The wording of 3.4 talks about: "Improve employment security and working conditions by strengthening employment protections", and we have heard that enforcement and the operation of our existing protections is important. Does she consider that a government that could demonstrate more robust enforcement, more widespread enforcement, in either a measurable or a tangible way, would be delivering against this? Does she see it only has to be new legislation or policy or a cultural change or improvement to enforcement? My second question would be: does she consider that employment protections in the context of sustainable employment, as she mentions, extends to prior to employment and post-employment?

[11:30]

Would she consider success being, for example, measurements such as a protection that all Islanders would have access during their employment to a workplace pension as an option, which I know the Minister for Social Security has spoken about in previous terms? Would she consider that the conversation, perhaps through questions I had with the Minister for Economic Development, about the publishing of pay scales prior to applying for a job as a protection in employment to secure sustainable employment? Because I believe in the balance of supporting a growing economy, that the Government want to, I understand the ambition to secure a balance in how one does that, just like we will debate the need to balance the environment in amendment 23 later. I just want to be clear that the Deputy, in her bringing it, does not consider that a failure to deliver perhaps the package of measures she described, to which I saw some contention when I was looking around the room as to, for example, tribunal dates. I saw Members perhaps disagreeing with her proposals. Is she happy that as long as there is a focus it can be delivered through no new introduction of statutory instruments or laws? It could be better enforcement, and it could also be through delivering a more sustainable employment environment going to both prior to employment and post-employment. If that is her intention and she is happy to say that, then I am happy to support.

1.3.4 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Everyone has lost their ability or desire to speak, it would seem. There are a couple of things that the Minister for Social Security said that I think need some kind of rebuttal. I am sure my co-leader colleague of Reform Jersey will address all the comments that have been made, but the first thing to say is that we have to remind ourselves of the asymmetric relationship that exists between an employer, a boss, if you like, and an employee, the worker. It is asymmetric. The power is usually held with the boss and the management and not with the worker. Of course, where there is a smaller workplace, where there is a business model, a sector which relies more heavily on casual labour, on a revolving door of labour, of labour that is imported, of labour that pays poor wages or wages that need to be topped up by Government, that relationship and that asymmetric relationship is even more stark. Those are the kind of people that we need to be bearing in mind with this. When the Minister for Social Security says that word will travel quickly about bad employers, I do not think that can be taken for granted, if you have a scenario, for example, in certain sectors which know that if they treat a worker badly - and it may be intentionally or unintentionally - they do not pay them the correct wages. I find it astounding that now in 2026, we still hear of employers who are not paying the right wages. They are perhaps paying below the minimum wage, they are taking payments for social security contributions and I.T.I.S. (Income Tax Instalment System), and they are not passing that on

to the Tax Department or on to the Social Security Department. It is only later when the worker leaves that employment, they say: "Well, why can I not claim benefits?" They go to Social Security and they say: "No, sorry, you have not been paying for the last 6 months." To be in that situation, where is the deterrence, I would say, for the bad employer? Have we ever heard a scenario where somebody in that situation, the boss is in front of a court, do they get threatened with their licence being taken away? If that was happening in any other area, if it was somebody operating in a professional area without due consideration for their obligations, they would probably not be allowed to practice, they would not be allowed to continue. I am not saying that this in any way is the norm, but we do hear these stories in Jersey. When we compare that … and I want to address, I think to a certain extent what Deputy Alex Curtis is saying. I think it is both cultural, so I think fundamentally this is about having a continuum here which does focus on the fact that there are small pockets of bad practice in Jersey. We know that if you are lucky enough to work for one of the big employers, whether that is in the private sector, the public sector, they are going to have their own protocols which are already either imported because they have to comply generally with the much higher standards of U.K. legislation or possibly European or international legislation and best practice in those other jurisdictions that they operate from. It is the same with the public sector. It does not mean that there cannot be disputes that arise in the public sector, but the norms and the bars are much higher, but if you are in those other sectors I think it becomes much more precarious. These are the kind of things that I think we need to be giving much more focus on. If I just turn to one example, that is the limits that we do set in terms of discrimination claims. I know this has been very controversial in the last Assembly, but the Discrimination Law sets quite strict parameters on what claims can be. Elsewhere, we can look at the U.K., but other examples will be available. The U.K. does not set a limit on how much compensation you can claim for a discrimination act, and we know that there can essentially be 2 parts of that: there can be one for loss of earnings or compensation and there is also one about compensation for feelings or hurt. In Jersey it is capped at £30,000 a year. It has been increased but only slightly. If those 2 elements combined were to increase to much higher than that, to £60,000 to £70,000, you can still only claim £30,000 maximum and it can be less than that because it is capped at 52 weeks' earnings in a year. If you happen to be somebody who earns £25,000 a year, the maximum claim you can get per claim is £25,000, not even the full £30,000. Of course, it is worse than that because if you are a higher earner, if you earn £60,000, £70,000 a year, the maximum you can claim then becomes still £30,000. It is not even, perhaps, half a year's salary even though the real impact that you have suffered … this may be somebody, for example, who cannot work for a year because they have had emotional impact. They have been blackballed in their industry. This idea that word travels quickly for bad bosses, sometimes you can find that people have been blackballed, or they feel they have been blackballed even though they have done nothing wrong, because they have raised a complaint to tribunal. That is therefore done in the public domain, and they are the ones who word spreads about: "Do not employ that worker because they are trouble", even though they are just trying to enforce their rights. If we can keep more cases out of the tribunal in the first place because we have better education, we have better practices, and we potentially have better deterrence. Because if you do go to tribunal, and I have heard it said from employers that: "We do not mind going to tribunal because the maximum they can take us for is £30,000 in this case. We can quite happily defend that, and that is what we would probably offer them anyway otherwise, so we are just going to defend this claim and we might do that." The jeopardy, if you like, for certain bosses who want to be bad actors in this domain and bring down the reputation of the majority of good employees in this area, I think, is not sufficient. There is a whole raft of things that we could look at, which is best practice and good practice across the board. To answer Deputy Curtis's point, a lot of this will be non-statutory. It will not be about necessarily increasing legislative burden, but it will be about having greater conversations and trying to bring everybody up to the same level so that all our workers … and remember the context we are talking about. We see the headlines in Jersey. We see the fact that seasonal workers come to Jersey, some of them lose a leg, and we do not always hear about that. Some of them die in poor accommodation. Some of them are not being paid

the wages that they have come here to do; there is a breach of that contract. Who takes the consequences of that disproportionately? It is the worker, not the bosses. I know we are going to get speeches being made about how we do not want to strangle business. This is not about strangling businesses. This is about making sure that everybody adopts best practice but we, as an Assembly, legislate for - unfortunately as we have to - the minority, and we speak for the minority who do not have a voice in this Assembly and who do not have a voice around the table when it comes to employment rights. Bosses are very well represented when it comes to the organisations we have in Jersey, the I.O.D. (Institute of Directors), the Chamber of Commerce, of course very valuable organisations. Value Jersey will know that they have a chair who knows about bringing in employees into Jersey, and they are working at that sector. I would like to hear what Value Jersey's vision is for the poorest employees in our society who perhaps come from the Far East or wherever they are coming from, from Africa increasingly. These are all valued parts of our community. Just like my grandparents, my great-grandparents were bringing economic value to Jersey through their physical labour as farm workers. They decided to settle here. They were lucky they could settle here. They were treated with some modicum, I think, of respect. There was still a lot of racism at the time. This is really what we are getting into here. When we talk about employment rights and not wanting to strangle the bosses, we are talking about real people here who are doing real jobs, including to those low-value sector economies, fundamental to Jersey, not just for our economic success, but also for our emotional and cultural relevance today. They speak to all parts of Jersey, and there are people in Jersey who will not do those jobs. Let us accept that. There is an idea that we want young people to go and work in hotels, in restaurants. I look across the Assembly, and I know that I have worked in a restaurant and I have worked in a hotel in France. We did perhaps put up with some poor working conditions when we are out there, things that technically were not right, but we were able to come back and live our relatively comfortable privileged lives, move back home with mum and dad, maybe with a little bit of money to spend and to get us off, but a lot of people start off from that point where they are already indebted. I do not want to take this debate into the area of modern-day slavery, but this is the whole complicated spectrum of employment legislation, employment culture and conditions that we need to be thinking about as legislators. It is not simply a case of having a short debate because this is seen as some kind of inconvenience and that we must follow the orthodox Ministerial line on this. I would value hearing from other Members. I think we should all be pulling in the same direction on this. Certainly, for my part, I am pleased that my co-leader has brought this.

Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South:

Point of order, Sir, if I may?

The Bailiff:

Yes.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Just having had the previous speakers and seeing some of the reaction around the room during this debate, I am wondering whether or not Standing Order 106 should have been provided during this, as those who are employers should be declaring their interest, and whether or not Standing Order 106(3) may also be in effect.

The Bailiff:

It is a matter for Members to declare interests, and there is recent extensive guidance on it, which I invite Members to consider. They will need to take their own course in relation to that. There is a presumption in favour of declarations if you do have a qualifying interest or may have a qualifying interest. Lots of lights have suddenly gone on, perhaps prompted by what you have just said, maybe prompted by something else. Deputy Parker.

Deputy R.J. Parker of St. Saviour:

I would just like … sorry.

The Bailiff:

Do you want to stand up when you are speaking?

Deputy R.J. Parker:

I would just like to declare my, basically, interest as a major employer, as chairman of the Hotel de France Group.

The Bailiff:

Yes. Thank you very much. Deputy Rose Binet.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

If I may …

The Bailiff:

Can I go in order in which I have people's lights on?

Deputy R.E. Binet of Grouville and St. Martin:

I want to declare that I am an employer.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I want to declare my business is an employer.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I am a director of a company which has a small number of employees.

Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central:

I am an employer through my business.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée of St. Helier South:

I am an employer, and I do have a business in the Central Market. Thank you.

Deputy P.J. Romeril of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

Yes, I will declare that I am an employer through a social enterprise, a small number of people, and as chair of Family Nursing & Home Care.

Deputy V. Li of St. Helier North:

I declare I have a company as a social enterprise.

Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

I am chair of a charity that employs a number of people.

Deputy F.G. Voisin of St. Helier North:

I am also the chairman of a business that employs over 100 people.

Connétable M. O'D. Troy of St. Clement:

Yes, I employ a number of people, both seasonally and year-round.

Connétable T. Palmer of St. Lawrence:

I am a shareholder of ASL Recruitment who employ a great number of people both on temporary and permanent contacts. Also, I suppose, as a Connétable, I am an employer of staff.

The Bailiff:

No, I think the guidance covers that. **[Laughter]** You do not all have to make declarations about the Parish Hall.

Senator T.J.A. Binet:

Yes, just an employer and chair of a charity.

The Bailiff:

Thank you all very much. Next person to speak is Deputy Ferey.

[11:45]

1.3.5 Deputy M.R. Ferey of St. Saviour:

I rise primarily to highlight an issue that Deputy Tadier raised in his speech concerning social security contributions where they have become unpaid by an employer. There is a robust procedure for making sure that in those situations an employee is not disadvantaged, a non-compliance statement is taken and, if necessary, schedules are constructed so that individual does not suffer any detriment. Further than that, the employer can be prosecuted, obviously, for non-payment of contributions. If the company has gone *en désastre*, then those contributions are still deemed as being payable, so the employee is not in any worse situation. There is a very robust mechanism to make sure that workers are protected in the circumstances where contributions have not been properly paid and there is an inspection regime to make sure that businesses are complying as far as is possible. I just wanted to highlight that anyone who finds themselves in that situation, they need to report that obviously to the Government officers in Union Street and that can be dealt with. I guess the point that Deputy Tadier raises correctly is that some people do not find out about this until they try to claim benefit and realise that there is a gap in their contribution history. Again, in those circumstances, those contributions can be deemed payable at the right time and benefit can be enforced properly. I just wanted to make sure that Members were aware of that scenario.

1.3.6 Deputy P.J. Romeril of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

I was just going to say a lot of similar things to Deputy Ferey on the protections that currently exist within our employment legislation. I will also support the Minister's points about the actual extent of our protections that already exist on the Island. I think we are and do intend through the next 3 years to really focus on the enforcement and supporting, ensuring employers that the small number of bad actors, as Deputy Tadier referred to, are dealt with appropriately to set a standard before we start focusing on new legislation, some of it which would potentially impact on the efforts to achieve the primary goal of the C.S.P. which is to grow our economy and put more money in people's pockets.

1.3.7 Senator Sir M.J. Boleat:

A general point and a specific point, if I may. I think everybody favours improving employment security and working conditions. The primary way in which this can be done is by having a very healthy and growing economy. That will provide the stability that people need, the job opportunities, and the ability of people to move jobs when they need to. It is always tempting to think that we can make people better off, whether in terms of cost of living or worker rights, by passing laws. Of course, there is a role for laws here but we must never forget the more important, or the equally important aspect of growing the economy to give people the security they need. The specific point is that the Deputy referred to the International Labour Organization, and I think the specific references there were all about improving the rights of trade unions or of trade union access. If we are looking at that, that is a major point which I think would need to be considered on its own. I will of course be supporting the Minister on this and rejecting the amendment.

The Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on the amendment? If no other Member wishes to speak, then I call upon Deputy Feltham to reply.

1.3.8 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Yet again I find myself in a position where it appears that Ministers have not properly read the true wording of the amendment as proposed. The amendment does not commit Ministers to bringing forward new legislation. In the same stance as my previous amendment, what this amendment does is give the Assembly the opportunity to make a commitment within this 4-year Common Strategic Policy to say that employment security and working conditions are an important part of our economy. I think that is really important. We really need to understand that we are in a global marketplace for workers. Just as the Minister for Social Security said, word may well travel fast about bad employers, word may also travel fast where our legislation and our protections do not keep up with global good practice, and that is really the point I want to make. I am disappointed that Ministers did not undertake their own comparative analysis of legislation with other countries before preparing to come and speak on this amendment. Just to give assurances to Members who may have been concerned about some of the gaps in legislation I suggested that I have seen, I mentioned those in answer really to the Council of Ministers' comments which listed the protections that do exist because I wanted to make the point that we do have lots of gaps in our legislation. That is not the outcome that would necessarily follow from the wording as amended. I thank Deputy Curtis for his request for assurance. I remind Deputy Curtis, I am not the Minister. If I was the Minister, obviously I would be leading on that work. This amendment absolutely leaves it for the Minister for Social Security and the Council of Ministers to lead on any work that follows through. The Minister for Social Security referred to the guidance that has been prepared around reasonable adjustments. I would absolutely see that as part of a good example of improving access to effective remedies. That is exactly the type of thing that this amendment is asking to do. I am absolutely not, to answer the Minister back, asking for legislation that might dissuade employers from employing some people, such as people with disabilities. That is an absolutely absurd comment given where I am with this amendment and the fact that I have not been prescriptive. I on purpose was not prescriptive. The word "legislation" is not used in this amendment, I just wanted to give the Assembly the opportunity to commit to workers' rights within this particular Common Strategic Policy. I thank Deputy Tadier for his contribution. He is absolutely right that there are terms in which there is a real power imbalance between workers and employers. I am disappointed that Deputy Coles had to remind Members of Standing Orders and that conflicts of interests were not declared at the outset of this debate because I think it is really important that we, as an Assembly, are always conscious about any conflicts of interest that we may have and how they may affect our own decisions. To that effect, I would like to note that members of the States Employment Board did not declare a conflict of interest. I think, as the Island's largest employer, they do need to be aware where conflict may well exist. I would like to give the Assembly assurance that this in no way binds them to specific legislation measures. I mentioned the gaps in legislation that were mentioned in my own manifesto. The Council of Ministers would have absolute authority to decide how they took those protections forward and how they improved remedies. From what the Minister for Social Security was saying, it sounded like she does want to do that work, so I am really lost as to why they would not want to include it as a priority within the C.S.P. I call for the appel.

The Bailiff:

The appel has been called for. Members are invited to return to their seats. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce the amendment has been rejected:

POUR: 19 **CONTRE: 27** **ABSTAINED: 0**

Connétable of St. Martin	Senator L.J. Farnham
Connétable of St. Helier	Senator I.J. Gorst
Connétable of St. John	Senator A. Maclean
Connétable of St. Clement	Senator M.R. Le Hegarat
Deputy M. Tadier	Senator T.J.A. Binet
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet	Senator H.M. Miles
Deputy C.S. Alves	Senator M.E. Millar
Deputy M.B. Andrews	Senator Sir M.J. Boleat
Deputy T.A. Coles	Senator S. Kersten
Deputy A.F. Curtis	Connétable of St. Mary
Deputy C.D. Curtis	Connétable of St. Brelade
Deputy L.V. Feltham	Connétable of St. Ouen
Deputy H.L. Jeune	Connétable of Trinity
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée	Connétable of Grouville
Deputy K.M. Wilson	Connétable of St. Saviour
Deputy L. Carpenter	Connétable of St. Lawrence
Deputy C. Leck	Deputy G. Voisin
Deputy V. Li	Deputy R.E. Binet
	Deputy M.R. Ferey
	Deputy J. Renouf
	Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson
	Deputy B. Ward
	Deputy S. Gleave
	Deputy R. Parker
	Deputy G. Raimondo
	Deputy C. Rebindaine
	Deputy P.J. Romeril

1.4 Common Strategic Policy 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): tenth amendment. (P.75/2026 Amd.(10)) - Transparency and clear benefits to government financial support to businesses

The Bailiff:

I move on to the tenth amendment lodged by Deputy Alex Curtis, and I ask the Greffier to read the amendment.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

After the words “report accompanying this Proposition” insert the words – “, except that, on page 9 of the report, after paragraph four, there should be inserted the following new paragraph – “Where investment involves Government financial support to businesses, we will ensure that public money

delivers clear public benefits. This will include publishing the recipients, value and purpose of financial support, and the public benefits it is expected to secure.””.

1.4.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

First I will declare an adjacent interest in this topic. My business applied for the Better Business Support Scheme and received grant funding for 2 courses under the skills initiative offered by the Chartered Institute for the relevant industry, the C.I.B.D. (Chartered Institute of Business Development). That grant was 50-50 match-funded, with the Government funding £560. I say this as I believe truly myself in what I am asking the Assembly to agree with, and that is a simple principle. When the Government provides taxpayer money to businesses in the form of direct payments like grants, we should know where it goes, how much was given and for what purpose. This to me does not seem problematic, indeed, as I have just shown, and it represents the bare minimum we should expect when we give out public money to support private enterprise. Members will have had sight of my report on my amendment; however, I will briefly summarise what it changes in the C.S.P. I will then touch on the Government's position and why I disagree with all arguments provided and then conclude. So to recap for Members, the amendment seeks to introduce a new paragraph after the following narrative text. The text by the Government states: "We will develop sector-specific investment proposals and reprioritise existing revenue budgets to focus resources on the actions most likely to support sustainable economic growth." As read by the Deputy Greffier, the new paragraph would say: "Where investment involves Government financial support to businesses, we will ensure that public money delivers clear public benefits. This will include publishing the recipients, value and purpose of financial support, and the public benefits it is expected to secure." In practice this means that should we see a return of schemes like the Better Business Support Package or, as we know will happen, the renewal and continuation of schemes such as the Rural and Marine Support schemes, we embed within them a level of publication and transparency in these from the outset and that we agree to the principle that publication is a good thing. This does not need to be detailed or intrusive to the recipients, it just needs to say who received money, how much and why. For example, a future productivity grant like the ones seen in 2025 and 2026 could read as follows: "Hotel" with the name of the recipient. "Amount: £32,000. Purpose: to upgrade heating system to an air source heat pump. Expected benefit: reduced cost. Benefit: better quality of comfort and offering to guests." Perhaps a motor company: "£23,000. Purpose: the installation of vehicle stacking systems. Expected benefit: increased productivity and throughput while maintaining the use of an existing building and site" perhaps preventing the need for the business to relocate. Or let us take the Rural Support Scheme: "Farm: £12,000. Purpose: rural support scheme. Expected benefit: public money for public good delivered in line with a credit system of the Rural Support Scheme" which is an established process. This is not revolutionary. Indeed, in my report I shared a link to some historic publications such as in 2021 for schemes such as the Rural Support Scheme that go into far more detail, listing every company that received money and not just that it was in line with the Rural Support Scheme credit, but how much they got for area payments, initiative payments. I do not see businesses crying out for that to stop or indeed to not happen. I believe we have seen a change in expectation, at least when delivered by Government in where public money goes. Members who were part of the previous States Assembly may recall my questioning about the Better Business Support Package to secure this. Although I had believed I had reached a position with the Minister, Department and Jersey Business that grants over £5,000 would be published and the recipient, I have yet to see this materialise.

