

# STATES OF JERSEY

## OFFICIAL REPORT

WEDNESDAY, 22nd OCTOBER 2025

|                                                                                        |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>PUBLIC BUSINESS - resumption .....</b>                                              | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>1. Supplementary Planning Guidance: Parking (P.54/2025) .....</b>                   | <b>3</b>  |
| 1.1 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier: .....                                     | 3         |
| 1.1.1 Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin: .....                              | 5         |
| 1.1.2 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South: .....                                     | 9         |
| 1.1.3 Deputy M.R. Ferey of St. Saviour: .....                                          | 11        |
| 1.1.4 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade: .....                                           | 12        |
| 1.1.5 Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin: .....                                 | 15        |
| 1.1.6 Deputy A. Howell of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity: .....                    | 15        |
| 1.1.7 Connétable K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour: .....                                      | 15        |
| 1.1.8 Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade: .....                                          | 16        |
| 1.1.9 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South: .....                                      | 17        |
| 1.1.10 Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John: .....                                        | 17        |
| 1.1.11 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement: .....                                        | 19        |
| 1.1.12 Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central: .....                                | 21        |
| Deputy A.F. Curtis: .....                                                              | 22        |
| <b>1.2 Supplementary Planning Guidance: Parking (P.54/2025) - reference back .....</b> | <b>25</b> |
| 1.2.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement: .....                                         | 25        |
| 1.2.2 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier: .....                                   | 25        |
| 1.2.3 Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity: .....                   | 26        |
| 1.2.4 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade: .....                                           | 26        |
| 1.2.5 Deputy P.M. Bailhache of St. Clement: .....                                      | 27        |
| 1.2.6 Deputy R. J. Ward of St. Helier Central: .....                                   | 27        |
| 1.2.7 Deputy M.E. Millar of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity: .....                  | 28        |
| 1.2.8 Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade: .....                                          | 28        |
| 1.2.9 Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin: .....                              | 29        |
| 1.2.10 Deputy A.F. Curtis: .....                                                       | 29        |
| <b>1.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance: Parking (P.54/2025) - resumption .....</b>     | <b>30</b> |
| 1.3.1 Connétable R.P. Vibert of St. Peter: .....                                       | 30        |
| 1.3.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade: .....                                           | 31        |
| 1.3.3 Deputy M.E. Millar of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity: .....                  | 33        |
| 1.3.4 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour: .....                                        | 34        |
| 1.3.5 Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity: .....                   | 36        |
| 1.3.6 Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central: .....                                    | 37        |
| <b>LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT PROPOSED .....</b>                                             | <b>39</b> |
| <b>LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT .....</b>                                                      | <b>39</b> |
| 1.3.7 Connétable P.B. Le Sueur of Trinity: .....                                       | 39        |

|                                                                                            |           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1.3.8 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South: .....                                         | 40        |
| 1.3.9 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier: .....                                       | 42        |
| <b>2. Jersey Police Complaints Authority: Re-Appointment of Members (P.66/2025).....</b>   | <b>44</b> |
| 2.1 Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier North:.....                                       | 44        |
| 2.1.1 Deputy M.E. Millar of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity: .....                      | 45        |
| 2.1.2 Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:.....                                                         | 45        |
| <b>3. Les Quennevais Parade and Precinct (P.67/2025) - as amended (P.67/2025 Amd.)....</b> | <b>46</b> |
| 3.1 Deputy H.M. Miles: .....                                                               | 47        |
| 3.1.1 Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin: .....                                  | 49        |
| 3.1.2 Deputy K.F. Morel of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:.....                        | 50        |
| 3.1.3 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade: .....                                               | 51        |
| 3.1.4 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:.....                                                | 52        |
| 3.1.5 Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:.....                        | 55        |
| 3.1.6 Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade: .....                                              | 55        |
| 3.1.7 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:.....                                                            | 56        |
| 3.1.8 Deputy H.M. Miles: .....                                                             | 57        |
| <b>ARRANGEMENT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS.....</b>                             | <b>59</b> |
| 4. Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North (Chair, Privileges and Procedures Committee):     | 59        |
| <b>ADJOURNMENT.....</b>                                                                    | <b>60</b> |

[9:30]

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

**PUBLIC BUSINESS - resumption**

**1. Supplementary Planning Guidance: Parking (P.54/2025)**

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Returning to the Order Paper, the next item is Supplementary Planning Guidance: Parking, lodged by the Connétable of St Helier. The main respondent is the Minister for the Environment. I will ask the Greffier to read the proposition.