[12:00]

I think it is always better to set your principles off at the outset rather than, in essence, retrofit in response to observing a scheme with insufficient transparency. It is worth highlighting the scale of money that can be involved in these schemes. The Better Business Support Package allocated £5.3 million per year in 2025 and 2026 to match-funded grants to businesses. That is over £10 million of

public money going to businesses in 2 years. Yet, short of the aggregated statistics Jersey Business provide in their quarterly and yearly reports, we do not know where it went. I simply do not think this is fair. I want to turn to the Government's position and their arguments, which I disagree with, and I will work through them. Their comments paper suggests largely 4 opposition points: (1) that what I propose is overly prescriptive, (2) that it fails to recognise legitimate confidentiality considerations, (3) that it duplicates existing mechanisms through which Government expenditure and business support schemes are scrutinised and reported, and (4) it creates additional costs which will outweigh any potential benefits. They also state, and I will come on to it: "The Council of Ministers do not accept that any economic value would be added from publishing information about individual beneficiaries of support schemes." Working through these in turn. (1) I do not consider the wording of this to be overly prescriptive. It does not state that schemes have to be reported in a certain way, only that a fundamental level of information, that we should expect from any scheme, is captured and published. I would also state that the Government has shown through this C.S.P. and amendments it has accepted that there is latitude to interpreting wording to provide a deliverable solution for what it aims to achieve. I would welcome any example of a scheme that could not be operated in the context of the wording I propose. On to point (2), it fails to recognise legitimate confidentiality considerations. I dispute this one entirely. Firstly, there may be legitimate cases that funding for a business would be on something that cannot immediately be in the public domain. Let us say that funding was going towards a new product line or a sector that the business had yet expanded into. I have not shared in my wording how quickly information must be published nor that it can simply state that a project would be published with the use at a later date or, in the case of product development, the use may simply be product development. This links back to the first point. Being prescriptive would state something like: "Details to be published prior to the receipt of funding" and I am not being prescriptive. I would make a further point based on values. If a business wants full confidentiality, that is in a sense they do not want the public to ever know they received public money, nor that that public money went to a certain purpose, they have another option. They do what most businesses do to finance their aims and they go private. They use shareholder investment, loans or they sell equity to raise capital. I think that the principle we should live by is taking public money should come with an expectation to meet some basic level of transparency. If you do not want that, I think you do not take it. It is quite simple. (3), it duplicates existing mechanisms; I disagree to this further. It states in my wording a "principle" and that is a principle that existing mechanisms should embed, and that is not uncommon in what we see in the C.S.P. It outlines a priority that the Government should deliver in the ways it already works. I am not asking for a bureaucratic Assembly report or something new. I am asking that the Government includes this minimum level of transparency in their existing mechanisms and update them where they find those mechanisms are deficient. (4), it adds cost. I simply cannot see how reporting information on grants that is already collected increases costs by any margin. To put some numbers to what we are talking about, in 2025 there were 237 grant approvals for the 3 Better Business Support Package grant packages: the productivity, skills and visitor economy. Providing the name, grant type and the value is a simple export from their systems. Clearly articulating the purpose of the grant and the benefit it aims to do should have been captured on the application form. It is a simple validation when a grant is received that the description is not sufficiently detailed and it creates unnecessary publication of private data. That is part of a good common sense workflow to capturing grants prior to even providing an acceptance. Lastly, turning to the commentary by Government that there is no economic value in publishing this data; I dispute this last comment as well. Part of the funding schemes that the Government has run before is to stimulate investment. Unless every business receives money, we are funding one private business over another and in any good scheme we are doing it with clear reasons. We know - and I hope this is something the Minister for Economic Development will touch on in a minute - that investment in business in Jersey is not as high as we would like. My view is that publishing investment drives a culture that investing in better processes and technology is necessary and the best way to pursue a better business. As a hotel, if you see your fellow operators

investing in better heating systems, this might sway you to consider: "Am I keeping pace with the requirements of my industry and what is provided by others?" Looking at skills grants should you see a business invest in new qualifications for their industry, it might encourage yourself to consider investing to upskill. We want investment to have a cultural impact and a multiplier effect. Again, if a business does not want their fellow businesses knowing they funded new training, purchased new equipment or made investments to improve their services, they always have another option: do not take public money to achieve that result. I really hope that after the Government and this Assembly has adopted amendment 12 that we can see cross-Assembly support for this. I see this in a positive light and consider the arguments presented do not stand up to the principles and flexibility the wording provides. I consider this amendment to be a values-led and driven amendment on transparency and accountability on the public's money. I hope the Assembly agree with the values I hold and I believe I represent for my parishioners, and that they will support this amendment.

The Bailiff:

Is the amendment seconded? **[Seconded]** Does any Member wish to speak on the amendment?

1.4.2 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement:

I rise to support Deputy Curtis's amendment. This is not about preventing Government from supporting businesses, the statement that he has made, which I agree with. Neither is this about questioning the principles of investing public money to stimulate economic growth. It is about ensuring that when Government uses taxpayers' money to support private businesses, there is a proper transparency accountability and evidence of that public benefit. It is my view that I think that should be a basic expectation we should all follow. I am going to refer to some of the findings of the C. and A.G. (Comptroller and Auditor General) that were reported in April 2025. It was a follow-up report on the grants and subsidies report that she had already provided evidence on the issue beforehand. The C. and A.G. identified continuing weaknesses in the way Government manages grant funding, including inconsistent governance arrangements, inadequate documentation of conflicts of interests and insufficiently measurable outcomes. Significantly, in 7 of the 12 grant agreements examined, performance indicators were largely narrative rather than measurable. That matters because we cannot demonstrate the value for money simply by reporting how much money has been spent. We need to know what it was intended to achieve and whether it was achieved or not. Deputy Curtis referred to the Better Business Support Package which provides further illustration. The Government did allocate a substantial amount of public money to support businesses, yet subsequently acknowledged that the necessary data-sharing arrangements had not been established to enable full publication of individual recipients and the purposes of those grants. We need to answer the question which is: why were those transparency arrangements not built into the scheme from the outset? I think this amendment is precisely the point of raising this issue as part of the C.S.P. The Government's response refers to the existing requirements of the Public Finances Manual but the C. and A.G.'s findings demonstrate that having rules and procedures is not the same as ensuring that they are consistently applied. I think we all recognise that there may well be legitimate commercial sensitivities in some cases. I am not suggesting that commercial confidential information should be published or that businesses should be placed at a disadvantage, but there is a clear distinction between protecting commercially-sensitive information and disclosing the basic facts about the allocation of public money, who got it, how much did they get, and for what purpose. I also do not accept that this should create an unreasonable administrative burden. If Government is properly designing a funding scheme, it should already know who is receiving the money, what conditions apply and what public benefit is expected. Indeed, I would argue that these requirements should be built into the design of every scheme before that funding gets distributed. As people know, my job as chair of P.A.C. (Public Accounts Committee) is not to determine which businesses Government should support, but I am very clear that public expenditure must be properly accounted for, transparent and capable of demonstrating value for money. I therefore believe the Government

would be in a good place if they were to accept this amendment. It is proportionate, it supports good governance, it strengthens public confidence and it gives Islanders greater assurance that their money is being used for a legitimate public purpose; the public's money is being used for a legitimate public purpose. We should not have to wait for any audit reports or a Scrutiny hearing or indeed any public controversy before discovering that the information needed to account for that money was never properly collected. I think this amendment is about building the transparency into public spending and not treating it as an afterthought. I think Deputy Curtis's amendment is a sensible and a practical step forward to achieving that and I will be supporting it.

1.4.3 Deputy C.J. Rebindaine of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:

I hope to get a reputation over the next few years for brevity, so I do not think you need the clock. I will vote in accordance with my personal values, as Deputy Alex Curtis has mentioned for himself. My philosophy is, if you deal with Government you should expect that arrangement to be in the public domain. Once the Chief Minister accepted the amendment number 12, then I think, frankly, Deputy Alex Curtis's amendment should have been waved through.

1.4.4 Deputy S.J. Gleave of St. Helier South:

I am not going to repeat anything; I agree with a lot of what has been said. I am very frustrated with lack of data constantly and I do think there needs to be more transparency. I just want somebody from the Council of Ministers to give us a little bit more detail about the cost. If you think it is going to cost more to do this, why, because that would have an influence on my thinking.

1.4.5 Deputy F.G. Voisin of St. Helier North:

I think it is important to take the Deputy's concerns one by one. The first issue that the Council of Ministers have a problem with is that we are duplicating existing mechanisms. The amendment asks for a blanket reporting of all monies or grants given to businesses. Of course, we already have this; we report where necessary. For example, the Rural Support Scheme, the grants are published as an annex to the annual accounts. Also grants given through the Arts, Culture and Heritage programme, that is also delivered through the annual update. Of course, we have reports from Visit Jersey, which are slightly different. Also the Better Business Support Package, this is undertaken by Jersey Business, this is going to be the subject of a report shortly because the programme is coming to an end. As part of the wrapping up of this support package, Jersey Business are going to be presenting a report to explain how the money has been spent and the benefits that it has derived. That report will not be going down into the detail of which individual businesses. It is quite right that Members of the Assembly do want grants to be given for legitimate public purposes. Of course, that is why we have the Public Finance Law and the Public Finance Manual which governs these things and which is obviously adhered to. If it is not adhered to, then of course we have a problem there and we need to take action. One of the important things here is, as the Deputy says, Jersey businesses are not investing as much as they need to, and we need to encourage that investment. One of the concerns is by naming all businesses with the amount that it will discourage people from applying for grants in the future. The other thing of course that we must remember, is that certainly with the Better Business Support Package, for every pound of a grant of public money that has been used, £1.40 has gone in of private money.

[12:15]

What we do not want to do is to discourage business from applying for these grants in the first place because that is unlocking further private investment. I was interested to hear that when the Better Business Support grant scheme was approved that an undertaking was given that any grant over £5,000 would be publicised. I will see the Deputy later on after this meeting to establish exactly what was promised. I think if we promise something, then we should deliver, so I will ensure that we take that and deal with it. I do not think that many businesses will mind their company name being

reported and the grant type. The value is a bit more sensitive because of course a big grant will attract a lot of public attention, and I think in some cases that is where there may be a problem. I think what is really difficult for the Council of Ministers to accept is the wording in the amendment requiring "a clear public benefit to be established and described". Obviously if money is going to a private business, then the benefit will be somewhat subjective. The benefit of encouraging investment into a business could be to help grow the economy or sustain employment. That is quite subjective and we believe that that is an area where there will be considerable argument. Again, if all this information is made public, then there could well be great scrutiny on individual businesses and that is not … I certainly understand the point that is being made about if businesses receive public money then they have to sign up to these conditions. What they will not want to sign up to is intensive public scrutiny over how they have used that money and whether the application of those funds have indeed made a clear public benefit. It is really for these reasons that the Council of Ministers are not supporting this amendment. I have been asked to comment on additional costs. Obviously, if there is a reporting process, then information has to be gathered, it has to be passed on to the department officers. Approval has to be sought from all the businesses involved because they need to approve what information is going to be made public, so that will inevitably create a cost. I think I will leave it at that. Certainly, the concept of making sure that public money is used wisely is of course at the very heart of what the Council of Ministers strive to achieve, and they do that through the applicable laws. I think the problem that we have here is the additional publication of the specific grants and also the test of clear public benefit.

1.4.6 Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central:

I was really pleased to see Deputy Curtis lodge this amendment because this type of transparency and management of public funds is something that is really important to me. It is something that I started work on when I was Minister in the previous Government, working with Treasury officials, looking at grants processes in particular. The reason why it is of such interest to me is because I spent 10 years in Western Australia working for State government and managing their creative industries grants programmes, for which many businesses applied for grant funding from Government. They were proud to receive that grant funding and all of that grant funding was open and transparent. It was open and transparent within our contemporary music programme where we funded music businesses, within our designer fashion programme where we funded fashion businesses and our other arts programmes as well. It was also transparent in our film funding initiatives. We shared an office with the Film Commission there as well. So when a Minister stands up and says that it is difficult to publicise what clear public benefits are from funding to businesses, I can answer that back quite clearly. Before Government gives money out to any business or organisation, it should be clear about what the public benefits are going to be. Now that might be in the form of being very clear about what a grants programme exists to do and the guidelines in that grants programme. Then, following on from that, being clear that any entity that has received a grant meets those guidelines, and the purpose of that funding is to meet those objectives as identified within that programme. But also giving assurances that programmes are managed well and that there are clear criteria by which applications for public money are judged by. I think that making those criteria explicit and clear at the outset absolutely would deliver on what Deputy Curtis is wanting to do about being very clear about public benefits. If any entity is in receipt of public money, that should be publicly known, and this is not a difficult thing to do. Like I said, I have spent 10 years doing it and that was 10 years ago, so I daresay what we are talking about is best practice. I think that is evidenced by recommendations of the Comptroller and Auditor General. Those recommendations we, as an Assembly, need to take seriously, the Government needs to take seriously. The Deputy is not being overly prescriptive in what he is saying. This is absolutely entirely sensible, entirely achievable by Government, and again I am at a loss as to why we are arguing about this particular point. I wholeheartedly support the Deputy's amendment.

1.4.7 Deputy P.J. Romeril of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

Mine is picking up on the last debate, declarations of interest, because as chair of Family Nursing, obviously we do get a large grant through a contract with Government, and my social enterprise, we also get grants. I am in one of those positions where organisations I lead are receiving money, so just a declaration of interest at this point, but if you do not mind I am going to reserve the right to comment at another point.

1.4.8 Connétable M.A. Labey of Grouville:

It is really just to ask the proposer for a clarification in the same way that Deputy Voisin has asked for a clarification about public benefit. I can just see one of my colleagues in the farming industry perhaps applying for a loan for a couple of tractors, a couple of 6120Ms, £85,000 a pop, just for your information. I cannot see much public benefit from driving around the country lanes with 6 tonnes of potatoes on the back at 50 kilometres an hour. Or even purchasing a GRIMME SE 150 at £250,000 per machine and driving that around the country lanes and having 100 cars queuing up behind him. What does he mean by public benefit? Because from an industry's point of view, I cannot see how a private benefit to a farmer for speeding up his operation in our wet and windy winters, trying to plant potatoes has a public benefit.

1.4.9 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

I think on that last point - and I am sure the Deputy will be happy to address that - I would simply say that nobody should be driving at 50 miles an hour in Jersey **[Interruption]** ... and we shouldn't be using kilometres the last time I checked. **[Laughter]** So either way, do not do more than 50 miles an hour and, if we can, let us stick to miles not kilometres, although I do use kilometres myself when I go for my run. I will have to convert it to miles if I am doing the Pudsey run, as some of us are doing this week. I digress, but I will not be running more than 50 kilometres an hour, I can give Members an assurance. What I would say is that I think there is a very simple test there. What I would imagine the farmer would say, and what Economic Development would say, is that by investing in a new tractor, it is probably going to be less polluting. You can be more productive, you can probably do more work. Ironically, this is not about employing more people. You might have an operation that currently requires 30 people to do the work. It might mean that you can employ 20 people rather than 30, so there is a saving there in terms of labour. You might be able to pay the remaining workers a bit more money, so it is good for those workers. Those workers, if they live around Hautes Croix, they might be walking to the Morrisons on the corner. It might mean that they have a bit more money in their pocket to spend in Morrisons on the Saturday when they go there because they have got a day off on Sunday. It does lift the community more generally. It should not be hard for the Economic Development Department to put that in as the general benefits. Of course, I think when applying for the grant anyway, the person applying for the grant will have to show that this is needed. You are not going to buy an old tractor which is going to break down in the middle of the lanes, which is really going to hold up the traffic. You are going to get one that is at least capable of respecting the speed limits, but getting from field A to field B and doing the work. I think we have heard enough from contributors in this debate to say that really this is a sensible one. Again, it is probably one that Government should be accepting. I find it strange that the Minister should be saying that the sticking point is that it might be difficult to justify that some of the grants are not in the public interests and not in the interest of Jersey because at the end of the day we are talking about taxpayers' money, directly or indirectly. It is not the Government Minister's money that they are handing out. Somehow this has come into our system through people's G.S.T. (goods and services tax) they pay, through the duty they pay on their cigarettes, on alcohol, for the taxation that we charge them, *et cetera*. I think it is part of that success story. If we have given a £50,000 grant to a business, it could be a bakery that has invested in a top-notch efficient machine that they can bake more bread in, which will be good for them, we should know about it. Maybe they should have a sticker saying: "We benefited from the Better Business Support grant." I remember going to the event because I was chairing the Scrutiny Panel at the time, and I was really excited by the proposals. They had these

Cadbury's Boost bars on the table, which I thought was very clever, and they were the duos. The idea was: "We are going to boost the economy, we are going to support our businesses and there are 2 of them because we expect at least half of the contributions will come from you. We do want you to invest in your own businesses. We will make up to 50 per cent contribution." What we saw, and I am sure the former Minister would say this, is that businesses were investing over and above what they might have done, so they were putting 65 per cent in some cases and Government was meeting that. It is not about disclosing necessarily your financial model, it is not about saying what the overall cost was for the piece of equipment you might have bought. It is about saying that if you have used public money and you are benefiting from it, then tell us about it, share that good-news story with us. Of course, if you are really that worried about your privacy, then you do not have to take a grant off Government. I do wonder, and it is just an aside, how much paperwork do you have to fill in when you apply for income support? What kind of forms do you need to give? Of course, no one is suggesting that recipients of an income support claim should have to share that, but I think there is a different negotiation going on here. A straightforward process, you apply for the grant, you prove that you need it, it is an economic benefit. It should not be beyond the wit of the Minister for Economic Development to say: "Yes, this is beneficial to the economy and we are publishing it, sharing that good news." One last thing I would say to Deputy Curtis, if you do not win today, absolutely nothing to stop him bringing this back as a standalone proposition. What it does mean is that we have to debate it all over again. There might be a requisite period of time for him to do that; I have no doubt that he will do that in 6 months' time or earlier if he is allowed. As a standalone proposition, we may end up supporting it, so why not just put it in now. I think this makes sense, it is pragmatic.

1.4.10 Connétable I. Gardiner of St. Helier:

I thank Deputy Curtis for bringing this proposition because again, as a former chair of the Public Accounts Committee over the 2 terms, I believe when we invest public money we must be clear what the public benefit is. What I would like to bring as a comparison, the private investor investing into the private business. When the private investor invests in a private business, the private investor would like to know how the money was spent, what is the benefit, what is the profit, what is the outcome. It is all transparent, it must be presented to any private investor in any private business. There is no way I can see a private investor saying: "Think about it, it is okay. I trust you, everything will be fine." It will never happen. The simple thing, I assume the public as an investor, the public invested money into the businesses, and the public would like to know what is the benefit.

[12:30]

Obviously, the benefit not necessarily will be financial. It can be a benefit which is creating employment, it can be a benefit which is improving well-being. Obviously, the financial benefit is one of them. It can be stronger local businesses, improving services, improving environment. The outcome-based responsibility, this is the major thing. When we give money, we would like to make it very clear what the outcomes will be following this investment. The outcomes can be seen in one year, 2 years, 3 years, 4 years, but it needs to be clear. I will not take all the time, I believe that public money should come with public accountability, and public investment should deliver identifiable public benefit as any private investor would expect from the private business.

1.4.11 Senator I.J. Gorst:

I start by saying that I have not been directly involved in the Better Business Support Package nor the … I cannot quite recall whether it was 2 lots of £20 million or 2 lots of £10 million adding up to £20 million. If we remind ourselves why it was provided, it was provided to offset and to support businesses with the increase in the minimum wage. I think it is a moot point, as far as I am concerned, about whether it has functioned quite in that way. There have been lots of good points made, and I have got no doubt that the proposer is going to sum up in his usual eloquent way and persuade

Members. There have been lots of good points about transparency, and if businesses are receiving money from the Government, that they should expect for that to be in the public domain. I think we ought to remind ourselves, however, that this was a strategy, a scheme developed by Government to support businesses. It did not come the other way around, and I think that is quite important. The point I really want to make is this, I have got great faith in the Minister for Economic Development. He was proposed by the Chief Minister post the election; he was approved by this Assembly. If we remind ourselves he, in his speech to take office, was even then somewhat racy in the comments that he made about the state of the economy. He has continued to challenge the orthodoxy, and he has been criticised for that. I was extremely disappointed to hear his comments yesterday that that criticism has even been reflected upon his family. I am sorry to hear that his family has received such criticism. He has challenged the orthodoxy. I think that is an important job for a Minister for Economic Development to do because the economy, in large parts, has stagnated, inflation has outpaced wages. If we are truly to deal with the challenges that our Island faces, then we must support the Minister to challenge the orthodoxy. The orthodoxy is that Government always knows best, that regulation is always best, and that businesses should just suck it up. We remind ourselves that that is not what has made Jersey great. What has made Jersey great is the entrepreneurial spirit with light-touch regulation provided in a risk-based sensible, pragmatic way. That is what has made us great and I believe that we must return to that to ensure that we have a strong future. Why do I focus on the Minister for Economic Development? It is because I think lots of good arguments have been made about transparency, but I am today supporting the Minister. He believes that this amendment will impinge upon his desire and his need to support business in the future should he need other schemes and business support like this. He also believes it is going to be difficult, as we were very ably reminded by the Connétable of Grouville, in some instances in the case of individual grants to be able to show what the public interest was. Of course we heard from Deputy Feltham where you can develop a scheme where there is a broad public interest because you want to support film, for example, or you want to support art and heritage. That is a broad public interest but that is not a public interest in regard to the individual grant to the farmers in Grouville - and I will have to let the farmers in St. Ouen know this - who are getting grants to spend on what we know are expensive tractors. I think that we should listen to the Minister. I want to today support the Minister with what he is saying and why he does not at this point think that this amendment is supportable or deliverable or I think what he is ultimately saying in the best interests of the work that he needs to do and has our support for when it comes to delivering economic growth. The Common Strategic Policy, I am pleased to say, focuses on economic growth and improving Jersey's competitiveness. He and I have a hand-in-hand partnership approach to delivering economic growth and supporting Jersey's competitiveness. I want to support him in doing the bits that he is doing to grow those bits of the economy so we can do it in tandem together because ultimately this is what is going to support Islanders, this is what is going to bring hope and this is what is going to ensure that we have a strong future.

1.4.12 Deputy P.J. Romeril of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

I referenced earlier my conflict of interest; I will briefly touch on that. I hear 2 different elements to this argument. First of all, the public good and the charities, *et cetera*, that I am involved in have a quite comprehensive reporting structure as part of their agreements with Government. Certainly, when they have won bids into the Impact Fund we have quite a commitment to do that. That is one thing but, as the Minister has said, we are very focused on growing the economy and diversifying the economy. We have a very strong financial services industry. We are also looking at finding other pillars, other legs to the stool, as Colin Powell used to refer to it. Some of this is going to require quite considerable external private investment. Now there are models that this can be enabled, and Government supporting that private investment is something we would be interested in doing. One of the concerns I have got with the amendment here is that private investors may become very wary about investing money into something which public funds are in because of this level of oversight.

Now that is a question that would be held at the time, but I am concerned that if this amendment is accepted and becomes part of the strategic policy, it would impact negatively on our ability to broaden and grow our economy.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Would the Assistant Minister give way for a point of clarification?

The Bailiff:

Would you give way? Yes.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

The Assistant Minister talked about public and private money and investment, could he clarify if he was talking about private money being used to be providing grants to companies or loans or investment or equity, because I was not clear?

Deputy P.J. Romeril:

Yes, certainly. At the moment this is an early stage of our Government. We are at the moment in discussions of what that could look like, so we do not have anything firm yet. What I would be concerned about is we are going to be putting ourselves in a position which would narrow down what we could do in that space.

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT PROPOSED

The Bailiff:

Do Members wish to adjourn generally or continue? Are Members content to adjourn now? Adjourned to 2.15 p.m.

[12:40]

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

[14:16]

The Bailiff:

We resume the debate on the tenth amendment and the next speaker is Deputy Jeune.

1.4.13 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

The proposal for going for lunch has stopped me to be able to say what I wanted to say, which was I was trying to request that Members stop political showboating about grand things that this amendment has nothing to do with. I hope that Members have come back after lunch and they have got some more sugar inside them that they reflect on the actual wording rather than think about trying to outdo themselves and their showboating. What is the wording that we are going to be discussing and amending? The Deputy has said: "Where investment involves Government financial support to businesses." What he means, and what he has told us, is he is talking about grants, so he is talking about grants to businesses: "We will ensure that public money delivers clear public benefits." Well, do we not hope that money that is given in grants to, not only charities who are named when they are given grants, but also businesses. Would we not want to see if there are public benefits to that money, the people of Jersey's money, and to show that there are public benefits: "This will include publishing the recipients, value and purpose of financial support, and the public benefits it is expected to secure." This is natural transparency. This is outcome-based accountability to find out if these grants, if this public money that has gone to businesses as a subsidy and as a grant, is doing the thing that it is saying to do. So the fact that the Better Business Support Package, as we heard from Senator Gorst, he was saying it was subsidising the facts of the living wage. Well that was not what we were told it was doing in the Better Business Support grant because they were asked to do activities or submit

projects that were helping productivity. You will have some activities potentially that are nothing to do with wages. **[Interruption]** Productivity, exactly, so it was not a subsidy because of the living wage difference, it was productivity. I think it is really important to say that because it is different. Subsidising your wage package is different than supporting businesses for productivity which can be a range of things and does not have to be anything related to the staff that the business employs. I think it is really important that we keep focused on the wording that is in front of us. We do not think about the red herrings that we have just heard before lunch, that we really focus on what the Deputy was telling us at the beginning, which was about the fact that transparency is requested. Now that we have supported amendment 12 of the C.S.P. about transparency, we demand this of other organisations like charities, and we heard the list of where we hear about that. Why can we not also ensure that we see where our grants money is going for businesses when we hope that there is a public benefit. This is just a simple call for transparency and accountability.

1.4.14 Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John:

I will start by correcting my colleague to my left because the Better Business Support Package was to help the transition towards a living wage in 2025 and 2026. To do that, businesses were encouraged to improve productivity. There was money for the visitor economy, skills and apprenticeships, so investments that ... projects that delivered process efficiency, cost reduction, increase in sales and so on and so forth. We outsourced that work to colleagues at Jersey Business and put a sum of £300,000 towards that. I am sure they are more than capable, within that sum of money, to provide a report of where each of those pounds were invested. Deputy Curtis has spoken this morning about the various ways businesses can raise capital, and they are not limited to handouts from Government. There are lots of different ways; I will not repeat them. The Deputy is not asking for a list of debtors to be published. I wonder how many businesses in Jersey are still using the States of Jersey as a bank. We have heard comments this morning about social security not being paid on time and so on and so forth. Perhaps that is a Written Question for the near future. Earlier today, 42 Members voted in favour of increased Government transparency, openness and accountability, and I will quote from the paper that we had: "Members of the public can often be left frustrated by complex, unclear communication or a lack of accessible information. If we want people to have confidence in our institutions, we must ensure Government is transparent, approachable and accountable." Forty-two of us voted in favour, only 3 voted against, so I hope to see a similar result this afternoon. Deputy Romeril will have us believe that private investors will not invest if it is known Government are supporting a business initiative. I think completely differently. If a business knows that Government are supporting an initiative, they see that at times as some form of insurance, yet we hear that the Deputy is involved with 2 organisations that have no issue with Government funding or with governance around that. So I urge Members to support this amendment from Deputy Curtis. It is not too onerous and I think the public, and us as Members, have a right to know where the money goes.

1.4.15 Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

I stand because obviously 2 years ago I was the Minister who brought forward the Better Business Support scheme, and also because I was discussing this with Deputy Curtis very briefly in the lunch break and realised that I am caught between 2 stools on this particular one. On the one hand, we have an agricultural support scheme, a Rural Support Scheme, which does publish the names of the businesses that receive that funding, so we have a precedent. On the other hand, I am aware we are a small community and people do, I am afraid, gossip, so when they know that a business has received funding, it can be seen as a negative in people's minds, or there is an envy, if you understand what I mean. But at the same time, I also know that if you receive funding through the Better Business Support scheme or the rural scheme or the marine scheme, it is telling Islanders that you are up to date with your payments to Treasury, because you will not receive a Better Business Support grant or rural support unless Treasury has signed off on the fact that either you are on a payment plan for

any outstanding Social Security, G.S.T. payments, *et cetera*, or you are up to date with them, so in that sense the fact that your business appears on such a list tells people that you certainly have no debt with Treasury or you have a debt which is being managed appropriately, so there it gives people confidence as well. I spoke earlier against Deputy Alves's amendment because I was concerned about those kind of deeper implications that often I find in the States Assembly: we ignore the unintended consequences is the phrase I was looking for. This is similar. This may have those unintended consequences, particularly if driven by envy and the like, an unpleasant emotion but one that everybody experiences at some point. We, as an Assembly ... I do not mean to teach people how to suck eggs, as they say - I hope that is parliamentary enough - but when envy is involved, then it does make for a nastiness in a community and that is something that I do not wish to see, but at the same time this is public money going to private businesses and private organisations. To some extent, I can understand why people feel that that should be highlighted, or not highlighted, but should be opened up. Deputy Curtis did say to me earlier something which was interesting. At the moment the Rural Support Scheme is published and the recipients are published, and in one sense that focuses attention, whether it is media attention, social media attention, on to just that group of up to 100 organisations. If we were to do this, it would in that sense dilute it. It becomes more of a norm that: "Oh, there is a list" and it just tells us, so it would perhaps become less of a media or social media impact if we published more names. So I am still sitting here, I am afraid. I have been entirely unhelpful to the Assembly, just putting out kind of both sides of the argument there, but as much as anything, showing that I myself am caught between 2 stools on this one and there are pros and there are cons to this particular proposed amendment by Deputy Curtis, but I think it is worth us thinking about this, and whether we want the transparency or whether we think the private organisations have that right to keep this part private is a difficult decision for us to make.

1.4.16 Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central:

I was not going to speak because I have been to the dentist and I am not sure how well I can speak, but I will try. I was just being prompted by colleagues telling me I should be declaring that I received a loan from the Government, but this was about 10 years ago and was paid back in full on time for my business. So having stood to speak, I would just like to say that I think too much transparency can damage business sometimes. I am aware that other businesses at the time could have had their reputation damaged when it was shown that they were paying back a little bit late, so for that reason I would say I cannot support this amendment.

1.4.17 Deputy G.A. Raimondo of St. Brelade:

I was not going to speak on this, but I feel I should. I completely echo the words of Deputy Curtis there. I believe this could have a really negative impact for businesses, which is the reason I am going to vote against it. Social media has been one of these things that we have seen, both in the election, but also growing in recent years, and a lot of these businesses will naturally have people that are against what they are potentially doing or competitors. I think we could see people being particularly nasty and particularly slating online, so I think this could have a really negative impact potentially. That is pretty much what I have to say.

1.4.18 Deputy R.J. Parker of St. Saviour:

I should basically point out - and I should have basically made my interest in this earlier - that one of my businesses has received a Better Business grant, and I am obviously happy to basically disclose that and to be totally transparent about it. I think that is all I really want to say, but I totally have a lot of support for transparency and I think it has been a very useful debate in this Chamber. Probably like Deputy Morel, I feel in the middle. I apologise that probably what I have said probably has not helped anybody make a decision, so thank you.

The Bailiff:

Does anyone else wish to speak on this amendment? If no one else wishes to speak, I call upon Deputy Curtis to reply.

1.4.19 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

I will work through the commentary. I am glad we have had a good, wide debate, but I will start with Deputy Parker. He does not have an interest to declare, you will be glad to know, because I am not asking for a scheme that seeks retrospectively to publish the information. That is a key part, that in wording this it is about proactivity, it is about setting the direction. One of the things when discussing it with Deputy Morel when he was Minister last time was the reasonableness to publish information one had not agreed to having in the public domain.

[14:30]

I think any issue of a grant is a contract with that individual to ultimately deliver the services responsibly. Indeed, the Better Business Support programme has a way of clawing back the money if it is not used for its intended purpose, but that contract has to be clear from the outset. I brought this at the C.S.P. because I think it is the right time to set that out and I think it is one of values. I will work through briefly what Members have said, and I would like to reflect on them. I appreciate Deputy Wilson highlighting that this is not brought in a vacuum of evidence, that the C. and A.G. has highlighted the need to link funding to clear and measurable outcomes, and that there are probably far more lessons buried within those many documents that would be supported by a more transparent approach. I think public money, public domain is all that Deputy Rebindaine said and all he needed to say. It is a simple set of values he seems to align with me on. I will turn to Deputy Voisin, the Minister for Economic Development, now and I will work through a few of the things he said. I am sure, hopefully, I will change his mind, although again perhaps he is a harder one to convert than some of the middle ground colleagues of this Assembly. He mentions the Public Finances Law, and I think this sits separately. There are times where you document a process and there are times you document an intent and a set of values. The Public Finances Law, when implemented, does not require what I am asking to be published. I think this is a set of values we should subscribe to for the next 4 years - and that is what it is - one of a greater level of transparency. He talks about duplication, that there are reports in the R.S.S. (Rural Support Scheme) and the B.B.S.P. (Better Business Support Package), and I agree. I hope he was listening to my opening comment, when I said I am not duplicating existing mechanisms. I am asking that when they are used in the future they are fit for purpose. To take his example, the Rural Support Scheme should include the transparency level we expect. The quarterly and indeed yearly reports on the Better Business Support Package - or a new version which would be caught under this, should he bring one forward - would from the outset include that in the publication. I would expect not a single new document would need to come out of the transparency here. It would be a change to the content of the existing mechanisms by which we report. Then he said a big grant would attract a large amount of attention and I think he is probably right. I think somebody receiving £290, let us say, to fund a half-day course at one of our safety operators will get less scrutiny than a £75,000 grant, maxing out what a business gets, but I would not confuse attention or public interest with negative scrutiny. I think the more you apply for perhaps the more you need to be clear that what you are asking for - and of course what those are assessing you for - is in the public interest and a public benefit. So I turn to that. The words "tenuous and subjective" were used by the Minister. What is a public benefit? Well, that is normally outlined at the outset of any scheme that grants money. We do not create pots with money and say: "We will find reasons to give them. If they align with the public interest or public benefit, that is great." The Better Business Support Package is a clear example. I will move past a comment for now on whether it supported the minimum wage changes or not, but it aimed to do a few things that Ministers felt were in public interest and would deliver public benefit. They felt a more productive Island would be in the public interest. They thought more productive businesses would deliver a better economy. So the public benefit, for example, for a hotel that invests in its heating is lower running costs, so it

can continue to invest in even better quality facilities for guests, improving our visitor economy appeal. It should be noted that visitor economy was an aim; a public benefit is a vibrant visitor economy. It is not hard to demonstrate that when the Government sets an ambition to deliver a more vibrant economy through grants, that as long as it is a reasonable ask for money to achieve that aim, it is in the public benefit stated at the outset of the scheme. Then I will jump to the Connétable of Grouville, who had a concern about whether buying a tractor was in the public interest. I can assure him that, first of all, loans were not covered by the way I drafted this, it is about grants, but he made a stretch further and wondered what if you got a grant. Well, of all the schemes, the Rural Support Scheme and the Marine Support Scheme are built on a framework of public benefit. They give out money through a context in which what they are supporting is a public benefit. Indeed, I drafted this amendment, first titling it: "Public money for public goods" and I changed that because that phrase is very well-defined and more routinely used specifically in the agricultural industry. It is because, in reviewing how money and funding has been given to the industry, it should be recognised money is given to an industry that delivers public goods that, in our case, an Island benefit from. I point him to why we have support needs for the rural and marine businesses, which is on the Economic Frameworks for Rural and Marine Environments page, when they outline the 2022 strategies. It says: "Jersey's rural and marine businesses need support to survive and contribute to the economy in the following ways" and it says: "providing a baseline level of food security; continuing stewardship of Jersey's countryside and natural resources." No doubt he will think that if somebody is investing in a new flail they are maintaining things or even something to trim our banques and hedgerows: "providing local produce; contributing to the wider health of the economy." It was on the back of these high-level needs that the existing Rural Support Scheme was developed. It is a credit-based system. Credits are there for the metres of hedgerow one manages, for the area of land under regenerative pasture, or any pasture. So of all the schemes - and I gave this in my opening - the Rural Support Scheme is the easiest one to capture, and in fact could provide less detail than is sometimes done today. It needs just to say that money has been given in line with a scheme which has been designed around the fact that the agricultural industry and marine industries provide public goods, they provide clean water when they are operated efficiently, so I see no issue that a farmer would have to justify this. As has been highlighted, farmers are already the ones caught earlier in being disclosed. Deputy Feltham highlighted her experiences in Australia. I like this, when there are 2 sides to the debate: are we hiding money, are we feeling scared or are we proud to receive funding? I think you have got 2 paths you can go down. You could be fearful of vitriol and envy or you could set the base wide and say that: "We publish and we are proud." Now I would move to Senator Gorst. Now, I am always glad when Senator Gorst gets up in a debate of mine. It means I am close to winning. **[Laughter]** In all seriousness, no ... Members who have been here longer will get that. In all seriousness, no, I would comment on a few of the comments he made and I would challenge. I think he led a very bold set of statements that do not tie to this proposition. He did mention that the Better Business Support Package was there to offset the living wage. What I would say is, as he knows, it was not targeted to businesses that were not paying a living wage at the moment. It was there, and each time an applicant was there to apply it was measured on productivity, enhancement of the visitor economy, and enhancement of skills. It is by those public benefits it was tested, not could it help businesses meet the living wage. He says he places his faith and trust in the Minister, in a good sign of Ministerial collegiateness. He says that the current Minister challenges the orthodoxy. Well, I would say that challenging ourselves to be more transparent - as we did earlier today and we agreed to - is challenging the more recent orthodoxy. I think that is one we can get behind. I enjoyed this one: he said regulation is ... he disputes necessarily the mantra that regulation is best, Government are best. I read this as a kind of small government, free market model. In my view, a free market model probably would not involve the Government giving out large sums of money to private businesses, so when we get into that point we are fundamentally talking about a contract between Government and businesses who willingly enter it. It is in that contract I believe we deserve transparency. I think that is enough to say on Senator Gorst. I think if he wants that

Government, he should not support the investment of funding, and if he wants it, he should support it transparently. Deputy Romeril said obviously there is a great focus on growing the economy, but again, I do not think it is at any cost to our values, and I think being transparent is a value we can take really positively and we should embrace it over the next 4 years. That should be the culture maybe this Assembly could leave after the next 4 years and look back at schemes that were subject to envy. On the debate about envy that I know Deputy Morel touched on, I would say that works both ways. We know that hundreds - over 237 - of businesses got the Better Business Support grant. There is talk about who got it and who did not, and people will speak and say: "I might have got money here." Envy occurs whether it is published or not, and sometimes a simple number and the knowledge removes the rumour mill and the jungle drums going as to who got what. He also mentioned private sector partnerships, and I should be very clear, I am not asking that money given by the private sector in a grant to a community organisation or even a business funding research would be disclosed. Only money coming from public money should be disclosed for businesses, and I think it is drafted very clearly that way. There might be concerns that Government being transparent is bad but, to me, that is a step over our values one too far. Deputy Jeune highlighted, quite rightly, this is about grants, not loans, and the Connétable of St. John, that this was not really an unreasonable interference with private businesses. To Deputy Morel, I would say again I think there are 2 sides to this. He is on the fence, and I hope he will lean with me in this vote. He says we are a small Island, and I think we are a small Island so we do not need a big country system, so simple publication of data is good. I think that rumour mill happens anyway. He said it is their right to keep it private. Well, their right to keep all their interests private is to approach the private market, it is to use their own funds. Deputy Catherine Curtis said too much transparency can hurt a business, and I just turn to that again. With public money there is an expectation, and if one is concerned that what they are doing could be seen in a bad light, they might want to think about whether they apply. I do not think this will hit and hurt businesses applying. Indeed, I stood up and made a declaration that I did not need to because I believe in the values, and I believe there are positive economic benefits for talking about investment in businesses. That should be a multiplier that grants give. Then Deputy Raimondo has highlighted social media and the slating online that could happen. Again, when one puts something in the public domain and describes what they have, I think there are 2 ways you can look at it, either: "Oh, that is going to get a bad rap" or: "First, how do I really market what I am doing as best for the Island?", investing in great equipment, improving processes, delivering. Once this Assembly is agreed that we want to provide grants, the narrative should be on are those grants working best for the public? That to me is the best defence against vitriol, envy or public online slating. Lastly for those - and I think it was Deputy Gleave I have missed mentioning - was on cost. Although the Connétable of St. John touched on cost and the cost of implementing these, I would highlight to her and to Members that the recent way in running these schemes has been highly efficient. I think we should recognise that the running of the Better Business Support Package, and indeed an upgrade to the Rural Support Scheme grant payment made by Jersey Business and Farm Jersey, are productive systems that make these changes easy. In fact, I am logged into the portal right now, looking at the skills grant application I referenced earlier. It requires a project name, project description, the business skills it will help, the digital skills it will help, the leadership skills it will help, the people skills, technical skills, and finally: "How will these skills benefit your company?" This was submitted at the outset, and in a redesign of any scheme similar to this - and indeed, I would hope it would be the bare minimum - we could catch public summary, public expected description. It would be a sentence. Businesses put a lot of care in making their applications because they want the detailed elements that remain private to be assessed in the best chance. Coming up with those will be negligible in time and cost no more, so I give everyone assurances that, having used the portal, the collection of that data, I have complete faith in the operators of our schemes to run this efficiently and it will not be bureaucratic. So with that, I hope Members agree this is a values-driven one. If Members do not believe that public money should be publicly disclosed, that we should invest

together as an Island and we should be proud when it happens, they are willing to do and vote accordingly. For those who agree with me, I would hope they vote pour, and I call for the appel.

The Bailiff:

Point of clarification. Will you accept a point of clarification from Deputy Catherine Curtis?

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Yes.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I think the Deputy mentioned about grants, but in the amendment the wording is: "where investment involves Government" so is it grants, loans or actual investments?

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I take the way I have worded it with the further narrative as to be "grant", but it is a good question. With a direct financial investment, should the Government wish to take equity stakes in a business, one might say this is captured. My arguments are unchanged.

The Bailiff:

Sorry?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

I just wonder if the Deputy would take another point of clarification.

The Bailiff:

Another point of clarification?

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

No, Sir.

The Bailiff:

The appel has been called for. Members are invited to return to their seats. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, I ask the Greffier to close the voting.

POUR: 24	**CONTRE: 21**	**ABSTAINED: 0**
Connétable of St. Mary	Senator L.J. Farnham	
Connétable of St. Martin	Senator I.J. Gorst	
Connétable of St. Brelade	Senator A. Maclean	
Connétable of St. Helier	Senator M.R. Le Hegarat	
Connétable of St. John	Senator H.M. Miles	
Connétable of St. Clement	Senator M.E. Millar	
Connétable of St. Ouen	Senator Sir M.J. Boleat	
Connétable of Grouville	Senator S. Kersten	
Connétable of St. Saviour	Connétable of Trinity	
Connétable of St. Lawrence	Deputy K.F. Morel	
Deputy M. Tadier	Deputy G. Voisin	
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet	Deputy R.E. Binet	
Deputy C.S. Alves	Deputy C.D. Curtis	
Deputy M.B. Andrews	Deputy M.R. Ferey	
Deputy T.A. Coles	Deputy J. Renouf	
Deputy A.F. Curtis	Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson	
Deputy L.V. Feltham	Deputy C. Leck	

Deputy H.L. Jeune
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée
Deputy B. Ward
Deputy K.M. Wilson
Deputy L. Carpenter
Deputy S. Gleave
Deputy C. Rebindaine
Deputy V. Li
Deputy R. Parker
Deputy G. Raimondo
Deputy P.J. Romeril

[14:45]

1.5 Common Strategic Policy 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): nineteenth amendment (P.75/2026 Amd. (19)) - Proportionate regulation

The Bailiff:

I will move on to the nineteenth amendment, lodged by the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel. Deputy Jeune, there is an amendment to the panel's amendment lodged by the Council of Ministers. Do you accept the amendment or not?

Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (Chair, Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel):

No, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much. The Greffier will read the amendment.

The Greffier of the States:

Page 2. After the words "report accompanying this Proposition" insert the words – ", except that, on page 10 of the report, in Action 4.1 after "Revise the Island Plan" there should be inserted the words ", where necessary and evidenced,"". After the words "report accompanying this Proposition" insert the words – ", except that, on page 10 of the report, in Action 4.3 after "Reduce the burden of regulation to businesses" there should be inserted the words "whilst maintaining existing environmental, heritage and consumer protection"". After the words "report accompanying this Proposition" insert the words – ", except that, on page 10 of the report, for the words "The test should be simple: regulation should exist where it is necessary and proportionate, not because that is how Government has always done things" there should be substituted the following – "The test should be simple: regulation should exist where it is necessary and proportionate, with priority given to areas of regulation that disproportionately impact small and micro-businesses and organisations"".