**The Greffier of the States:**

The States are asked to decide whether they are of opinion – to request the Minister for the Environment – (a) to revise the relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance to ensure that, where practicable, a minimum of one parking space is provided per unit of accommodation; and (b) to allow, where feasible under the terms of the Bridging Island Plan, the creation of new off-street car parks that will be prioritised for the use of drivers with reduced mobility, shoppers and visitors.

**1.1 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:**

I am sure all Members - at least all Members who drive - remember their first car. They remember the test, the parking test, the one that they passed. They remember that feeling of surprise, in my case, as well as hilarity and pure pleasure, driving away from the test centre back home without anybody else sitting beside one. Members will remember not only their first car, but their first trip. I still have vivid memories of the Dordogne, must be nearly 50 years ago, in a battered Mini Clubman. It was battered because I was not long behind the wheel. Of course if we had all kept our first cars and kept them in the garage we would all be rich people by now because they have gone up so much in value. At least my Mini Clubman would not have raised much but some of the other old cars would have done. Of course, as we get older cars are important for the complex lives that we all lead these days. The difficulties involved in having small children, having to get them to different places, being the chauffeur for a growing family, and then of course at the other end of our lives, perhaps we have given up the car or we have been asked by our Connétable to surrender our licence, but we are living in accommodation with no parking on-street and we are unable to receive visitors who want to come and see us. These are the kind of issues that I have been dealing with for many years and which have caused me to bring this proposition to the States. What I am seeking really is a steer to the planners that where practicable - and that is the get-out clause really for the planners because they can always fall back on that, they can say it is not practicable - but where practicable, where possible, the planning officers dealing with applications for accommodation should see to how far they can provide a parking space for the people who are going to live in that home. Because a car is not an evil device. It is a source of tremendous independence and utility and freedom, and it is interesting that some people have told me that I am out of step with the younger generation and they are all going to be walking and cycling. I was in a 6th form recently talking to them about ... it was about something else but we will not go back to that. I was talking to them about a political matter and I asked them as a matter of interest, I said: "How many of you are driving?" and quite a lot of them were. I said: "How many of you intend to have your own car?" Every single hand in the room went up. There is no appetite, as far as I can see, among the younger generation to give up the independence that comes from owning a car. But the planners appear to think and some environmentalists appear to think that there is something innately evil about the motor car. I made the mistake as a young Deputy of being photographed by the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* on a bicycle and ever since then I have been caricatured as someone who hates cars. I warn my fellow Members, do not be photographed on a bicycle because you will have the same reputation all your life. I do not hate cars, I really appreciate their value. But as a town dweller, who is lucky enough

to have a parking space, I do not need to use my car very often, which is why I am often seen on a bicycle, and that reputation continues to build. There goes the car-hating Constable on his bicycle. The Constable's car is at home because I am making a short journey, I do not need to use my car. In fact, I will get to my destination faster than those people who are looking at me in their wing mirrors, because they are stuck in traffic and I am not. But at weekends, if I want to go and see someone at the other side of the Island, if I want to take grandchildren to the beach, if I want to go to France again, for old time's sake, down to the Dordogne, I need a car. The problem is that current planning policy is making it harder and harder for people living in town, in particular, to enjoy their right of car ownership. As I explain in my report, it is flawed to assume that people who live in town do not need cars. We even read in some comments from planners that town residents with cars contribute to traffic congestion. Well, they do not, because their cars are at home. They used to before we introduced residents parking. Town dwellers used to have to get up early and move their cars to avoid a ticket, and then they had to move them 3 hours later, and 3 hours after that, if they were law-abiding. That has all changed. We have a residents parking system. We have had it for more than 20 years. It works really well. Residents' cars stay on the street. Residents walk to work. They walk to school. But they would like to have a bit more space. So car ownership is not inherently evil. It is car use that creates traffic congestion. It is only fair that St. Helier residents have sufficient space. I have said at the end of my first paragraph in my report that if the States want to reduce car ownership in the Island, it should be a policy that applies across the Island, not just to people who live in urban areas. I believe that Bermuda may be a place that has done that. They have limited car ownership because they have a traffic problem and they want to make sure that no household has more than one car. I would not have a problem with that, but it has got to apply to St. Mary as well as to St. Helier.