1.5.1 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

The panel is grateful that the Council of Ministers supports the majority of the proposed amendment, and I think it is important to first lay out why the panel brought this amendment. The panel supports sustainable growth. We want a strong economy, a planning system that can respond to change and regulation that is proportionate. Our 3 amendments do not change any of the Government's objectives. What the amendments do is ask that economic growth, regulatory reform and planning policy are taken forward in a balance and evidence-based way with regard for the Island's long-term commitments. Those commitments are already ours. Future Jersey says: "We cannot afford to put community, the economy or the environment in separate boxes." The Island Outcomes Framework says the same, and Article 9 of the Public Finances (Jersey) Law requires the Council of Ministers, in preparing the Budget, to take account of the sustainable well-being of Islanders over successive generations, economic, social, environmental and cultural. So I will take these in parts, so part 1 of the amendment relates to action 4.1 of the C.S.P. draft, which commits the Government to revise the Island Plan to facilitate economic growth and sustainable development. The amendment is

straightforward. It would insert the words "where necessary and evidenced" after the words "revise the Island Plan." In March, this Assembly adopted the Planning and Building (Jersey) Amendment Law. It gave the Minister a new power to revise the Island Plan. Planning policy must be able to respond to change without always needing a full review, but flexible. Flexibility needs safeguards. The Island Plan guides decisions on housing, the economy, infrastructure, land use and the environment. It is built through extensive consultation, independent examination and significant public investment. Islanders' businesses, developers and community groups rely on it for certainty. Having a power to revise the plan should not in itself be a reason to revise it. Changes should come where there is clearly identified need and the evidence supports them. That keeps confidence in the planning system. We feel that the added language that we have put in speaks to this. The second part relates to action 4.3, which commits the Government to reduce the burden of regulation on businesses. It adds the words - or we add the words - "whilst maintaining existing environmental, heritage and consumer protection." The panel supports cutting unnecessary bureaucracy. Businesses should not face duplication or processes that cost money and achieve nothing, but these protections we have added are not red tape. Future Jersey commits us to protect our unique natural environment for future generations, to value and enjoy our built and historic environment and to manage our natural resources responsibly. Consumer protection gives Islanders confidence and reducing burdens on businesses should not be read as reducing those standards. This amendment I hope makes that clear, and of course I will speak to the Council of Ministers' amendment later. The third part relates to the narrative on regulatory reform. The current text says: "Regulations should exist where it is necessary and proportionate, but not because that is how Government has always done things." The panel agrees with that principle, but it is already covered by "necessary and proportionate" so we have replaced the second half with something more useful. "Priority given to regulation that disproportionately affects small and micro businesses and organisations" we think is more appropriate. Proportionality should recognise that the same rule weighs differently on different businesses. A requirement a large firm can absorb can weigh heavily on a sole trader or a small charity. In Future Jersey, Islanders told us that bureaucracy, recruitment issues and commercial rents were holding back businesses. This does not remove any safeguards. It points reform at the places where the burden is greatest and the benefit will be the most felt. Therefore, these are modest but important amendments, largely supported, I might add, by the Council of Ministers. They ask that the Island Plan changes when the evidence says it should, that regulatory reform keeps the protections that Islanders value and that reform starts with those who feel the burden most, therefore I ask the Assembly to support our amendments.

The Bailiff:

Thank you, Deputy. Is the amendment seconded? **[Seconded]**

1.6 Common Strategic Policy 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): nineteenth amendment (P.75/2026 Amd. (19)) - amendment (P.75/2026 Amd. (19)Amd.) - Proportionate regulation

The Bailiff:

There is an amendment to this amendment lodged by the Council of Ministers and I ask the Greffier to read the amendment.

The Greffier of the States:

After the words "whilst maintaining" substitute the word "existing" for "appropriate."

1.6.1 Senator Sir M.J. Boleat:

I thank the Member for the way she has presented her argument and also for her panel, which has produced some excellent ideas, which I can agree with almost all of them. I ask the Assembly to support the Council of Ministers' amendment, and in doing so reject amendment 19 in its current form. The difference is a single word, but words matter, particularly in a document that will guide

the Island's strategic direction over the next 5 years. Let me begin by making one point absolutely clear; Ministers agree entirely with the principle behind the amendment. We support strong environmental protection; we support the preservation of our heritage; we support robust consumer protection. These are fundamental responsibilities of Government and they are values that are reflected throughout the Common Strategic Policy. The issue before us is not whether these protections should exist. The issue is whether we should commit ourselves to maintain the existing regulatory framework, regardless of future circumstances, opportunities or risks. The amendment proposes that when reducing the burden of regulation on business, we must maintain existing environmental, heritage and consumer protections. At first glance, that may sound reasonable. However, the word "existing" locks us into today's arrangements, regardless of whether they remain the best arrangements tomorrow. Good government should not be about preserving regulation exactly as it is today. Good government should be about ensuring that regulation remains appropriate. That is why Ministers are proposing the amendment to the amendment, to replace the word "existing" by the word "appropriate", and why is that important? Because the world does not stand still. New environmental challenges emerge, new technologies create new risks, consumer markets evolve. In some areas we may need stronger protections than we have today. In others, innovation, digitalisation and smarter regulation may allow us to achieve the same or even better outcomes with less bureaucracy, less duplication and less cost for businesses. If we enshrine the principle of maintaining existing arrangements, we risk creating a presumption against improvement, we risk tying the hands of future Governments when circumstances change and we risk sending a message that regulatory reform is about preserving process rather than achieving outcomes. The Council of Ministers believes there is a better approach. We should judge regulation on whether it is effective, proportionate and evidenced. We should be prepared to strengthen protections where necessary. Equally, we should be prepared to simplify, modernise and streamline regulation where that can be done without compromising outcomes. Each case should be considered on its merits, with careful consideration of the circumstances involved. That balanced approach is not only compatible with the environment, heritage and consumer protection, it is essential to achieving those objectives, while also supporting a productive and competitive economy. Jersey's businesses need regulation that protects the public interest without imposing unnecessary burdens. Our economy needs a framework that encourages innovation, investment and growth, while maintaining proper safeguards. The choice before us is straightforward. Do we commit ourselves to maintaining today's regulatory arrangements indefinitely or do we commit ourselves to maintaining protections that are appropriate, proportionate and in the future? Let me give an example. I am sure Members are familiar with the Sea Beaches (Removal of Sand and Stone) (Jersey) Law 1963. If not, Deputy Curtis will advise you. **[Laughter]** "No person shall take or remove any sand, stone, gravel, shingle, clay or loam from any beach in Jersey." That is it. There is no *de minimis* exemption, even for Bailiffs. **[Laughter]** Even if one's dog takes a grain of sand home, you are committing an offence and you are liable to a fine, which I am advised is unlimited. If you commit 2 offences, you can be in prison. Now, if I had eyes in the back of my head, the Minister for Treasury and Resources is rubbing his hands at the millions he could raise by fining everybody who walks off the beach with a grain of sand between their toes. Now, of course the Minister responsible for this has got bigger fish to fry, and she is the Minister for the Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries after all, and nothing is going to be done about this. It would indeed be a waste of time to review this in itself, but when the whole law is being looked at, that is something that should be done. But if the Deputy's amendment is approved, this is an existing protection that we could not remove. Let me give another example of the sort of law we might get around to reviewing at some stage. Of course we need protection for tenants, but it is an offence to cease being a landlord without telling the Government. So if, for example, someone has been a landlord, they have been keeping a property, perhaps for a family member, the tenant leaves, the family member is coming back in 6 months, you have to notify the Government. Now, that is desirable, but it is a criminal offence if you do not do it. Now, the good news there, the fine is not unlimited; it is only £10,000. Yes, the Minister is grinning already. Now,

I give these as, if you like, absurd examples to illustrate a point, but I am deadly serious about regulation. We absolutely have to get regulation right, it needs to be appropriate for the issue we are dealing with, and the fact that we have regulation in the past does not mean that it is appropriate for the future. So our amendment seeks to preserve the assurance that environmental, heritage and consumer protections remain central to Government policy. At the same time, it provides flexibility needed to improve regulation, response to emerging challenges, and reduce unnecessary burdens on business. I therefore urge Members to reject amendment 19 as drafted and support the Council of Ministers' amendment, replacing "existing" with "appropriate." It is a small change in wording, but an important improvement in principle and one that better serves the people of Jersey for the future.

The Bailiff:

Is the amendment seconded? **[Seconded]**

1.6.2 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

As I said in my opening speech, I thank the Council of Ministers for supporting the panel's amendments, and I welcome they are accepting of the first and third parts in full.

[15:00]

But the panel does not support their amendment to the second part, as it changes one word, but I think that word does matter. Our amendment says that: "reducing the burden of regulation on business should happen, whilst maintaining existing environmental, heritage and consumer protections." The Minister, as he explained and outlined, wants to change "existing" to "appropriate" and "appropriate" does sound reasonable. The Minister has laid out arguments and has given a few good examples. It is good to hear examples. We have been asking for examples for at least 2 hearings we have had with the Minister, and we have yet to have it. So I am glad we got given some examples, but I think we will probably need more, because as we said, even though we have a few examples, it does raise some questions, because "appropriate" according to who, judged against what criteria? The Minister for Planning and Regulation told our panel that the Council of Ministers has agreed a new framework for regulation and he said that it will be published in due course, but this Assembly has not seen what that looks like. We do not know what that means. Will it answer the question of this idea of appropriate to who or judged by what criteria? Where is that criteria? We do not know. So we are being asked to swap a clear word for an undefined one before we have even seen the definition. The Minister himself told us even in September that everybody agrees we need to be proportionate; people only disagree about what proportion it needs. That means that it comes back to my question of appropriate for whom, judged against what criteria. That is exactly the problem that the panel has with the word "appropriate." The Council of Ministers' report to the amended word also does not say; this does not set this out. It sets out no test and names no one, who that judgment would be. So without that "appropriate", it can mean whatever the decision-maker of that day wants it to mean. "Existing" is different. It is clear, it tells Islanders, businesses and this Assembly where the line is. Protections we have today will not be weakened as part of a drive to reduce regulation. I want to answer the concerns Ministers have raised, because I do not think they stand up. First, Ministers say protection may need to be strengthened in response to new risks, as the Minister outlined earlier. I agree, but nothing in our wording stops that. Maintaining existing protection is a floor, not a ceiling. Ministers are free to strengthen protection at any time or introduce protection against new technologies or new environmental risks at any time. Second, Ministers say technology and innovation offer changes to streamline processes without compromising outcomes. The Minister for Planning and Regulation told our panel that the last thing we want to do is to damage environmental protection in any way. I take him at his word, but if outcomes are not changing then "existing" costs Ministers nothing. It only bites if a protection is being weakened. If a process can be made more simple while the protection stays the same, our wording still supports that because, as the Minister said many times, it is about processes. A lot of the time it is about processes and it is not about the

protection. So if the aim is to strengthen protection where needed, our wording still allows it. If the aim is to streamline processes without compromising outcomes, our wording still allows that. The only thing "existing" rules out is weakening protection, and that is precisely the assurance this amendment is meant to give. The Ministers' report also says each case should be weighed individually - and we heard that also from the Minister - while, crucially, aiming for a reduction in the overall burden. Put "appropriate" next to that goal and the balance tips. Each case-by-case judgment starts from the aim of reducing regulation first. Over 4 years, that is how protections can be worn away, one reasonable decision at a time. These protections cover our countryside, our coastline, our historic buildings and the confidence consumers have when they spend money in Jersey. Future Jersey commits us to protect our natural environment for future generations and to value our built and historic environment. Those are not commitments to be judged "appropriately" case by case. They are commitments to keep. Members should know where "appropriate" may lead. A report commissioned by the Government last year, and co-written by the Minister who spoke to this amendment before he took office, recommends removing the requirement for noise impact assessments. It recommends replacing ecological surveys with a general statement. It says heritage should be an input, not a determining factor. The Minister has told our panel that the direction of the report is absolutely right. I do not say every one of those recommendations will necessarily happen, though some of them already have, but none of them needs a vote in this Assembly. They sit in guidance, checklists and conditions, the things Ministers can change themselves. In fact, we have heard from the Minister himself that many of these changes he will do and not bring back to the Assembly. It is in the power of the Minister to do those changes. The wording of this C.S.P. is one of the few places this Assembly can set the floor. Even the U.K. deregulation programme cited in its report that it commits to maintaining high standards and protection, and that is all our amendment is asking. I would like to ask if the Minister, in his closing, can give one example of an existing environmental, heritage and consumer protection the Council would consider no longer appropriate. I understand the Minister already said, very out there, about the sand, for example. But could we have some more, very concrete, at the moment what he is considering? We have tried to test this, as I said before, in our hearings and so far we have not received it. I would like to understand a bit more from the Minister where is the test going to be placed and where he is seeking to see where there are appropriate changes to be had? The panel supports proportionate regulation. We support making processes simpler. But we want Islanders to know that cutting red tape will not mean cutting protection. "Existing" gives that assurance and "appropriate" we believe does not. I urge Members to reject this amendment from the Council of Ministers.

1.6.3 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

I do not have much to add to the chair of the panel I sit on. I think it is fair to say the panel, as I think the chair has outlined, was open to considering how to achieve its aim, and its aim is not, as stated, to set the regulation in stone and to freeze it. It is to ensure the protections that regulation afford are maintained when it comes to, for example, the environment. I am seeking from the Minister, given his knowledge of the Sea Beaches (Removal of Sand and Stone) (Jersey) Law 1963, how he sees his ideas as to where he would want to weaken environmental protection specifically within that. He makes somewhat light of the idea that a person or a dog who leaves a beach carrying sand, stone, gravel, shingle, clay or loam is causing an offence. But I would say it is a law that is working very well and it achieves the protections. He also goes a bit far, he says: "No one can remove these from the beach." Of course there are 2 exceptions, they can be removed with a licence granted by the Minister for the Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries or indeed Deputy Voisin, as Minister for Economic Development, can trudge his way down to the harbours and remove any sand, stone, gravel and shingle from there or the approaches thereto, although I think we updated the language we use in our laws. My point being there is a protection behind this that is real. Quarrying of sand and stone from our beaches was a real issue and, in his example, he has not outlined what he would change that would be different to the protection we are seeking to maintain. He may wish to see a more modern

law. He may wish to see the licences managed by somebody else. He may wish to have a *de minimis* for the removal of sand, although I would be quite surprised if he would like to see people carrying 10 kilos of sand a day and what purpose it has. But, arguably, the environmental protection set out by the 1963 law I think is sound. I think we have landed on a point where the protections afforded to our environment in our community are, broadly speaking, sound. The burden of proof should not lie on the Scrutiny Panel to accept "appropriate". It should be on the Minister, as the chair has highlighted, to say, where do our protections for the environment go too far? Where do we want to provide less protection for the environment or for the community? I think it is in that lens I hope he will answer. If he could, given he has chosen to highlight the Sea Beaches (Removal of Sand and Stone) Law, provide a genuine example as to does he see a need to perhaps quarry around our sites further than we do at the moment? Does he want to or does he want to see our intervention to the Ramsar site go further? Because of course we are talking about a protection and not a single regulation.

1.6.4 Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

Words do matter; that is how Senator Boleat started his speech. He gave me a brilliant example at the beginning as well. Words do very much matter and in fact, because he forgot to say a particularly important word when directing me to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to ask about the sand and gravel law, Deputy Curtis, I realised that words do indeed matter. I find it hard to follow Deputy Jeune's argument that "existing" is an appropriate word in this case and "appropriate" being the alternative. "Existing" does tie us into the past. Deputy Jeune asked, who are the people who decide to what level is appropriate? How do we quantify appropriate in different forms? That is us; that is this Assembly. Even when Ministerial Orders are signed, that is the case that I believe the Assembly can call them in, and that is the job. That is why we need Scrutiny and why I look to people like Deputy Jeune on Scrutiny to keep their eyes out for those Ministerial Orders. Because there is no world in which any Minister should just be signing things off with no one else looking at it. Senator Boleat, I am sure, would welcome such scrutiny of any orders that he does sign. It is the case that I disagree with Senator Boleat on the sand and gravel beaches law. I think it is incredibly well-worded and if he spends even an ounce or a second, I should say, of his time or officers' time in changing that law, then I think he is wasting time. Because it is all-encompassing to the point that it need not be used until I do go down and start picking up blocks off the beach to put around the pond that I started digging on Sunday. When my wife asked me: "Where are you going to get the stones to put around that pond?" I said: "I will get them from the beach." She reminded me of that law, this is Sunday just gone and I was going: "You are right, I will not be doing that then." Deputy Alex Curtis did point out quite correctly that even a *de minimis* level opens up the possibility of lots of people suddenly going down to put sand in their garden or round their garden ponds, *et cetera*, and suddenly you have this serious problem on your hands. The way that law is worded at the moment, that regulation is worded at the moment, means that no one can. Yes, of course people do, whether it is just on their feet when they walk off the beach or whether they did in fact take a few stones back home with them, but as long as it is not happening in a regular and commercial way, then our beaches will be protected. But the moment that somebody is doing it regularly or commercially, then of course the Minister for the Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries should be stepping in and should be prosecuting. That law sits there able to do that but it will remain ignored, no matter how precise it is at the moment saying that even one grain of sand is in breach of the law. I think when we stood for election we all stood on different platforms. Some of us stood on platforms similar to other people's. But it is for us to decide what "appropriate" is. It is for us to hold Ministers to account if they are making unilateral decisions and to keep our eyes on that. It is for us to make sure that Jersey has a legislative basis to enable us to move into the future. I am hugely supportive of protecting our heritage, protecting our environment. There is very little I would want to change around regulations in those areas. But there come times when we do have to change those regulations in those areas because - and I have used this phrase before - otherwise Jersey gets caught in aspic, and that means

we cannot be fit for the future, and that would be the scariest thing. In an Island with demographics which are changing to mean that we are much older, we have much fewer young people in the Island, to tie us to the past would be awful and would lead us to, I think, slow but eventual negative economy in that respect; it would be dangerous ... and society. One example, I believe, the Minister for the Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries and myself in a meeting recently with the Action for Cleaner Water Group, there one of the questions was we were talking about different herbicides and pesticides that come and go from commercial use and whether they should be added or taken away from the existing regulations. There is another thing, there are pesticides which just fall out of use; the makers stop making them and yet they are listed in regulations. One of the things that the Minister for the Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries has to do is then decide which pesticides to take off the list. The wording at the moment that is being proposed by Deputy Jeune would mean that those pesticides stay on the list, despite the fact that they are no longer available. We would be regulating for things that are not possible to regulate on. These are the sorts of things that I think are just caught up in Deputy Jeune's suggestion of using the word "existing", which are not caught up by Senator Boleat's suggestion of changing to appropriate.

[15:15]

I do think no matter how strongly States Members feel about heritage, environment or any other area of regulation in Jersey, to tie us to the past is denying us a future, and that is not something that we should be doing in this Assembly. We should have the self-confidence to say that we decide what is appropriate. That is the answer to Deputy Jeune's question; we decide what is appropriate. When a Minister makes a unilateral decision it is still in our gift to call that in and say we think this needs to be debated, we are not so sure about this decision that that particular Minister has made. It is on us, as an Assembly. Let us not pass off the responsibility that we hold by hiding behind what is in the past. That, to me, is the easy thing to do. The hard thing to do is to take that responsibility upon ourselves and say, no, we decide what is appropriate, we are the people who are elected to decide that and we willingly and happily take on the burden of that responsibility; that is why I will be supporting Senator Boleat's amendment to the amendment. I do hope it does pass because I fear us getting caught in the past. We would then obviously be able to support all of Deputy Jeune's amendment, except for that one word very well drafted.

1.6.5 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South:

If Deputy Morel is anything like me, he thought about digging that pond many, many months ago and had he done so while he was still Minister for Sustainable Economic Development he would have been able to collect the stones. But, unfortunately, he has not, and that is where we are. I take a little bit of issue with Deputy Morel saying that we can call in any Ministerial Order and decision because, unfortunately, the Minister for Planning and Regulation holds a number of pieces of guidance within the planning thing. The Assembly cannot direct the Minister in his questions, the supplementary planning guidance, having done pieces around residential space standards before it becomes very, very tricky in how to request the Minister to review something because we cannot stop him from doing so, not unless we change the law. But that is aside because obviously we are talking about this amendment, and this amendment to a single word. But words, as we have all agreed, are important but words also exist in context. When you take a single word and you do not look at what is before it and what comes after it, we can get sucked in. Existing means existing, until you say what about it is existing. We are talking about its protections, not its regulations. We can create, as I read this, by using the term as it goes through: "While maintaining existing environmental, heritage and consumer protection", not regulations. The Minister can come away, draft new regulations. They may make less paperwork, less requirements, easier access to licences to go and get your sand and gravel from the beach, while being less burdensome. But still maintaining the protection that we are limiting the people who can do it, when they can do it, and how they can do it. It does not say in there that we have to maintain all those regulations. When we look at the regulations

around pesticides and herbicides, they are there because they offer certain protections. We can choose, we look at the environment changes, data changes, science changes. We look at things and say that is not doing what we want it to do anymore. It is having this negative impact, so it is not protecting the land which it is being sprayed on. We should remove that from the regulation because that is no longer creating the protection of our farmland that we wanted to do. This is because after the fact, as Deputy Jeune said in her opening, it sets the floor, that how we have things at the moment, we want to protect our heritage, we want to protect our environment and we want to protect consumers. Absolutely, there is probably a lot easier way to do this. As we all know, there are so many piecemeal bits of legislation sitting all over the place, and these could be quite easily condensed down. Having spoken with Trading Standards a number of times, there are many different pieces of legislation all over the place. It needs to be drafted back into a single place, which, firstly, makes it easier for consumers to know what their rights are and makes businesses know what their rights and responsibilities are. This does not prevent this. It just means that we are not going to change any of those protections that exist. You can redraft legislation, put it in one place and make it less burdensome and make it easier and simple for people. But the term "appropriate", again, this is where Deputy Jeune I think hits the nail on the head with her speech and how we came to this decision as a panel. Because, to be honest, this is a panel amendment, this is not a Deputy Jeune amendment; this was the panel. We sat there, we looked through the C.S.P. as a group and we said, how comfortable do we all feel about this? We all come from different places, different Parishes, different representations and we just generally thought that we have to protect what is here. We agree there is a burden of regulation that needs to be quite simplified. I have spoken with Deputy Parker this morning about how we see the triplication of paperwork going into government departments is a ridiculous waste of time for businesses. It is one of the things that I have, and anybody who has mentioned to me about red tape on the doorstep I ask, what is your biggest bit of red tape that you hate? Basically they were not talking about a regulation; it all came down to bureaucracy. If we can simplify bureaucracy, then that is great and we can do that without impacting the current existing environment, heritage and consumer protections. I think this is the important point we need to make, is the floor in which we start and we can build up from. We can still make changes. It is where we are; it is the starting point. If anybody can say one thing that our environment does not need protecting, then please stand up and say it while we are looking at this discussion and what is appropriate. If you think part of our culture and heritage should not have any kind of protection, please stand up and say it. Our consumer rights, we do not have the same level of consumer rights that we do in the U.K. That is probably one area where it could be expanded massively, but we would not want to put that burden on too quickly. I just want people to reflect on that when they are choosing whether or not to use the word "appropriate" or "existing". But for me "existing", as Deputy Jeune said, is the floor by which we should build from, not dismantle from.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Sir, may I have a point of clarification please?

The Bailiff:

Point of clarification, will you give way?

Deputy T.A. Coles:

I will listen to the question and decide.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I will take that as a yes. Thank you. It was just with regard to the S.P.G. (Supplementary Planning Guidance) that Deputy Coles mentioned. Could he clarify that the Assembly could still bring a proposition after an S.P.G. has been signed into law, if that is the right word, by the Minister for

Planning and Regulation, if States Members could create a proposition to nullify the effect of that S.P.G. should they wish to?

Deputy T.A. Coles:

I am happy to clarify that and the answer is, no. Members of the Assembly cannot bring that proposition.

1.6.6 Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier Central:

I was not going to speak on this but Deputy Morel prompted me with his contribution. I found myself agreeing with a lot of what he was saying. He is absolutely right, we do decide what is appropriate here; I agree with that. I agree that we should not be caught up in the past. I wonder whether what this boils down to his interpretation and semantics. I think Deputy Coles addressed this; took the wind out of my sails a little bit. I am not a linguist, I am a mathematician, so I am not sure whether maybe this is up to you, Sir, to maybe give a ruling on. But I see the word "existing", that meaning in itself changing over time dependent on what "existing" is referring to. If we in this Assembly bring forward some regulatory changes, for example, what is then existing in protections is then changed because that regulation is changed. We do not refer to old regulations or old legislations when we are looking at things that are existing. We look at what is in the law at that moment in time. Maybe the better way to have approached this was to have an amendment that said "existing" and "appropriate". Because then that would have addressed both issues but we are where we are. I do wonder whether "existing" is probably more appropriate than "appropriate". I think that that very meaning of the word "existing" in this specific amendment will change over time. Because it will be referring to whatever is currently in legislation, in regulations or in orders, or pointing to whatever. On that point, I will be supporting the panel's amendment and rejecting the Minister's amendment because I just think it makes more sense. I may be wrong in that, and maybe the Bailiff can offer some clarification but that is my interpretation of that.

The Bailiff:

Do you want me to give some guidance on this?

Deputy C.S. Alves:

I think it might be useful, Sir, thank you.

The Bailiff:

We have looked at the definition of "existing" and it is not really good enough to see exactly what it says. But the gist of it means is currently in operation. "Existing" would appear to me - it is a matter for Members ultimately - to mean now, so existing does mean today, not existing at some future time. Existing means existing now.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

But if that were to change at a future time, if laws were changed, for example, or …

The Bailiff:

This is not a law, it is only a policy document, which of course has been adopted by the Assembly if it is adopted. But "existing", in my judgment, means existing today.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Thank you, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Yes, Deputy Rebindaine.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine of St. Mary, ST. Ouen and St. Peter:

Sorry, Sir, it was the laptop.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Sir, may I refer Deputy Rebindaine to the Minister for Treasury and Resources for a laptop?

1.6.7 Connétable R.D. Johnson of St. Mary:

My thought processes, if not tainted, at least influenced by my experience on the Environmental Scrutiny Panel in the last Assembly. We are talking about one word and if we were to change a regulation by a further regulation, then I would be very happy with the word appropriate because the Assembly today can decide whether what was decided was appropriate. The problem, as I see it, is that there are some changes which can be made other than by regulation which should not come to the Assembly. I do go back to the last Assembly - I cannot remember the name of the law, Wildlife Preservation Law - where the panel sought to amend the legislation by providing that amendments made by order would first come to the attention of the Scrutiny Panel. That was opposed by the Minister for the Environment of the day and our amendment was defeated. That, to me, is the one concern I have in approving the word available. My misgivings could be overcome possibly if the Minister in his summing up could reassure the Assembly that any changes to the existing legislation he would make the changes known to the Scrutiny Panel in advance by providing draft orders, to give them the opportunity to comment. But without that I probably am inclined to support the opposition.

1.6.8 Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin:

Words are so important and we always need to look at the context because of this. As someone who had never really used A.I. before, when Deputy Alves spoke I thought, yes, well I will just look up how this would change. This is the A.I. overview but it is completely commensurate with my view. I will be supporting the panel. It says: "In environmental law and regulatory policy, changing a single word from 'existing' to 'appropriate' shifts a legal standard from an objective measurable baseline to a subjective discretionary judgment." That is what really, really worries me and has worried me all along: "While the exact ecological impact depends on the specific statute or permit where the edit occurs, replacing existing with appropriate generally weakens mandatory environmental safeguards by giving regulators, developers or polluters wider latitude to decide how much protection is enough." This is exactly why I am totally with the panel: "The loss of a fixed ecological baseline, the word 'existing' anchors protections to current measurable conditions on the ground, such as existing water quality, existing wetlands or existing habitat. Changing this to 'appropriate' detaches the rule from the actual ecosystem, allowing conditions to degrade as long as an authority deems the new standard appropriate for the situation." Everyone's alarm bells should be ringing here: "Increased regularly discretion existing leaves very little room for interpretation because an ecosystem or a standard either does or does not exist. Appropriate introduces a subjective value judgment allowing officials or corporations to weigh economic costs, development goals or convenience against environmental health when deciding what action to take." I will not go on but I think if you really listen to that, this is why the word "existing" is so important because "appropriate" you can use, it is how the person feels that day when they get out of bed or something.

[15:30]

I think we really, really, really need to look after our environment. I am very surprised with Deputy Morel, who has usually been somebody who has not particularly wanted changes to our laws with environment and with the arts and culture because we have a really strong heritage here. Our environment includes places like the Les Ecréhous, the Ramsar site, it is so important to me that we keep existing in here. I will be voting for the panel.

Senator M.R. Le Hegarat:

I would like to ask a question of the Solicitor General please. Based on some of the interpretations and the context of some of the speeches within the States Assembly, I would value an opinion from the Solicitor General in relation to the comments that have been made in relation to appropriate and existing please.

The Bailiff:

I do not want to prevent the Solicitor from answering her first question at all. **[Laughter]** But to my mind there is a …

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Sir, would a point of order help?

The Bailiff:

Sorry?

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Sorry, would a point of order help? I am not sure this is a question that can be answered by the Solicitor General. It does not sound to me like a point of law, it sounds like a point of ordinary meaning. We have got a lawyer in the Assembly, not a …

The Bailiff:

Who is speaking now, is that Deputy Tadier?

Deputy M. Tadier:

Yes, sorry, Sir, I should have introduced myself.

The Bailiff:

Yes, but he is giving my ruling for me in advance. **[Laughter]**

Deputy M. Tadier:

Sorry, Sir, there must be some prescient.

The Bailiff:

Have you finished, Deputy?

Deputy M. Tadier:

I am sure she is a capable linguist but she is a lawyer, not a philosopher.

The Bailiff:

Are we sure you are standing up for the point of order? All right, we got the gist of that. Yes, I think these are the meanings of ordinary English words and not really matters of law for the Solicitor; that is the difficulty. Do you want to make a speech as well?

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Sir, can I just add to that then? This may be a question to the Solicitor General.

The Bailiff:

If you have got a question for the Solicitor, yes.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

How is the word "existing" normally interpreted in law? The point I was trying to make was that the word "existing" will refer to existing at the very time and that may change over time. I am just wondering if that is the case in general in law when we see the word existing.

Ms. V. Bell, H.M. Solicitor General:

I would consider that "existing" normally means in relation to certain points in time. However, of course it is entirely context-dependent. If one is looking at particular pieces of law, it is going to be very important to be understanding the context of the word. Obviously in an ordinary meaning one is looking at that point in time, but if one is looking across the statute book that could take on different hues, depending upon the context, if that is helpful.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Thank you.

1.6.9 Deputy P.J. Romeril of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

Yes, interesting debate. First of all, I would like to just address the question to some of my colleagues as the Assistant Minister for Economic Development: do I have access to the beach for my rockery as well or is that reserved purely for the Minister? I think the word that I am going to use to sum up my thoughts on this is evolution. Through the recent election and for years before, one of the biggest challenges that the business community has had is red tape, and regulation is specifically part of that. The old saying that regulation is put in to stop bad people doing bad things can eventually accumulate to prevent good people doing good things. I fear that is the case in Jersey, as we stand. Deputy Morel referenced being caught in aspic. I am afraid our economy has been caught in aspic for a number of years and is stuck. This is one of the problems that we are trying to unpick over the next 4 years. The use of the word "existing", I am afraid I agree with the Minister, when my other Ministers, that is very restrictive and, effectively, is sending out a message to our business and commercial community that nothing is going to change here. I think that is a problem when we are trying to engender confidence in the community, start growing parts of our economy outside of the financial services area. I am not in favour of using the word "existing". I am going to obviously support the appropriate amendment that is being brought forward.

1.6.10 Senator S.M. Kersten:

Yes, I was not planning on speaking on this but I feel as the Minister with responsibility for A.C.H. (Arts, Culture and Heritage) I think I should chime in before final decisions are made. The difference of this word and the language means quite a lot to me. The heritage sector in particular, those who have been following heritage for a long time, it is a sector that has been growing and funding has been an increasing challenge over the last decade. I feel it is part of my responsibility, as the Minister, to encourage Heritage to innovate, to be more creative and to look further and perhaps maybe bigger than what it once could be, where it was just intended to preserve. Global trends - and you can look at the U.N.E.S.C.O.'s (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) website for this - global trends are changing when it comes to heritage. It is no longer enough to just preserve; we have to be creative and we have to innovate if the sector is to survive. I would just like to have stated that to everybody before we go and make a decision today because language does count and it certainly counts for my ability to help the sector over the next 4 years.

The Bailiff:

Does anyone else wish to speak on this amendment? If no one else wishes to speak, then I invite the Minister to …

Deputy M. Tadier:

Sir, sorry, I did put in the Chat, I am …

The Bailiff:

Sorry, Deputy, yes, my fault entirely.

1.6.11 Deputy M. Tadier:

That is okay. First of all, Sir, could I apologise to yourself and Members for not being present? I had a small personal emergency that I needed to attend to. I am availing myself of this facility; I know it is not quite the same. I do not know what to make of that last speech, effectively, from the Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage and I know she has got a sports portfolio. Because I do not see this as specifically about heritage, I see it as about heritage considerations in the planning system. Unless we are going to try and encourage Jersey Heritage to innovate by putting maybe, I do not know, like a side return on Gorey Castle or some kind of extension on Elizabeth Castle, which I know the Germans did in the Second World War with some quite unsightly concrete, which has now, unfortunately, become part of our new heritage, if you like, even though we did not ask for it, I do not really think that is what it is about. I will take it back to the wording of the proposition, which for me it really boils down to a very simple premise, is that as somebody who cares deeply about the environment, about our heritage and about consumer protection, they are all 3 slightly different things. Consumer protection is very different of course. But I want to make sure that all those elements are afforded the highest protection and so we do not erode them; we do not erode the environmental protections, we do not erode our heritage and we do not erode our consumer protection. That does not mean that anything is frozen in aspic. I think we can continue to innovate within appropriate developments. But if I think about which then gives the highest protection, which form of wording gives the highest protection, it has to be the one that is being proposed by the Scrutiny Panel. We know what the existing policy is. We can look at it, it is measurable. But it is not just us, it is the industry, it is different sectors, the public know exactly what is expected. Whether it is a planning application that they are putting in or whether it is how they run their businesses, it is all subject to something that they can check. It is a basic principle of the rule of law, is it not? You should know what the rule of law is or, in this case, you should know what the policies are and that Ministers should not generally have a large amount of discretion to make decisions that the public where they should expect some clarity. The second point - and I will make this my last point - is that I do not know what this current Council of Ministers is like. I do not know what they think is the appropriate level of environmental, the appropriate level of heritage, or the appropriate level of consumer protection that they think. I can certainly surmise it from some of the things they have said before the election, which is that they want to deregulate. They want lower planning standards to make it easier for maybe big multinationals to come into Jersey, and that is certainly not something I want to be part of. If it is other things like collecting a bit of sand from the beach, then I think the Minister is up for doing that and making those changes and bringing it to the Assembly or using his powers to do that. But I do not like the direction of travel that this Ministerial amendment will seek to make. For my part, I think the safest thing is to stick with what we have got. We know exactly that we have generally a high level of protection in these areas. I would not want to gamble with substituting a subjective word "appropriate", which is going to be made, ultimately, by somebody else.

The Bailiff:

If no other Member wishes to speak, I call upon the Minister to reply.

1.6.12 Senator Sir M.J. Boleat:

This has been a fascinating experience. Never before has so much time been spent on one word. **[Laughter]** We all now have a deep understanding of the meaning of "existing" possibly and we are all now word perfect on this wonderful law about the beaches. I hope Members will be more careful when they leave beaches in future. I want to take up a point that the Deputy made on this, that the law is working well. It is working well for one reason only; it is not enforced. I think as a general principle, laws that are not enforced are bad laws. It is not within my gift to amend this legislation.

I am sure, as I have said, this is the Minister's job and she has got far better things to do. I was not proposing any change. I was merely using it as a good example of regulation that is inappropriate. There is no suggestion ... I do not want to change it, I want to take sand off the beach between my toes like everybody else but it was a fascinating debate. Deputy Alves, who has promptly left as I started speaking, made, I thought, an excellent point. Taking her point, if we are using the word "protection" it almost means that all of this is irrelevant because we can change all of the laws provided we keep the protection and that then becomes very subjective. The Connétable, and I agree that "existing" is definite and "appropriate" is subjective but we are here to be subjective. We are the elected Members to take that decision about what we should be doing. I would love to have the powers that some Members seem to think I have. I do not have such powers. I have no powers to intervene in what any other Minister is doing, although I am delighted to be able to talk with them about what they are doing. Even what I can do as a Minister is constrained in all sorts of ways, as it should be. Any Member also has the power to bring a proposition on any issue to this Assembly where it will be debated. I think the chair and I are pretty united on what we want to see on regulation. She is smiling, nodding, possibly agreeing; I will take that as total agreement. I think there are some wider issues I would really like to discuss at another time about guidance. The bulk of the regulation that bites is not laws, it is not regulations, it is guidance and it is, frankly, practice within regulators. I am pleased that the Minister for External Relations has joined us. But a lot of the regulation to which financial institutions are subject are made by the Financial Services Commission that comes absolutely nowhere near this Assembly. If I can give another example, when looking through the requirements that providers of care homes for the elderly have to comply with, none of that came anywhere near the Assembly or quite possibly the Minister. Those requirements include about 30 specific requirements to comply with guidance and 15 to comply with best practice, by a legal requirement to comply with best practice without saying what it is. I am concerned about that sort of regulation, and I am making that point to regulators that that is just not acceptable to make a legal requirement on somebody to comply with undefined best practice. The Deputy has quite rightly asked for examples, but there is a bit of a clash here between examples and evidence. I like to do things with evidence putting it all together, not bit by bit. Indeed, we are consulting or we have just concluded a consultation on space standards. That has been, in my view, an exemplary consultation. We published a consultation document with facts and we are looking to see what people say and based on what they say we will take a decision.

[15:45]

That was my decision to do that sort of consultation. I have no wish to take any measures on regulation that are not supported by Ministerial colleagues, nor would they let me or that are going to be challenged rightly in this Assembly. I want to see the right sort of regulation, and that requires a good process of analysis, discussion with relevant parties and with consultation. I will give an example perhaps on heritage. I am a great believer in the Island's heritage, and I am a very active member of heritage organisations. I have been involved in a lot of work on heritage, indeed I made a speech to the Société a week or 2 ago on it. Some of the heritage protection we have, in my view, is counterproductive. With the provisions we currently have on listed buildings, if a building goes derelict that is entirely in accordance with the law; we cannot stop that. But by having, in my view, unduly onerous requirements on the placement of doors and windows, which some Members may be familiar with, what we risk is work not being done which would enhance our environment, enhance our heritage. We finish up with something that is derelict, and that is fine; it is entirely in accordance with the law. That is not what I want to see. I firmly believe that "appropriate" is the right word because I trust this Assembly and my fellow Members to make those sort of judgments on the basis of evidence. That is why I am not content with leaving the word "existing" because - thanks to all the legal clarification and I am sure there will be a learned theses written on the meaning of the word "existing" - that to me, in my view, is unnecessarily restrictive. Although, as I have said, if I take Deputy Alves' interpretation, it would enable us to do what we like, as long as we are preserving the

protection as opposed to the regulation. A fascinating debate, we are all much the wiser about sand from beaches and about the meaning of words but I think the whole of the proposition without one word changed is something I can enthusiastically endorse. I hope that the Assembly will reject the amendment and then very quickly move on to supporting the main amendment.

The Bailiff:

You would like the Assembly to adopt your amendment now.

Senator Sir M.J. Boleat:

I hope so, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Yes, all right.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Sir, would the Minister give way for point of clarification?

The Bailiff:

Will you accept a point of clarification from Deputy Alex Curtis?

Senator Sir M.J. Boleat:

Of course, Sir.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Just the Minister said that his consultation on residential space standards has recently closed. I think members of the public will be looking at the deadline for comments being today, 11th November. Would he just clarify that Islanders have until the end of today to make comments, as it is listed as end date 11/11/26?

Senator Sir M.J. Boleat:

I am sure the Member is absolutely right and I am happy to correct that point.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Sir, I wonder if the Minister would just give a point of clarification to his final sentence. I think he was encouraging Members to support his amendment.

The Bailiff:

I think I will be able to confirm that myself. Yes, do you want to confirm it again?

Senator Sir M.J. Boleat:

Right, it seems a very sensible suggestion. **[Laughter]**

The Bailiff:

Yes.

Senator Sir M.J. Boleat:

Nice to be rescued by the Senator, Sir. Yes.

The Bailiff:

Yes, thank you. The appel I think has been called for. Members are invited to return to their seats and I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce the amendment has been adopted:

POUR: 31	CONTRE: 15	ABSTAINED: 0
Senator L.J. Farnham	Connétable of St. Martin	
Senator I.J. Gorst	Connétable of St. Ouen	
Senator A. Maclean	Connétable of St. Saviour	
Senator M.R. Le Hegarat	Deputy M. Tadier	
Senator T.J.A. Binet	Deputy L.M.C. Doublet	
Senator H.M. Miles	Deputy C.S. Alves	
Senator M.E. Millar	Deputy T.A. Coles	
Senator Sir M.J. Boleat	Deputy A.F. Curtis	
Senator S. Kersten	Deputy L.V. Feltham	
Connétable of St. Mary	Deputy H.L. Jeune	
Connétable of St. Brelade	Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée	
Connétable of St. Helier	Deputy B. Ward	
Connétable of St. John	Deputy K.M. Wilson	
Connétable of St. Clement	Deputy L. Carpenter	
Connétable of Trinity	Deputy C. Leck	
Connétable of Grouville		
Connétable of St. Lawrence		
Deputy K.F. Morel		
Deputy G. Voisin		
Deputy M.B. Andrews		
Deputy R.E. Binet		
Deputy C.D. Curtis		
Deputy M.R. Ferey		
Deputy J. Renouf		
Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson		
Deputy S. Gleave		
Deputy V. Li		
Deputy R. Parker		
Deputy G. Raimondo		
Deputy C. Rebindaine		
Deputy P.J. Romeril		

1.7 Common Strategic Policy 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): nineteenth amendment (P.75/2026 Amd. (19)) - Proportionate regulation - as amended

The Bailiff:

We now return to the nineteenth amendment as amended. Does any Member wish to speak on the amendment as amended?

1.7.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

I am glad that beyond that debate on one word, the rest of this amendment is accepted. I want to call Members' attention to a part that they are supporting, should they support this. I raise this not as much as a member of the panel but as the chair of the Planning Committee, who has a lot of experience in using our Bridging Island Plan as the decision-making body. The panel has included a change to ensure that 4.1: "Revise the Island Plan, insert the words where necessary and evidenced." I have many conversations with people about planning policy and the Island Plan and being a decision-maker within that system. It is common to hear that the Island Plan is broken. I think it is good to see this Government and this Minister agreeing that the plan is not broken. What we have is a workable document. What would be important in adopting this is that the Minister brings forward the evidence to make change to facilitate economic development. The reason I find that necessary is because the Island Plan, as drafted, does a good job at that already. Some of those who have been fastest to speak against the plan have also been those who championed the approval of the second application of Strive, for example, on planning principle or were very happy to see conversion of existing buildings in town for residential, commercial or even the reconstruction of office spaces. I would say that the evidence barrier for proving change to support the economy would be high. It is not to say that there are not changes that will not support specific sectors of the economy. But I hope all Members understand that when they agree to this they are agreeing that the evidence base to change will need to be there. We can now, as an Assembly, move away for anyone who is in any doubt that the Island Plan is a workable document and acts as a good document for planning officers as a department, for the committee and for inspectors who advise the Minister to use and continue to use until evidence presents otherwise.