[9:45]

The irony, of course, and this is explained in my third paragraph in the report, is that I have always supported States' propositions to protect the countryside and the beaches, Plémont and Grève de Lecq. More recent, Grève de Lecq, of course, when we bought that site at vast expense to the taxpayer. It would be ironic, indeed, if I was seen to be defending these wonderful rural and coastal beauty spots of the Island, which my constituents actually cannot get to unless they are willing to go by bus. But everybody else on the Island, because there is normally generous parking provision made in other planning applications around the Island, they will not have any trouble in jumping into the car. I have mentioned one particular development, which was by Dandara, if I am allowed to say that. The West Centre development, which was a total rebuild, came to the St. Helier Roads Committee and we said: "We understand the planners do not want you to provide any parking, but actually, we think it would be a really good idea if you provided basement level parking", and they did. But that is the only development I can think of in nearly 24 years, where actually a comment by the Roads Committee in favour of parking has been followed up. If we take a more recent one, this one was in the press only a couple of days ago in Colomberie. The Planning Committee has just approved this. We are going to have 30 ... how many is it? Let us have a look. Twenty nine flats; of those, 15 will be 2-bedroom flats. So one can assume there will be at least one car driver in that flat. So 15 2-bedroom flats, one enormous office, and 14 one-bedroom flats and a retail unit. That development, which is from the ground up - it is completely new - is being provided with 14 parking spaces. Fourteen parking spaces. They will be used up by the people who live in the 2-bedroom flats for a start, if they all want to drive or if they want to have a car. That makes no allowance for people living in those flats who want to have a visitor, for example. I have also mentioned in the last section of my report, and this is something that has been drawn to my attention by the people giving care in St. Helier, how difficult it is for the many people now who receive calls from carers, for the carers to get anywhere near the flats where they are delivering the care because of this persistent failure to provide enough parking in town developments. It is a cumulative problem. We now have this situation where people tell me they cannot get tradesmen to sort out our problems in our kitchen

because they cannot park anywhere near our property because there simply is not enough parking. I have suggested also in the proposition that we should allow off-street car parks and I have to confess that the wording of part (b) is not brilliant. What I meant to say was that we should allow developers to create private off-street car parks. The dreaded N.C.P. (National Car Parks) . I do not know how many members have been in the U.K. (United Kingdom) and unable to park and there, like a beacon at the end of the street is an N.C.P. sign gleaming yellow and in they go, and it relieves them of a lot of money, but at least they can go to dinner with their friend, they can go to a concert, and they have not got a swingeing parking fine, they have not been wheel clamped, and their car has been safely stored by the good people at N.C.P. I would welcome that in Jersey, I think particularly in Havre des Pas where a recent application for an off-street car park by a developer that actually wants to create a car park rather than flats - what an amazing idea - it has been turned down by Planning because it is against policy. What I was trying to achieve in part (b) was to ask the Minister to agree that where a private developer feels that an off-street car park will be beneficial to the residents and retail and hospitality businesses, that that will be made an exception to policy and will be encouraged. Actually we are all talking at the moment about the States providing a new off-street car park. Has anyone thought about getting the private sector to provide it instead and saving us all that money, saving the Parking Trading Fund from having to pay for a new car park? Let us get the private sector to do it. People will have to pay more to park in it, but I think most people accept that, that when they park in one of these places that they will pay a little extra. That is the point of my proposition. It is designed to send a message to the planners that they have got to stop turning down ... they have got to start looking for ways to make properties have - particularly where it is a build from the ground up - a parking space. One of the biggest criticisms in the comments from the Minister for Planning, and I suppose also from the Council of Ministers, is that this will make property unaffordable. Well, I simply do not believe that. I think if we start telling developers that it is a right of people particularly living in town to have a parking space, jolly well make provision when you design a building to have the first floor, the first 2 floors, parking. This happens all over Europe. You do not have to go underground, the first couple of floors are parking. Make the building a bit higher if you have to. But do not deny residents of town areas the parking that they need, the parking for their visitors, the parking for their carers. I make the proposition.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