The Bailiff:

Does anyone else wish to speak on the amendment as amended? If no one else wishes to speak, I call upon Deputy Jeune to reply.

1.7.2 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

I will keep this brief because we had a long discussion about "existing" and "appropriate" but I would like Members to just heed what the Minister said in his summing up. Because I think there is a bit of conflation between guidance, procedures, regulation and what protection is. I think protection is that umbrella where we have the values of what we want to protect. Then you have then the law and the regulation and then under that the procedures. I think sometimes we are hearing it being conflated, and I would hope that moving forward, if this amendment is supported and we see the new wording in the C.S.P., that the Minister or Ministers - because different Ministers bring different regulation forward - is that there is that values on protection around the 3 areas of consumer, environment and heritage being placed in that when they bring amendments to the Assembly. Noting though that, as Deputy Morel said, of course this Assembly is the final place to make those amendments and make those decisions. It is up to us but, again, as others have pointed out, that has not necessarily or been the case. Because as we heard from the Minister many times, a lot of what he is talking about is guidance and procedures, which do not need to come to the Assembly and, quite frankly, could definitely be improved. I think it is really important that we do keep an eye on that, and I take the call from the Deputy that Scrutiny does that. I would like to ask the Assembly to support us on that and for other Scrutiny Panels to also take heed that Scrutiny is an important mechanism with this Assembly and the points that the Scrutiny Panel makes, it is done as a collective. This was an amendment from the Scrutiny Panel. We jointly decide that we are going to go ahead and do this, and I think it is really important that we respect Scrutiny and when they come to those issues and including those powers that the Minister put forward. I thank the Connétable of St. Mary for bringing a point from before and his experience of where the Scrutiny Panels have tried to raise the concerns about reduction in protections, and that was rejected by the former Minister. Please, I

would like to ask the Assembly to keep an eye out going forward in the next 4 years and please do support our amendment.

The Bailiff:

Is the appel called for? The appel has been called for. Members are invited to return to their seats and I ask the Greffier to open the voting on the amendment number 19 as amended. If all Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce that the amendment was adopted unanimously:

POUR: 43	**CONTRE: 0**	**ABSTAINED: 0**
Senator L.J. Farnham		
Senator A. Maclean		
Senator T.J.A. Binet		
Senator H.M. Miles		
Senator M.E. Millar		
Senator Sir M.J. Boleat		
Senator S. Kersten		
Connétable of St. Mary		
Connétable of St. Martin		
Connétable of St. Helier		
Connétable of St. John		
Connétable of St. Clement		
Connétable of St. Ouen		
Connétable of Trinity		
Connétable of Grouville		
Connétable of St. Saviour		
Connétable of St. Lawrence		
Deputy M. Tadier		
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet		
Deputy C.S. Alves		
Deputy K.F. Morel		
Deputy G. Voisin		
Deputy M.B. Andrews		
Deputy R.E. Binet		
Deputy T.A. Coles		
Deputy A.F. Curtis		
Deputy C.D. Curtis		
Deputy L.V. Feltham		
Deputy M.R. Ferey		

Deputy H.L. Jeune

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée

Deputy J. Renouf

Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson

Deputy B. Ward

Deputy K.M. Wilson

Deputy L. Carpenter

Deputy S. Gleave

Deputy C. Leck

Deputy V. Li

Deputy R. Parker

Deputy G. Raimondo

Deputy C. Rebindaine

Deputy P.J. Romeril

1.8 Common Strategic Policy 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): fourth amendment (P/75/2026 Amd.(4)) - Develop a strategy for young Islanders wishing to return to Jersey

The Bailiff:

I move on to the fourth amendment lodged by Deputy Carpenter, and I invite the Greffier to read the amendment.

The Greffier of the States:

After the words "report accompanying this proposition" insert the words - ", except that, on page 11 of the report, after action 5.2, there should be inserted the following - "5.3 Develop a strategy for young Islanders wishing to return to Jersey, to include maintaining communication with students during their studies, access to affordable housing and graduate career opportunities upon returning to the Island"".

1.8.1 Deputy L.D. Carpenter of St. Helier Central:

I would like to begin by expressing my disappointment that the Council of Ministers has chosen to reject this amendment, which seeks to make the creation of a strategy to assist young Islanders to return back to Jersey after completing further education in the U.K., a targeted action for Government over our 4-year term. Rejecting this amendment seems an illogical decision to me, and I will try to explain why. Firstly, why have I brought this amendment? The manifesto I stood on during the election included a pledge to develop a package of incentives for young people to stay here or return to Jersey after their studies. This amendment is brought predominantly on a key aspect of this pledge. Bringing an amendment purely to honour an election pledge is all well and good but is there a need that requires action? The answer, in my view, is very clearly yes. I think we all know in this Chamber that significant numbers of young people leave the Island to study and do not return. The Policy Centre Jersey found that during the 2021-2022 academic year participation in higher education was just over 53 per cent. Of those that studied in the U.K. nearly 60 per cent would not return to the Island upon graduation. The Jersey Youth Assembly's submissions to the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel Budget Review was also very eye-opening. When answering the question: "Do you see your future in Jersey?" 44 per cent of respondents said they do not see their future here in Jersey and are currently planning to live and work elsewhere, with a further 36 per cent unsure whether they

will live in Jersey or not in the future? Only 16 per cent said that they see their future in Jersey. There are of course many factors that contribute to this. We all know that Jersey has a high cost of living, approximately 20 per cent higher than the U.K. Jersey's housing market is also seen as one of the most expensive in the world. In real terms the Q2 2026 U.K. House Price Index shows a national average house price across the U.K. was £272,000. This is less than the average price of a one-bedroom flat in Jersey at around £326,000. These challenges sit against a wider population picture that we also cannot ignore. In the 10 years to 2021, the proportion of the Jersey population aged 65 and over increased from 14.8 per cent to 18.1 per cent. The dependency ratio increased from 46 to 52. This ratio compares the number of people outside working age to those of working age and is projected to increase to 76 in 2042. Statistics Jersey's latest projections go further, suggesting that with no net migration the dependency ratio could reach 94 by 2080, meaning almost one dependent person for every working age adult. Statistics Jersey has also found that if the population remains the same over the next 20 years, the working age population will decline by over 10 per cent by 2040 and that net migration of approximately 325 people each year is needed to maintain the working age population at its current size. The consequences of this will of course be significant. A larger older population will require greater spending on health and social care, while a smaller proportion of the population will be working and contributing to the taxes that fund it.

[16:00]

A higher dependency ratio places additional burden on healthcare, social security and educational systems. Jersey will, therefore, need to maintain or grow its working age population whether through inward migration, a larger resident workforce, an increase in birth rate or a combination of the 3. It makes sense, therefore, that Government should do all it reasonably can to entice young Islanders back to Jersey. They have a connection to the Island, they are likely to be at the start of their working lives and, unlike many other new arrivals, they are returning to a community that they already know. There are of course also many families around the Island who would be delighted to see their family members return, and the benefit of this outcome should not be overlooked. It is not realistic to expect all graduates to return and this amendment does not suggest otherwise. However, the Jersey Youth Assembly Budget Review submission to Scrutiny that I mentioned previously polled its members asking that if they left Jersey what would be the biggest reason. A quarter said travel and experiences, the remaining three-quarters cited career opportunities, cost of living and housing costs, all issues within our power to affect. If we can encourage even a small proportion of those who would otherwise not come back, the cumulative benefit to our workforce, our economy, our public finances and our Island would be significant. The comments issued by the Council of Ministers are, on the surface, very clear but, in my view, their approach is lacking joined-up thinking. They state that the C.S.P. supports young Islanders wishing to return to Jersey, that substantial work is already taking place across Government in this regard, including communicating with students during their higher education studies off-Island, as well as promoting a wide range of internships, work experience and student opportunities to undergraduates, as well as graduates. That all sounds fantastic but without an overarching strategy we are, effectively, asking certain teams and departments to perform certain tasks and then hoping for the best, with no real ability or seemingly even any real desire to track our success. Having a strategy in place will help us, firstly, identify our objectives, ensure funding and resources are allocated effectively, better identify opportunities and ensure better chance of co-ordination across relevant departments. Crucially, it will also mean that we can measure and evaluate how successful we have been and amend our tactical approach accordingly. I also do not see any logic in the premise that amendments must be rejected if work on them has already taken place. While I can understand wanting to keep the C.S.P. from becoming unwieldy, it is, in effect, a manifesto of pledges the new Government seeks to achieve over the course of the next 4 years. There is no good reason why it cannot or should not include initiatives that are already underway. On the contrary, if work is already underway then the inclusion of my amendment seems like something of an easy win for Government that they can tick off as accomplished further down the line. There also

appears to be an underlying inconsistency in the Council of Ministers' approach to C.S.P. amendments. With mine they request that the Assembly rejects it on the basis that work is already underway, while with others the Council of Ministers has accepted amendments citing that very same reason. The comments paper from the Council of Ministers for C.S.P. amendment 17, for example, brought by the Connétable of St. Helier entitled Responding to Demographic Change, opens with: "The Council of Ministers recommends the amendment lodged by Connétable Inna Gardiner should be accepted, as the principle has already been accepted and work is underway." I could not agree more. The Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel's Budget hearing on Monday heard the Minister for Treasury and Resources speak about the importance of having strategies in place in order to ensure money is spent appropriately and targeted effectively. I completely agree with the Minister for Treasury and Resources. I ask that Members do so too and accept this amendment.

The Bailiff:

Is the amendment seconded? **[Seconded]** Does anyone wish to speak on the amendment?

1.8.2 Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central:

This amendment impacts several Ministerial remits but principally asks for a strategy to be developed for young Islanders wishing to return to Jersey. The amendment specifically refers to students and, therefore, is very central to the remit of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning. If I had had the opportunity to see or consider this amendment before it was lodged, then I would have sought to reassure the Deputy that this work is already well in hand. Indeed, the work has become a priority of mine and was a pledge in the Reform Jersey manifesto. However, I always thought it is not good practice for States Members to put forward amendments or for Ministers to accept amendments when the work is already substantially in hand, and in this case that is exactly what is happening. For my part I must reject this amendment. Frequently there is also a call for strategies, but when work is ongoing, when it is already in a good place and when there are improvements underway refocusing of time on a strategy is not especially productive or helpful. The amendment calls for communications with students during their studies, and this is clearly already happening. The comments paper sets out the current communications plans to students, and I will read from that section now. Skills Jersey regularly communicates with off-Island students using their database of student emails. Firstly, ad hoc emails are sent to promote jobs, events, schemes, programmes, training, and networking opportunities. Secondly, a dedicated newsletter called *Connected* is distributed twice per year, sharing job opportunities in Jersey collated from Skills Jersey industry connections, and approximately 1,000 employers. For reference, the summer edition is linked in the comments paper. I would also add that the *Connected* newsletter and the e-shots get sent to all current students and graduates from the previous 3 years. Skills Jersey also offers one-to-one careers advice and appointments via Teams, and longer term mentoring for students undertaking higher education qualifications. They also promote internships, work experience and student opportunities. Ministers are committed to enhancing and improving the effectiveness of all these avenues, including increased awareness. I ask that all States Members look at the linked summer edition, and also at the linked gov.je page. The information includes a link to book a one-to-one free appointment, information about career planning, and a link to the Jersey Skills Show website. I would suggest that all States Members who have an interest in education should attend the Skills Show. I was delighted to open the show this year, which included 71 employers. For those students or graduates who cannot attend the show, or who want to catch up later, then each employer is also listed on the Skills Show website with information and their contact details. There are also internships which many students benefit from. The summer internship programme has closed and the 2027 programme will shortly be published. In addition, External Relations engages with the Jersey diaspora through the Jersey Connections initiative. This helps maintain links with Islanders overseas, promotes professional and social networks, and supports opportunities for Islanders to remain connected with Jersey and its community. Jersey Connections issues a regular newsletter to its networks, providing updates on

developments in Jersey, opportunities to engage with Island life, and information that is relevant or may be of interest to Islanders living abroad. One area which has been in need of improvement was a need for the collection into one online portal of all the information around training and career opportunities. This was identified by my Scrutiny Panel during the last term when we published the Lifelong Learning Review. Since becoming the Minister I have put into place a rollout of the recommendations in that review. We now have a programme of implementation, and one of the first projects will be the publication online by the first quarter 2027 of all training opportunities. This will include links to all the information available to students and graduates, and all in one place. Another part of the vision or the package of incentives to enable young Islanders to stay in Jersey is my focus on a new further and higher education college. Recent trends show that more young people are choosing to stay on-Island to study. We will be expanding the degree programme and expect on-Island study to increase. The previous Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning adjusted the maintenance allowance for distance learning to enable more on-Island study, and the new college will make studying on-Island a more attractive proposition. While I am sure it is a good thing for many young Islanders to get away and experience other jurisdictions, it is not necessarily so for many young people who are not yet ready or simply do not wish to go at a young age. Indeed, since taking office I have received many appeals from students who have dropped out of their U.K.-based degree course to return home, and of course a request to not pay back their grant. That is usually several every week. Another factor for more students studying on-Island is that employment opportunities for students in the U.K. have lessened dramatically. There are more opportunities for part-time work around studying here in Jersey. It is also worth noting that advertised graduate career opportunities in the U.K. have fallen by 45 per cent compared to last year. Jersey is becoming more attractive by comparison. It is clear then that there is a growing, if not plentiful, access to graduate career opportunities on-Island, which the amendment also requests. The points regarding maintaining communications and of access to graduate career opportunities are already in hand. The final point raised in the amendment is for access to affordable housing. I will only speak on this briefly, as it is not my remit. The previous Minister for Housing expanded access to social housing to include young people without children from age 18 years upwards. There is also assistance to buy a home, the First Step home ownership scheme, and for those young people who rent privately there are now protections for all tenants through the Residential Tenancy (Jersey) Law. Of course, to rent or buy a home in Jersey remains both challenging and expensive, but there have been improvements, which I have just referred to. I would not be in favour of graduates receiving special housing support, which would not be accessible to other aspiring young Islanders. That would be inequitable. Any improvements must be available to all. This is reflected in the Youth Assembly's budget report. They call for financial support for first-time buyers and greater protection for tenants. If there are more measures to come forward on these matters I will be supportive, but that does not need a strategy. States Members need not doubt the focus from myself and Assistant Ministers on improving access to training and career opportunities for young people; in fact for all Islanders. Yesterday evening, for example, after a long day in the States Assembly, I met with my Assistant Minister, an Islander who may be able to assist in providing much greater opportunities in conjunction with a top U.K. university here in the Island. The work to incentivise young people to stay in or return to Jersey is very much in hand. There will also be opportunities for improvements, and I am happy to work on those, but the amendment which calls for a strategy is ill-considered, with the work very much already in hand. It is, therefore, unnecessary and should be rejected.

Deputy G.A. Raimondo of St. Brelade:

Sir, can I just ask a point of clarification?

The Bailiff:

Are you prepared to give way?

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes.

Deputy G.A. Raimondo:

If I could just ask the Minister which email she was referring to before that they contact students with?

The Bailiff:

Minister, can you answer that question?

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

There are regular e-shots sent out to the students.

The Bailiff:

Deputy Raimondo, do you want to speak next? Your light was on.

1.8.3 Deputy G.A. Raimondo of St. Brelade:

Yes, thank you. I thought I should probably speak on this amendment; I think it is slightly relevant to myself and the people I went to school with that are now at university. It may come as a shock to some of you that I am not supporting this amendment and I think the reason behind that really comes from the wording. It very much focuses on students that have left and are currently at university. Now, I do not believe that we should focus on the students that have gone away, trying to grab them back. To be completely honest, I do not think they care about the emails being sent to them at university when they are drinking. They just want to enjoy their university experience.

[16:15]

I think the support that we should be giving and the part that we should be focusing on is when those students need to come back. When they come back that is where we need to start helping them with housing, with finding a job that allows them to live in Jersey and allows them to meet their needs. I will not go too much on that because I gather people have been here a long time and they are probably slightly tired and it is off topic. I also want to thank the Minister for going through everything that is already done because I do think it is important, but I do think we should focus more around what is happening here and I believe this would just be a waste of money and time, and we would be putting our priorities in the wrong place.

1.8.4 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North:

I will definitely be supporting Deputy Carpenter's amendment and the reason being is because I have seen many of my friends go to university and quite a lot of them stayed in the U.K., or a couple studied elsewhere, because there was nothing really to entice them back to Jersey. But I do think if we have a co-ordinated strategy in place, first and foremost we need to know what the students are studying at university and the relativeness of their skillset if they are to then come back to the Island. We do need to have a small team in Government who are communicating with students frequently to make sure that the opportunities that potentially could be available to them if they are maybe to come back in the summer ... then they should commence dialogue between businesses and the students to try and create those opportunities, so when the students finish university there might be a career opening available to them. I remember I asked a written question - and I cannot remember it exactly - about what offering is there to try and encourage our students back to the Island. In fact I had a mother who contacted me to say: "To be honest with you, Deputy, there is not really much of an offering here." Our students are not updated, they are not informed about the opportunities perhaps that are available to them, especially when they are in the middle of their studies. They are focused on doing essays, *et cetera*, and of course partying is the important part as well. But it is really crucial. We do have a demographic issue where we have got an ageing population, we have got many people who are leaving the Island, and of course we have got many students who leave the Island, some of

whom perhaps will not find a career for themselves in Jersey because maybe the field that they are working in is somewhat limited. That happened to one friend of mine who studied media in the U.K. I remember playing 5-a-side football with him one summer when he came back to the Island, and it was toward the end of his studies, and I just said: "Look, are you going to come back to the Island?" He said: "Well, no, the only opportunity really is Channel ITV and that is it. I have probably got more opportunities available to me in the U.K." I do not think he was willing to just confine himself to a certain area of the U.K.; for him it was just about exploring the world of opportunities that were perhaps available to him. But my friend in his 30s decided to come back to the Island, having purchased a property in the U.K. He built a bit of equity over time, and that was the only reason why he was able to come back because he could use that as a deposit for a property here. So the strategy itself, I guess some people could say it is quite narrow in terms of what it is trying to address, but there are all of these add-ons that we should encapsulate that should be part of the Common Strategic Policy. We have also got to find ways to try and appeal to our young people to come back to the Island, to make sure that they can build a career here, that they can build a family in the Island. Because the numbers that Deputy Doublet's question showed us about emigration, it tends to be from the ages of 16 to 39. It is a real problem, and what we will potentially end up seeing is if net inward migration is not increased, taxes in the future - and I think this will happen over a period of decades - will go up. The question will be, where will those taxes be levied? Will it be on the corporations, will it be on personal income tax? Probably it will be on middle Jersey once again unfortunately. This is the issue that we have got. I think many of our young people do not feel like they are being represented in the Assembly. They kind of just see it as a group of politicians who are more established, they are well-known, but again not much changes. I think we have got to be a bit more radical but we have also got to be more modern in our thinking and a bit more strategic as well. I think when we look at trying to bring students back to Jersey, yes, the work would be very intensive because there are loads of students, but it is about opening those lines of communication with those students to make sure we remember who they are, and we want to bring them back to the Island. There might be some cases where students are not interested in coming back and so we have to respect that, but I have listened to what the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning had to say, and I respect that is her view, but I do think more work has to be done. We have to try and bring back more young people to the Island because quite a lot of our young people do not really have much hope, and that is one of the reasons why quite a few of them decide: "Well, you know what, I am going to go elsewhere." I was in that position a little over 4 years ago myself and I thought: "Look, I can complain and do nothing or I can stand myself and try and make a difference", and in the end I stood and I tried to make a difference. But even recently before the election as well I had to sit down my partner and say: "My view is I would like to go to the U.K. and maybe give it a go there" but my partner said: "No, I do not want to do that." It is probably for similar reasons to quite a lot of our students not wanting to come back that I also wanted to explore perhaps buying in the U.K.; you have more equity in the property, cheaper mortgage repayments, *et cetera*, and also the cost of living is going to be reduced. So there are quite a few elements that we, as politicians, have to get to grips with, and I think this is a starting point and I commend the Deputy for bringing it forward. It is an amendment that I consider to be looking outside the box, it is unconventional. I probably would not have thought about it if I had a sit down to myself and thought: "Look, what areas could we maybe look at that other politicians would not think of?" So credit to him, he has done a good job there.

1.8.5 Connétable T. Palmer of St. Lawrence:

I think one of the most important pieces around this is a clear and concise career strategy that goes through the schools and through the students so that we are not waiting for them to be away at university to communicate with them. The other thing that needs to be done is the students' voice, because we are looking at what we are telling them but I have not heard much about what they think of what we have got to offer, so I think that would be another point. For what it is worth, I will be

supporting this because I truly believe that students coming back ... but not just students, a student is still a student I assume under what is being said when they are 30 and want to return to the Island. It feeds into a much bigger piece of work. Another point was the dependency ratio. I believe the dependency ratio is measured up to 65 years of age, if I am right. I am sorry but there are a number of us in the Assembly that are a few years past that dependency ratio and we are still contributing both tax and social security, so I think there is a lot of work to be done in lifelong learning, which is talked about, but there is little strategy on. So keeping people in work longer is obviously another way, an answer to support the economy.

1.8.6 Senator Sir M.J. Boleat:

I obviously wish to reject the amendment, while supporting a lot of the ideas behind it. I am going to take slight exception to "young Islanders" speaking as an older Islander, and I am going to agree with everything Deputy Raimondo says, and the fact that 2 of us with 58 years between us can say the same thing is, I think, encouraging. But we do need to think about older people returning to the Island as well younger Islanders. I quite agree that some of us over 65 are not totally useless and we can contribute, I hope, to making a contribution to the Island. The difficulty I have with the amendment is what Deputy Raimondo has said. It is looking for special treatment for people who have left the Island and to come back. Affordable housing; of course we want affordable housing, but if it is a special deal for people who have left the Island, probably increased their career earning opportunities by going to university, and they are going to have preferential treatment over Islanders. I am also very concerned about those Islanders for whom it is not financially viable to go to university in the U.K. In the U.K. about 30 per cent of university students live at home, predominantly for financial reasons, in some cases for health or caring reasons. That option is not available to most Jersey students because what they want to do is not available on-Island. I think we need to be offering more higher education on-Island, and it is a matter that the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and I are working on. I fully support lifelong learning. I have been learning today how to move my own amendments, and I have learnt a great deal by being a Member of this Assembly. The key point, of course we want more affordable housing and of course we want more career opportunity, but we want it for everybody, not just for graduates returning to the Island. Deputy Raimondo gave us a very sensible comment, do you really think students read emails that come from the Government of Jersey unless there is money attached to them? **[Laughter]**

1.8.7 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South:

I am going to start by annoying quite a lot of Members by pointing out that I am someone who is beyond middle age, at 44 years-old my life expectancy to get to 88 is marginal so there I sit firmly in that middle age bracket. I have people older than me who still have many years to contribute. I have Members younger than me that also have many years to still contribute. I am going to start from this point though by saying thank you very much to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning for highlighting the fact that she has the best intentions of young students and trying to find ways to have their education continue on-Island and provide them opportunities, and regardless of the outcome of this amendment that her work is going to continue. I think that is something that we can all support and get behind. My question though is when we look at the wording ... we will go back to words because it is very important when we get to debates and, I am sorry, you can never get away from this. In fact, I do remember my first amendment in this Assembly where I used the wrong word. I used "income" instead of "earnings" and of course the Deputy Bailiff at the time, who is now the Bailiff, rescued me, much to the dismay of the then Deputy Gorst. But, again, he did come to my rescue, and I am ever grateful for that and will never forget it because I will always check my wording. I make this point because Deputy Raimondo made the point about young students coming back to the Island, but the proposition says "young Islanders". This is people who have qualified. They might have left because their parents have taken them away, they might not have gone just because they are a student, they might have gone for other reason, and we want to find a way to make

Jersey an attractive offer for them to come back to. I also wonder if the wording of this amendment had put "graduate career opportunities" first whether the main respondent would have been the Minister for Economic Development. Or if we had put "affordable housing" whether the Minister for Housing would have been the main respondent. Because we are talking about a wide-reaching strategy. We are not talking about a single point, we are not talking just about education. We want to find a way to attract our young people or people who have a connection to the Island to come back ...

Deputy G.A. Raimondo:

Sir, can I ask a point of clarification?

The Bailiff:

Are you prepared to give way?

Deputy T.A. Coles:

No I will not give way at this moment. I will give way to the Member at the end if he still wishes. I might get to his point. I sit there and I think with young people - and some people that I know through family and friends - why they have left and things that they might want to come back for, and I am struck by some members of our Executive Committee who have got a lot younger than me now, which is weird again because I am only 44, talking about modern entertainment happens. I thought it was bizarre when somebody told me that they sit on TikTok or YouTube and they watch people colouring in for entertainment. Absolutely, same reaction. Now, how on earth is watching people colouring entertainment? But people make a living out of colouring in online because platforms like TikTok and YouTube pay people by the number of views and the number of hits they have. We have these things called influencers, that they do things online and it becomes profitable. But you cannot do that when you are based in Jersey. There is no mechanism to gain earnings through these platforms as an option to entice people back to the Island. There are many brilliant chefs that exist on this Island, we have got a great catering school on this Island, but people might leave because they cannot get the opportunities through catering on-Island, that they will go to other places, like Dubai has great caterers, they attract great chefs there. They also get to produce YouTube channels and TikTok channels where they cook and do their culinary skills online and make money out of it. Now, they could do that in Jersey using local products, selling Jersey while making a living, but of course they cannot. This is where I would look at the Minister for Economic Development because this falls within his remit and brings the strategy into another aspect. Obviously housing has already been mentioned, which would bring in the Minister for Housing. During the election campaign one of Deputy Raimondo's friends sat in the front row of one of our hustings and asked the question about what would we do to attract people back to Jersey. For me, part one was you have got to give them the career opportunities. We cannot just have everything living in finance. We have got to give them other reasons to come back to the Island. Not everybody wants to work in ... let us give them other job opportunities and develop our economy.

[16:30]

Maybe it is in hydroponic growing through different things, and there is science they can come back to this Island and do, and not just finance. Also another critical part is entertainment. What exists within Jersey for young people to do? You can jump on a train and get from one end of London to another in the same time it takes you to fly from Jersey to London, but there is less prep and you can also go back the same day. See a concert, stay out, go clubbing. We do not have that sort of nightlife and entertainment that attracts people back to stay in Jersey. But of course that was what the Fort Regent development was looking like producing, giving an entertainment complex, something where we could have big music acts perform under the dome, big comedians come back, create a sense of place and being in Jersey to attract people back. This for me is why a young Islander wishing to

return to Jersey ... a strategy around that because that will also keep people here. It will stop the allure of leaving in the first place. The Minister has already outlined that they are trying to develop more studies on-Island so they do not have to do that part, but not everything can be provided on-Island. We sometimes will have to go off. I absolutely agree that a strategy is necessary. I will go back to wording though because Deputy Carpenter has put just 3 points in this point for his strategy to include. It is not definitive, it is not over, because obviously if he started putting more items on this list that the strategy should include he would be told that he is being too prescriptive. If he had left it shorter he would have been told he was not prescriptive enough. This is one of the failings that we have with this Assembly, so I do hope that Members do reconsider and consider that adopting this strategy as worded is not being overly prescriptive because it does give flexibility to include that. So I do hope Members can support this because we do need young Islanders to want to stay. Those that have gone, for whatever reason, we want them to come back. Even myself, I still have 23 years' worth of working life to reach 67 so I can contribute for a lot longer as well.

Deputy G.A. Raimondo:

Sir, can I ask a point of clarification?

The Bailiff:

Are you prepared to give way?

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Yes, sir.

Deputy G.A. Raimondo:

Talking about wording, I just want to ask the Deputy what age he would consider to be "young Islander". Should we be helping a 6 year-old with affordable housing?

Deputy T.A. Coles:

The Deputy does raise an interesting point, because at what point does somebody become an Islander? Is that when they secure their housing qualifications, or is it birth? Because you have to have been here for 10 years, even if you are born here, to establish permanent housing qualifications. So it could be a 10 year-old but I think that might be the starting point because that is something we have in law.

1.8.8 Senator M.E. Millar:

I am probably going to say a couple of things I have said before. But what I would like to say is I imagine if somebody went to my mother and said: "Would you like her to come home?" she would say yes. Even after 30 years, even though she is 90 and I am of a good age. **[Laughter]** Woman of a certain age, I accept that. Parents want their children near them, particularly as they get older. If everybody in Jersey who is not from Jersey went home we would be in dire straits. I think we have to be realistic about the nature of the world now. There is a lot to agree with Deputy Carpenter's amendment but I think we have to be realistic. I came here in my mid-30s with a degree that was paid for by the Scottish Government and 10 years of experience, and I like to think I have contributed quite a lot to Jersey. But when I came I had no intention of staying. I had no intention whatsoever of staying because, firstly, I could not buy a house even if I wanted, and, secondly, if I could I did not think I could afford it because they are so expensive. But if on top of all that I discovered that Government were going to give some people more help to buy houses than I would have received as an incomer who was paying taxes, social security, and working very, very hard, that would have driven me to go away even faster. We have to be realistic. We have a big element generally in Jersey of the grass is greener syndrome. We look to the U.K. and say: "Oh, it is all so much better over there." No, it is not. No, it is not. If you live in a small county town there is nothing to do on a Saturday night there either other than go to the pub. The average house price may be ... was it

£250,000 did you say, Deputy Carpenter? That is probably in a small town in a county somewhere. It is not in the new town of Edinburgh or in central Manchester or the centre of London or any of the big conurbations that you might want to live in if you are 25. I am always surprised when I go to the U.K. and look at house prices at just how expensive they are, but perhaps I am looking at the wrong places. We cannot control life. Students will go away. They will go away or people will come to Jersey, they will get jobs and go away, and they will find jobs and people and places they love, and that is why people come to Jersey and stay here because we find jobs and people and a place that we love. That is what happens with people going from Jersey. It is easy for me to say this as someone who does not have children. We have to be generous with our young people to send them out to the world and let them find their way, and we have to be ambitious for them. We have to accept Jersey cannot give every young person the career they might want or that they might be capable of. You are not going to be a nuclear scientist in Jersey really. If you want to work in CERN you are not going to find the job you want in Jersey. If you want a meaningful career in the performing arts you are not going to have that career in Jersey. We have to be realistic. People leave their homes, young people leave their homes day in and day out to find the careers they want. It may be the town and it is a bus ride away, it may be a train ride away, but they will move and we have to accept that. But we do need to make sure that Jersey is a place where all people coming here, whether they are younger or older, can make a good life. Yes, I absolutely accept we want young people back, but I think the reality of life is that we are in a global environment, people are very mobile and they want to travel. Young people want to travel and we have to accept that, and we have to accept that a lot of them will not come back for many, many reasons.

1.8.9 Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central:

I support Deputy Carpenter's amendment because helping young Islanders return home should be a priority of the Common Population Policy. The Council of Ministers' comments suggests that this amendment mainly sits under lifelong learning, and I understand why the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning has a role in responding. I respect that there is good work happening in that area but the central question reaches well beyond education. It concerns the number of people of working age in Jersey, the skills available to employers, the homes people can afford, and the future of the services upon which we all depend. For that reason I would have expected the Chief Minister or the Assistant Chief Minister responsible for this area of work to lead the Government's response. Education can make contact with students and do the things that it is doing, but it cannot on its own make returning to Jersey a realistic option, which is why this belongs in the Common Strategic Policy. I was going through my 12 year-old daughter's school bag the other day. A Sunday night, looking for P.E. (physical education) kit, that type of thing. I came across her geography homework and it involved looking at population pyramids and understanding push and pull factors for population, which influence of course where people live. I am sure that Members are very familiar with those. It got me thinking that if my 12 year-old can understand that people are pushed away by some circumstances and attracted by others, I think that we can reasonably expect the Council of Ministers to manage the same homework. But the serious point here is that people make choices. Housing costs, career prospects and the life they can build all influence those choices. A connection to Jersey can be a powerful reason to return but it does not pay the rent or create a suitable job. I will say it again, we are in a global marketplace for working-aged people. Young Islanders can compare the opportunities available here with those elsewhere, and we should want Jersey to make a persuasive offer to them. Of course it is important to remember that young people are not always students. I know from my own experience that leaving and returning are not necessarily single decisions made at the end of university. My husband and I came back to Jersey after university but then a few years later, while we were still young, left again to pursue career and lifestyle opportunities in Australia and we spent 10 years there. While we were still relatively young we made the decision to come back with our young child because we wanted to be near our parents. Jersey is our home and we believed it was a good place to bring up a family, and that was our reason for returning. That

experience is why I would never suggest that young people should feel guilty about leaving. Living elsewhere can offer experience and opportunities which enrich their lives. If they later choose to return Jersey can benefit from what they have learned. We should keep that door open. We should recognise that affection for home and a real opportunity to return are different things. Someone can want their child to grow up near their grandparents and still be unable to find a home they can afford. They can want to bring their skills back and still struggle to find a route into work which makes use of them. Reform Jersey's manifesto commits us to developing incentives for young people to stay in or return to Jersey after their studies, including housing support. Deputy Carpenter's amendment gives this Assembly an opportunity to put that objective into the Government's Strategic Policy. The Council's comments describe existing work by Skills Jersey and the Jersey Connections initiative. I welcome the careers advice, mentoring, student communications and contact with Islanders oversees. That work provides a basis upon which to build and a strategic commitment by a new Government and an Assembly at this point in time is important. Ministers also recognise that people may return later after gaining experience elsewhere. I agree, and my own experience illustrates precisely that point. Sending someone information about a job is useful. We should then ask whether the opportunity, pay and housing available together allow that person to return. A strategy should help Government identify where that route breaks down and what it can reasonably do about it. It should give departments a shared objective and establish who is responsible for bringing that work together, otherwise each service can point to its own activity while the wider problem remains unsolved. This amendment does not ask us to guarantee that every graduate will return, or to promise a particular home or job to every person. It asks Government to develop a strategy which takes those barriers seriously. The Council of Ministers have a statutory function to discuss and agree its Common Population Policy regularly, and at least annually. Helping young Islanders return is a practical issue for that collective responsibility. Jersey should remain a place where people can see a future for themselves. For those who leave it should remain somewhere they can realistically choose to come home to. I want my daughter's generation to have opportunities elsewhere and a real choice about returning. Jersey must remain an Island of opportunity for them, and I ask Members to support Deputy Carpenter's amendment.

1.8.10 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:

I am very pleased to follow Deputy Feltham, who made what I think was a very good speech. We may end up on separate sides of the voting on this, and I will explain why but I think we have very shared principles, beliefs and hopes for our young people and our community. I do think it is very good what she has just said. Also, Deputy Raimondo and Deputy Coles, the things I had written down were we have talked a lot about semantics today and the question about how you define a young person was exactly what I was going to open with because how do you? I was not long ago at a C.P.A. (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association) event where this question came up and a discussion was had across the floor with parliamentarians from across the Commonwealth. A really interesting comment was made, and I cannot remember which country it was but let us say it was the other side of the world. They defined young people in their Parliament, they said: "We have got somebody who is only 35 as a young person in our Parliament." I still do not quite fit into the category but it made me feel a little bit better about myself anyway. But it also focused the minds. We were talking about having a young person in our Assembly, as we now do, and the Isle of Man I think recently had a young person elected as well. It was interesting to hear those conversations and what different places interpret as "young", and probably within different contexts. As a side note, how do you define an Islander? In my view, an Islander is somebody who has made Jersey their home. To me it is day one when you arrive in Jersey we should think of you as an Islander, but that is by the by.

[16:45]

One more semantic comment before I do move on. I am pleased that the amendment does say "wishing to". As others have said, that really is what we should be hoping to when we are talking about this subject. It is not about forcing anybody back, making anybody feel guilty about leaving, but about enabling those who wish to return to Jersey, so I am pleased about that also. As you can probably sense, I am very sympathetic to the Deputy who has brought this amendment and to the thinking behind it. However, for me I believe that the amendment is focusing in slightly the wrong place, and that is for a couple of reasons. As we have heard from the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, there is work already going on, and I do support that. To make it very clear, I do want to see opportunities for graduates in Jersey; of course I do. I want to see those who do return here to have good job options, access to quality affordable housing and more, and I do welcome all the work of the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning and others in that regard. But I think where Government could be focusing its efforts, if we were going to have a strategy or a focus, to me it is a slightly older group of Islanders. Again, it comes back to what we are classing as young, and I think talking to some of what Deputy Feltham was talking about, for me Jersey's U.S.P. (unique selling position) where we could be focusing with some very meaningful work and having the most impact is looking at those who have perhaps been away, maybe studied, they might have travelled, they might have gone off and seen the world and had experiences and worked in other places. That might have been for a year; it might have been for a few years. I do apologise that I am making some very sweeping generalisations here but when we have these conversations in this Assembly - often we do, so I am aware it is not for everybody - everybody's stages of life are different. We will all make our own individual decisions. But typically we have seen in our demographic patterns, people having children older, doing a bit of the career thing first and then settling down. For me that U.S.P. that Jersey has, and an opportunity we have to be even better, is around those who are ready to settle down, who want to buy their family home and they want to perhaps start a family. I appreciate there are challenges in that, huge ones, in having a family home, but to me that is where we should be focusing our efforts. We have made great strides in this Island in recent years around family friendly policies and we are continuing to do so. It is not perfect. We know that cost-of-living challenges hit families hard and people are finding it hard at the moment, but there is real potential there. If Government was to have a strategy of this kind I would like to see it focusing on those kind of people. I think, as I say, that is where we could have the biggest impact, where our U.S.P. would be. The key to a good strategy I am always told is to first define the problem. In this case I do not think that I am quite aligned with the Deputy in his amendment on the details of that problem. I think we agree on some of it, but for me it is not clear enough, specific enough, and detailed enough on what I would like to see there, so I will not be supporting the amendment, but that does not mean to say that I do not appreciate where it is coming from. I echo many of the points that Deputy Feltham has said in her speech as well.

1.8.11 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

One of the advantages of going late is that an awful lot has already been said, and I can discount three-quarters of what I had originally set out to say. The one point I would want to emphasise was made by Senator Millar and Deputy Feltham, which is that it is not the case that we should encourage everyone to come back to Jersey. Some people's future lies elsewhere. We should be proud of that and we should be proud of the diaspora that goes out into the world and represents Jersey. Some of those will eventually come back, whether that is to the benefit of the Island we may take a different view. The main point I wanted to pick up on, which I think is the only point that has not been addressed, is the point that was made about the alleged disparity in the Government's approach to amendments were work is already underway; that supposed inconsistency where we have accepted somewhere work is underway and rejected others. For me the reason for rejecting an amendment where work is already underway, and in fact the choice that we make about those is specific to the particular amendment. In this case, I think it is because it requires additional work that is not necessary. The key point here is it is not a free hit to put an extra priority into the C.S.P. when it

requires, in this case, particular work that will, in the end, in terms of actual outcomes change very little. We have heard the Minister speak for 10 minutes about the work that is already underway and the work that is already planned. In that situation we have to ask seriously whether we really want to spike into the C.S.P. something like that when it will divert work. It does not need a new strategic priority and it does not need a new strategy that will divert work. That is the point. You cannot just be additive. It is not the case that you can keep adding stuff into the C.S.P. There is a price, and it will be paid in work not done. It is diluting. Therefore, because it is not necessary and because it is asking for extra work, I think in this case the Council of Ministers' position is justified, notwithstanding - I will echo all the other points that have been made about the principle of wanting to enable people to come back to Jersey. I just think it is already underway and there is not a need to go this extra step.

1.8.12 Deputy V. Li of St. Helier North:

I happen to come from the other side of the world. Born and raised in China during the one child policy era, and perhaps because of that experience I am always very cautious about policies that seek to engineer population outcomes through Government intervention. I agree with Deputy Coles and Senator Millar that Government cannot provide jobs for every single graduate, and certainly cannot provide a role for any aspiration; influencer, artist, or nuclear scientists. But that is really not the point of this amendment. This amendment does not ask the Government to guarantee employment or housing, it asks the Government to recognise that losing a large proportion of our educated young people has economic and social consequences for this Island. If we are investing in their education, like we do now, it is reasonable to ask whether there are unnecessary barriers preventing them from returning, particularly housing and awareness of career opportunities. Hence I support this amendment.

1.8.13 Deputy K.M. Wilson of St. Clement:

I support this amendment because I think it raises an important question about the future of our Island and the question is: can young people see a future for themselves here and what can we do to help them make life better? When we debate the C.S.P. we understandably focus on the immediate pressures facing us, and people have talked about that already. I really do think that the C.S.P. needs to look beyond the next 4 years and think about the generations who will shape Jersey's future. What is our offer to them? Can we see that in the C.S.P.? To use a business marketing metaphor, how do we attract young customers back to the business of what it is to have a Jersey life. We have already heard about the importance of investing in education and skills, and I commend the Ministerial contribution and leadership on that. But my question is more about whether we are creating the conditions that will encourage them to bring the experience that they have elsewhere back to Jersey, and what is going to be here for them when they do. The question is where does the C.S.P. reference any of that? For me, the conditions are not simply about having a job available, they include all of the things that Members have spoken about previously - access to affordable housing and career opportunities, *et cetera*. These things, in my view, are not additive, they are connected. If you want Islanders to build a life in Jersey we want to understand how those different policies work together and where they may be creating barriers. I recognise the work being done through the Skills Jersey and Jersey Connections, including careers advice and mentoring, and that work is worthwhile. I am not suggesting that nothing is happening, but I think Ministers are in the place of having to answer a slightly different question. Having a number of initiatives is not necessarily the same as having a co-ordinated approach. Keeping in touch with someone is not the same as understanding what is preventing them from returning. Promoting job opportunities does not, on its own, address the affordability of housing, or whether there is a realistic career path for them here. The Minister has suggested that Jersey needs to be an attractive place to live and work and that many people return later in life. Of course that does happen but surely we should not simply be relying on the hope that people will eventually come home. It would be helpful to know what works; what evidence Ministers

have that the current arrangements are working; how many Islanders are we reaching; how many are returning, how many are staying and, importantly, do we understand why others choose not to come back; who has overall responsibility for bringing together the different strands of Government policy on this issue; are there any measurable objectives and how will the Assembly know whether we are making progress in this area. I am supportive of having a clearer approach to this, one that identifies and communicates the barriers, brings all of the relevant policies together, establishes that responsibility, and brings those outcomes forward with measurable indicators. There is also a wider economic and demographic consideration here. Those who have left may return with valuable qualifications, professional experience, contacts and perspectives that contribute to our economy and public services. This is about more than filling vacancies or attracting skills, it is about whether the next generation can genuinely see a future for themselves in the place where they grew up. I think we need to look at this through the lens of future generations. We cannot expect young people to return simply because Jersey is their home. We have to make it a realistic and attractive place in which to build lives. The C.S.P. should not just be about managing the pressures of the next 4 years, it should also be about the kind of Island that we are creating for the years beyond that. So I would ask Ministers if the existing initiatives are sufficient, what evidence are you using to demonstrate that? If we do not need a strategy, how will we ensure that the different policies affecting young Islanders are joined up, and that somebody is accountable for the overall outcome? For me, this amendment is not about producing another document, it is about taking a more deliberate approach to retaining our connection with young Islanders, understanding what stands in their way, and giving them a genuine opportunity to return. We should not simply measure the success of Jersey by how many people we attract to the Island, we should also ask whether we are creating a place to which the people who grew up here want and are able to return. I believe that is an important ambition. I do not see that reflected in the C.S.P. in the way that it is written at the moment. I think this amendment does add to that and I think it deserves to be part of the Common Strategic Policy and, therefore, support this amendment.