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

**Female Speaker:**

Could I ask for the défaut to be raised on Deputy Ozouf, please?

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Are Members content to raise the défaut? The défaut is raised.

**Female Speaker:**

Could I ask for the défaut to be raised on Deputy Labey, please?

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Are Members content to raise the défaut on the Deputy? The défaut is raised.

### **1.1.1 Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin:**

While parking is undeniably a popular and emotive issue, especially as we lead up to an election, it is vital that we approach this debate with clarity and focus. I had thought to keep the speech to the end of the debate, where I might sum up in some sort of way and speak against some of the people who will support the Constable. But actually this is far too important, and I want to make the speech while everybody - nearly everybody - is in the Chamber at the start of the day. I urge Members to concentrate on the substance of each part of the proposition before us. With that in mind I will begin

by addressing part (b) of the Constable's proposition, and despite what he may have meant, this element is of less concern to me primarily because its current wording, and I accept that the Constable may have meant something else, but the current wording offers little practical impact and does little to advance the issue meaningfully. The Constable's proposition asks me as Minister to allow new off-street car parks where feasible under the Bridging Island Plan. Let me be honest, this part of the proposition does not change anything. It does not change how decisions are made and it does not change the policies already agreed in this Assembly by Members. Planning decisions, including those about car parks, are made by the Planning Committee or under delegated authority having regard to the merits of individual development proposals. My role as Minister is limited, but it is to uphold the Island Plan and to follow the advice of independent inspectors in planning appeals, unless there are strong reasons to do otherwise. The Bridging Island Plan, which has been approved by this Assembly following public consultation and independent scrutiny by planning inspectors, is clear. It does not support new standalone private car parks in St. Helier, except for temporary short-stay shopper parking. Why? Because land in town is better used for other forms of development, such as the provision of homes or schools. We have seen this recently in Bath Street, where land as a surface car park for decades has been left, but now transformed into much needed housing. That is progress and a much more appropriate use of land in the middle of town. I understand the Constable's concerns, especially around the availability of parking to serve places like Havre des Pas, but any proposal for a new off-street car park, whether private or public, needs to go through a formal planning process and be justified with robust evidence and considered on its merits relative to the policies of the Island Plan. The Minister for Infrastructure is working on a car-parking strategy and that evidence will help inform future decisions about the provision of new off-street parking facilities to be considered on its merits either against the current Island Plan or included in the next one. I would suggest that the Constable and his Roads Committee engage with this work and explore how best St Helier is served by off-street car parks. Let us be clear, this part of the Constable's proposition, part (b), does not unlock any new powers, it does not change policy or enable any new action. If we want to improve off-street parking, we should do so through evidence-led planning with a clear strategy, and consider proposals on their merits, not symbolic propositions. I want to turn now to part (a) of the Constable's proposition, and this is the far more important part of my address today. It is more important to emphasise that this part of the proposition is about the amount of car parking that is provided in association with the development of new homes. It is not about the general availability of parking in town. The effect of the Constable's proposition would be that planning guidance is amended to require every new home to have at least one parking space. I do not use this phrase lightly, but the consequences of supporting part (a) would be disastrous. It may seem like a small change to Members but it would be catastrophic on many levels, and it would take the Island back 30 years. I have already lodged my own comments, which I trust have been of assistance to Members in considering some of the seriously adverse implications of part (a). I would like to speak to those comments and highlight some of the serious issues presented by part (a) of the Constable's proposition. These concerns are shared not only by me but other stakeholders across the development industry. I want to start my comments about part (a) by explaining the supplementary planning guidance that I have issued. This guidance, Residential Parking Standards Guidance, was only issued in October 2023 and remains, in my view, entirely appropriate. Members may not have had the opportunity to review it so it is important they understand what is already in place before we consider further changes. The S.P.G. (Supplementary Planning Guidance) is designed to reflect Jersey's diverse character and it is not a one-size-fits-all rule. It divides the Island into 6 zones with parking standards tailored to each. In central St. Helier standards are lower. In Parish centres and countryside, standards are more generous, and this reflects the differences in accessibility and travel needs of Islanders depending on where they live. For all of the Island, except St. Helier Town Centre, the guidance sets minimum standards for provision. Developers can provide car parking space over and above the minimum standards where they wish to do so. This guidance does not preclude car ownership for St. Helier residents. It allows for and requires the provision of space to park cars in