1.8.14 Senator L.J. Farnham:

My speech has been taken down to about a minute, you will pleased to know, because of what has been said. I refer particularly to the speeches of Deputy Renouf and Deputy Stephenson, and because Deputy Feltham suggested I should speak. When I first saw Deputy Carpenter's amendment I spoke to the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, and we discussed that this looked like something that could be accepted, and then I learnt about the strategy that is already in place which is quite significant. Through Skills Jersey we maintain contact with students. I know they are drinking most of the time.

[17:00]

I spent 4 years in London "studying" **[Laughter]** and learning, and my alcoholic tolerance has been greater ever since I got back. But when I was there it made me realise how lucky we were to live in Jersey, for example the safety and the climate. I remember on many occasion being jammed into a tube on a hot, sunny morning at 7.00 a.m. when it was high tide in Jersey, crammed in with thousands of people, and I could not wait to get back. But in the Skills Jersey programme we maintain contact with students when they are studying, from graduate opportunities, internships, work experience, provide careers advice and mentoring. We are also developing - as Deputy Feltham mentioned - Jersey Connections to keep our diaspora engaged with opportunities and life back at home. But there is a more fundamental point, and the point is driven home by the work of this Assembly, by the Common Strategic Policies, and by the work that is at the heart of this Government, and I believe it is at the heart of this Assembly as well. That is to realise that young people - and "people", you do not have to be young - my son is away, he is in his 30s, he is going to come back some day but they are content where they are at the moment for a number of reasons, none of them because Jersey is not right for them. They look forward to coming back but they have made the decision to take that

course of life. We have to realise that people will return to Jersey if they can see a future here. That means good jobs, career progression, affordable housing, a good quality of life. That is where we need to focus, on top of all the good work, the strategy that is being handled by Skills and Education and such forth at the moment. I, therefore, ask Members to reject this amendment because we have a good strategy, we have good work, we are doing everything we can to encourage people to come back to Jersey, but until we get those fundamentals right ... good jobs and cheaper housing, that is what will bring them back and that is where we should focus.

1.8.15 Deputy S.J. Gleave of St. Helier South:

I am very motivated to get this right because I have 2 young boys, both in their early 20s, both telling me they do not want to live in Jersey. Part of that is because they want that thing of stretching their wings, they have always been in Jersey, the grass is always greener. But when I get beyond that and I ask them and say: "In the future, maybe when you have got a family, would you come back to Jersey?" as a hopeful mother. It comes down to 3 things. It is job opportunities, cost of living, and there is nothing to do. That ties into what we are already addressing. It ties into the visitor economy, the economy and growing those legs of the stool that we need to so that there are more job opportunities and other things outside of finance, that it is not just finance and States jobs, and cost of living. When I left university almost all of my friends went to live in London from university. It was sort of what you "did". That is no longer, I understand, the case. In fact, none of my nieces have gone to live in London because London is so expensive. Jersey is now 11 per cent more expensive than London. It is not a surprise that we are not attracting students back here. In comparison, I had a friend recently who went to Stratford and was commenting how cheap they found Stratford. I just did a quick Google search; Stratford is 50 per cent cheaper than London. I want Jersey to be on the right side of that comparison. I want it to be cheaper than London. If we can have a laser focus on the cost of living hopefully we can start attracting people back here, and that is why I will not be supporting the amendment. Not because I do not want to attract people back here, I really want to, but I think we do it by focusing on the cost of living, and that is applicable for all Islanders, not just one demographic.

1.8.16 Deputy C.S. Alves of St. Helier Central:

I just wanted to pick up on a few things that have been said. I think it was the Minister and Senator Boleat talked about how it would not be appropriate to give preferential treatment to those that are local. Well, let me take you on a bit of a journey. I am twice the age - a little bit more - than Deputy Raimondo, and I never had an intention to come back to Jersey. In fact I had my visa ready to go to Australia when I met my now ex-husband. I only really came back because of that. He is now my ex so there we go.

Male Speaker:

Point of clarification. Was that to get away from him?

Deputy C.S. Alves:

No, it was actually to come to be with him, believe it or not. Yes, so now you have me here for ever. So, at the time, the reason I was able to so easily get approved for a visa in Australia was because I am a qualified maths teacher. Maths is in short demand across the world; it still is, and especially in secondary education. I also had I.C.T. (information and communications technology) as well as my minor. But what I quickly learned was that being a local and coming back to teach in my local secondary schools counted against me. Because there was, and I believe there still is, a whole relocation package that is offered to professionals who are not locals but come to the Island to work here. That includes help with costs of accommodation. Maybe a Minister can correct me if I am wrong, but I believe that still exists. So, there were a number of teachers who had exactly the same contract as me, but because they were not local they were getting help with their accommodation,

they were given extra relocation costs as well to be covered, and that was all part of their package. Now, I see that as preferential treatment and I would have been better off not being local. I did the Government a favour by coming back and having my skills and putting them into our local economy and our local schools, which they potentially could have lost. As I said, I am twice the age of our Deputy Raimondo here, but I do have a brother who is 10 years younger than me, and he qualified as an I.T. (information technology) consultant. Well, he qualified in I.T., he is now an I.T. consultant. When he first came back to the Island, I was shocked that he was struggling to get a job placement in his area, given his expertise. I.T. was kind of up and coming at that time, if you can imagine that is probably almost 10 years ago now. I said to him, why do you not reach out to Digital Jersey, for example, being one of our A.L.O.s (arm's length organisations), being here to support our people, to try to help you get into a company that will support your skills and that will help you. Now, bearing in mind, my brother could have gone halfway across the world and been on a starting salary of 6 figures, but he chose to come back to Jersey, and he chose to do that and to use his skills here. When he did approach Digital Jersey, he did not have much help. He ended up working basically on a help desk for a finance company. He is now working for an I.T. company. I will not name them, but they do a lot of work for Government. He was also one of the people who, I am sure he will not mind me saying, who made the COVID app at the time. So he has really important skills that this Island needs. There is a 10-year age gap between us. So that just shows me that not a lot has changed, to be honest. What this amendment does is it supports those wishing to return. It is not trying to force anybody to return. It is simply saying we need to look at this and we need to look at our locals and, instead of giving a package to those that are not local, who we will also then have to do things like give them residential qualifications to enable them to live locally, our local people already have that, especially if they have gone through education, this amendment really focuses the mind and makes Government look at a strategy to support those wishing to return. I agree we should not be giving preferential treatment, but unfortunately we already do. We do that for professionals who are not locals wishing to come and live on our Island. So I would urge Members to support this amendment.

The Bailiff:

Point of clarification?

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes, please.

The Bailiff:

Are you prepared to give way for a point of clarification, Deputy Alves?

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Sure, yes.

The Bailiff:

Yes.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

It was just to ask the Deputy what her understanding was when she mentioned about the Minister making a remark about locals?

Deputy C.S. Alves:

I think I said that the Minister talked about it not being appropriate to give preferential treatment. I may be wrong. If I am wrong, then I take that back. Sorry, through the Chair, my understanding was that the Minister mentioned talking about not appropriate to give preferential treatment, but I may have misheard or maybe misquoted.

1.8.17 Connétable M.A. Labey of Grouville:

Very briefly, 3 children, all 3 made their choices about Jersey or coming back to Jersey, primarily on one aspect, and that is jobs, careers. My eldest is a midwife, went away to train because she knew she had a job back here in Jersey where she is with my 2 grandchildren. My youngest came back here because we have full employment and she was able to choose the career of her choice to suit her needs. I am sure those of you who know my son, he could not have found a career as a lead in London's West End in Gloucester Street. So he has to live in the U.K., but he is thinking now about returning to have a family. Is that not strange? We have heard that already mentioned in here. We have a very secure place to live. We have a wonderful education system, which I am sure his children would enjoy if he had a family. It is secure. We do not have gang violence, very little homelessness. There are lots of things that people are attracted to Jersey about, but primarily my children, it is all about jobs and careers, and that is their reason for coming back. I think Deputy Carpenter has done a wonderful job of all the statistics he has come up with for this amendment. I congratulate him. It is also wonderful to have somebody in the demographic that we are talking about right here in the Chamber; it is lovely to have Deputy Raimondo with us. But for me, it is all about the careers and this Government of forging forward to try to encourage diversity of careers available in Jersey. That is the key to this, I really do believe.

1.8.18 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

I do want to bring a new angle to this debate. I think there is a section, or possibly more than one section, of Jersey society that we fail to consider up until now. While it has been said that there is an overriding reason that young people come back to Jersey, it could be jobs ... I thought Deputy Gleave gave a good speech and analysis about what she envisages and what the feedback is she has had from her own 2 sons. I think they are sons, are they not? There is another reason that if you have strong family ties in Jersey you are more likely to return. So I know we have all been talking slightly personally; it is perhaps inevitable in this kind of debate. This is why I thank Deputy Carpenter for bringing this amendment, his first amendment, I think, in this first opportunity he has had, because whether this wins or not today, I think this is a valuable debate that is being had. It is something that does belong in the C.S.P., because it is something that we have all heard about in the run-up to the election. But even before that, we know that it is a perennial issue. So, for my part, when I was a young person who had done some time at university, some time abroad as a student, I had the privilege of living in different countries, learning a different language or practising a different language. But then I had a period of time when I did come back to Jersey, but then I decided to go and live abroad again. If it was not for the fact of one thing for me I probably would not necessarily have ever come back to Jersey. It is the fact that I had a family here and I had a home here. I specifically had parents who I wanted to see again who were getting older. So that was the big draw for me. I would question whether we have given any consideration in this debate, I do not think we have, of where the Government, either in the past or currently, is giving any consideration to care leavers. Because I wonder what happens if you have left Jersey from a care setting, you go to perhaps university or you leave Jersey, maybe for some work or life opportunities, perhaps to the U.K. is the largest draw for many people. What incentive do they have to come back to Jersey? They are not necessarily keeping in contact with people in Jersey. I am not being funny. I am sure it is really welcome and it is good that the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning is keeping in contact and sending out these emails.

[17:15]

I did like Deputy Raimondo's comment that if you get an email through from a Minister in Jersey or a department and it is all quite formal, do you even get it in your inbox? Does it go to your spam? What level of priority do you give it? Because, on the one hand, he suggested you might be busy studying or you could be busy drinking, depending on which way you look at it. I do not know if we should categorise young people in that way now. I think demographics have changed. I think a lot

of young people are not necessarily interested in the same things that potentially students were 20 or 30 years ago. I heard the comments that were made by Senator Millar that why would you want to live in a sleepy little village in the U.K. where you can buy a house for £150,000 to £250,000? Well, that might be exactly the kind of lifestyle that a 25 year-old who has left university wants. They can go into the country. They might have a nice, quiet local pub. They might have a nice running group or a crochet group that they can join. Probably not at that age; let us not be completely ludicrous. But there might be lots of other social groups. There could be a church network that they want to be part of. There could be other social networks that are strong, even in deepest rural England or, dare I say, Scotland that might attract them to it. But, again, it is the ties that bring people back to Jersey. When we were asked this question recently at a visit to Victoria College, it was a question that the young people asked us: "Do you think we should be doing more to get people back to Jersey?" In fact, I think the question was: "Do you think young people should come back to Jersey?" My answer was pretty much like what most Members have been saying. We should not be tying people to come back to Jersey automatically. There is a big wide world out there to explore and to visit. There are great opportunities out there. It might be that you find yourself wanting to come back when you are 35, when you are 45, when you are 55, or even you might want to come back in your mid-70s to run for election. Who knows? These are all aspirations that people have in Jersey. You might even be a 79 year-old whose opponents say that you are older than you are and that you are not fit for the job. So it depends. There is no young age or old age which qualifies us for a job or which qualifies people to want to come back to what might have been their homeland at some point. This is why I think what Deputy Carpenter is getting at here is vital. Because we tend to think in clichés, I think. We tend to think of an archetypal young person, a couple who have moved to the U.K. or moved elsewhere. What would be bringing them back to Jersey? We need to be thinking about them in the round. We need to be thinking about all those connections. I think it is generally right, if we include this as a strategic priority, is it more likely to happen or is it less likely to happen? I would suggest it is more likely that this current Government will give it more attention than if it was not included here. Because they seem to be giving us 2 different reasons. They seem to be, on the one hand, saying we do not need to include it because the work is already being done. But secondly, they are saying we do not want it to be included because then we would have to do things and it would cost money. We would have to reprioritise. So which one is it? If the work is already being done, and it is being done to a sufficiently high level, then surely this should be just added as a priority which you are prioritising. What we have learned today is that the Council of Ministers are not prioritising this as much as they should be, because they would need more resources. They would need to give it more energy and more attention if they were to make it a priority. That is what I would like them to do. I do not think it is high up enough their ladder of priorities. The beauty is, by making Jersey a place which is going to attract young people back, so whether it is through a bespoke policy that we set up, could be to do with housing, could be to do with the tax break, could be to do with you do not pay social security at the same level for the first 2 years when you return. All sorts of things. That might not be something that we just want to apply to young people. It could be to older people who have spent their lives working in the city of London, for example. We could give them a tax break to incentivise them to come back to Jersey. Let us be flexible and imaginative about what we do here. But the bottom line is it will make Jersey a more vibrant place. Because we have a double whammy at the moment. Not only are we losing young people who go to university and then do not come back, we also do not have the university ourselves. So we have some very good offerings currently on-Island, but they are not a patch on what our young people might expect across the piece, academically or indeed vocationally, that they can get elsewhere. So we are losing people quite rightly to go to the U.K., usually, and I would encourage youngsters to look beyond the U.K. There are opportunities to go across the pond, to go to France, the overseas territories in France, Rennes and Caen, for example, but Europe. So there are lots of opportunities for young people to come to. But secondly, we do not have that university which could be, first of all, retaining students and then bringing new young people into Jersey who might be on a tourist visa, who also might make this

Island their home. So I think we have had a really positive debate. I hope that this debate is not forgotten. I do commend Deputy Carpenter for his first amendment. I think it is one of those that we must not forget what has been said here, because there has been a lot of agreement. We have been vigorously agreeing with each other. I just hope that the product that we get in 4 years' time, when this Government has ... I am not going to say run its course, but when it has had its term, that we see some tangible net benefits towards the aspiration that is being put forward by Deputy Carpenter. The way to do that is to support the amendment.

1.8.19 Deputy F.G. Voisin of St. Helier North:

It is just useful, perhaps, to gather up a lot of loose ends. Everybody wants young Islanders to return to Jersey. That is a given. But I think the Common Strategic Policy is wanting Islanders of any age wishing to come to Jersey to be given an opportunity. Islanders of any age, not only to come to Jersey, but to return to Jersey. Also, Islanders of any age to stay in Jersey as well. We need our people to stay here. I certainly accept that high cost of living, housing, and jobs are key to attracting people to Jersey and getting these people to stay. Of course, the Common Strategic Policy does this. Item (1) is about dealing with the cost of living, bearing down on it. Items (2) and (3) are about creating jobs, diversifying the economy. (5) is about providing education and training, lifelong learning as well as junior learning. Also, item (6), lowering the cost of housing. So the Common Strategic Policy deals with all of the issues that are being raised in this amendment, only they are focused on people of all ages, not just on young people. So I would urge the Assembly to vote against the amendment.

The Bailiff:

Does anyone else wish to speak on this amendment? If no one else wishes to speak, I call upon Deputy Carpenter to reply.

1.8.20 Deputy L.D. Carpenter:

I thank those Members who have contributed to a very interesting debate. I will keep my closing remarks fairly brief. In my view, this debate comes down to one real question. Is a strategy a good idea? I believe it plainly is. The need is not in doubt. The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning has made it clear that valuable work is now underway. But siloed work in isolation is usually inefficient and lacks the ability to track success. A strategy is how we move from good intentions to results. It makes us set clear objectives for what we are trying to achieve. As I have said, it ensures funding and resources are allocated where they will have the most effect. It helps us identify opportunities we might otherwise miss. It brings departments and teams together so their efforts are co-ordinated rather than separate. Above all, a strategy lets us measure success. We can set targets, track how many young people return, and learn which initiatives are working and which are not. Then we can change our approach accordingly. Without that, no one in this Chamber, including the Council of Ministers, can say whether the current work is effective. Senator Boleat said he would be rejecting the amendment as it referred to special treatment for those away from the Island. Deputy Raimondo alluded to the same. The amendment does not ask for any special treatment. It asks for access to affordable housing to be available to those away from the Island who are seeking to return. It does not state that this needs to be at the expense of anyone already here, merely that affordable housing is available. Deputy Stephenson and Deputy Raimondo asked how we define a young person. It is a really valid question. I am largely agnostic on what the strategy may end up looking like and how it makes such definitions. Senator Millar says you cannot be a nuclear scientist and live in Jersey. My opening speech was very clear that this amendment is not looking to attract every single student back to the Island. The amendment is targeting those wishing to return. However, when three-quarters of those polled by the Jersey Youth Assembly cite issues we can tangibly affect as reasons that they may leave, we surely have a duty to act. Deputy Renouf stated that a strategy will achieve very little. I challenge the Deputy to demonstrate just how

successful we have been in 4, 8, 10 years' time if we do not have a strategy in place. I expect he will find it challenging to do so. The Chief Minister said that he spoke with the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning when this amendment was lodged and was minded to accept this amendment until learning about the strategy already in place. There is no strategy in place, and that is the entire point. There are a series of individual initiatives taking place with no single individual either responsible for its success or able to measure its success. Existing work does not make a strategy unnecessary. It makes it easier to deliver because the foundations are already in place. This amendment simply asks Government to bring that work together and ensure it is focused to give it direction and purpose. This, in my view, is a modest practical step which gives Government a way of knowing whether the existing work is succeeding. I ask Members to support it. I call for the appel.

The Bailiff:

The appel has been called for. Members are invited to return to their seats. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce the amendment has been defeated:

POUR: 17	**CONTRE: 29**	**ABSTAINED: 0**
Connétable of St. Mary	Senator L.J. Farnham	
Connétable of St. Martin	Senator I.J. Gorst	
Connétable of St. Brelade	Senator A. Maclean	
Connétable of St. Clement	Senator M.R. Le Hegarat	
Connétable of St. Saviour	Senator T.J.A. Binet	
Connétable of St. Lawrence	Senator H.M. Miles	
Deputy M. Tadier	Senator M.E. Millar	
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet	Senator Sir M.J. Boleat	
Deputy C.S. Alves	Senator S. Kersten	
Deputy M.B. Andrews	Connétable of St. Helier	
Deputy T.A. Coles	Connétable of St. John	
Deputy L.V. Feltham	Connétable of St. Ouen	
Deputy H.L. Jeune	Connétable of Trinity	
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée	Connétable of Grouville	
Deputy K.M. Wilson	Deputy K.F. Morel	
Deputy L. Carpenter	Deputy G. Voisin	
Deputy V. Li	Deputy R.E. Binet	
	Deputy A.F. Curtis	
	Deputy C.D. Curtis	
	Deputy M.R. Ferey	
	Deputy J. Renouf	
	Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson	
	Deputy B. Ward	

Deputy S. Gleave

Deputy C. Leck

Deputy R. Parker

Deputy G. Raimondo

Deputy C. Rebindaine

Deputy P.J. Romeril

The Bailiff:

Chair of P.P.C., do you want to mention tomorrow?

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Yes. I did send an email around to Members to gauge their interest about sitting late. I did get a number of responses from people who already have prior commitments and cannot make it, so therefore I will not be suggesting that. It might be an idea for us to consider shortening our lunch breaks to be from 1.00 p.m. until 2.00 p.m. instead for the next couple of days. That way we will just gain an extra hour. So, if Members are happy with that, I can see a lot of nods, I will propose that now so that we are clear on our direction for the next couple of days.

The Bailiff:

That is proposed now and seconded. **[Seconded]** Are Members generally are content with that?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

The only thing, we have a Council of Ministers meeting arranged for tomorrow lunchtime. I would propose that tomorrow we retain the same lunch hour for that reason. It is on quite an important matter.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Was that an official proposition?

The Bailiff:

The proposition has been made for one-hour lunches. We are now in the debate, which will be quite short. The Chief Minister is against it. What is your view?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

My view is, tomorrow, I am very pleased, I speak from the board of Brighter Futures, upon which I sit. Tomorrow we have a meeting at lunchtime with Brighter Futures coming in. I know 26 Members of the Assembly had agreed to attend that. So that is from 1.00 p.m. until 2.00 p.m. Obviously it takes a little bit of time to get people into the room, get people out of the room. So that is why I would personally be against this, because we have this. Obviously the Council of Ministers meeting is also a problem. I would not mind seeing that moved as well.

The Bailiff:

Does anyone else wish to speak? Yes, forgive me.

Deputy C.S. Alves:

Sorry, can I suggest that we do not do tomorrow, but we do Friday?

The Bailiff:

Yes. Are all Members content with Friday 1.00 p.m. until 2.00 p.m., or does anyone wish to speak on that? So Members are agreed, we will have a normal lunch hour tomorrow, and on Friday 1.00 p.m. until 2.00 p.m. only. Are Members content now to adjourn? The States are adjourned until 9.30 a.m. tomorrow morning.

ADJOURNMENT

[17:30]