new residential developments in town and across the Island. The guidance considers the type and size of homes. It ensures that the needs of families, specialist accommodation, visitors, cycles and motorcycles are met by ensuring the parking spaces required to be provided for all new residential development. These parking standards are integrated with policies on housing size and development density, and this supports better places to live and more sustainable communities. The guidance provides flexible not zero standards. There is no encouragement for car-free development. Developers can provide more parking space over and above the minimum standards for everywhere in the Island apart from St. Helier Town Centre, and here there is a maximum standard of up to one parking space per home. Parking is required for all forms of residential development but some exceptions are allowed. Yes, there is reduced provision in the town centre. In exceptional circumstances, development with no parking is allowed on small sites with limited family accommodation and challenging site conditions. But this can usefully enable, for example, the conversion of secondary office accommodation in town to provide new homes. This guidance balances sustainability and practicality. It recognises that many Islanders still rely on cars. It aims to manage, not eliminate, car use.

[10:00]

This is a moderate, location-sensitive approach. It supports both housing delivery and sustainable transport. This guidance is relatively new, only adopted in October 2023, and it is unlikely that we have seen many large development schemes that have been built out with parking provided in accordance with this latest guidance. Its preparation and adoption follows extensive consultation with industry and stakeholders. My view is that it should not be changed without clear evidence that development is not working. Any further amendments should be proceeded by a thorough assessment of the standard's actual effects, coupled with additional consultation with both the public and industry stakeholders. The Constable's proposition does not provide such evidence. In my view, the current S.P.G. is flexible, tailored, and balanced. It reflects Jersey's needs and promotes choice. Yes, I am willing to monitor its performance and to make changes should it be demonstrated that it is not working. But the time to do that, however, is not now. So I have set out why I think this existing standard is entirely appropriate and do not need to change. I want to move on to set out why, and many others are deeply concerned about the serious implications of part (a) of this proposition, should it be supported. I will start with the affordability and economic risks posed by part (a). Risks that cannot and must not be underestimated. We are a Government and an Assembly committed to reducing the cost of homes on our Island. We are also striving to support a construction industry that is facing significant challenges. Part (a) of this proposition runs counter to both those objectives. Let me be clear. Requiring a parking space for every new home will make homes less affordable for many Islanders. The cost of providing a parking space, whether above ground or underground, ranges from £30,000 to £70,000 per unit. That translates to anything from £175 to £410 per month on a typical mortgage. £410 per month. For first-time buyers, for young families and for those on lower incomes, this could be the difference between owning a home and being locked out of the market entirely, and that is before we consider the ongoing cost of car ownership in Jersey, which already sits at somewhere between £2,500 and £4,000 per year. By supporting part (a), Members would be imposing additional financial burdens on Islanders, burdens that directly contradict our stated goal of making housing in Jersey more affordable. Members should be clear, however, that the impact goes way beyond individual households. Economically, this proposition threatens the viability of new developments. In many cases, the cost of providing parking exceeds its market value. On the St. Helier waterfront, for example, a single basement parking space would cost about £90,000 to deliver, while the sale price would be somewhere around £70,000. This misalignment risks stalling projects, reducing housing supply, and weakening our already fragile construction sector at a time when we should be providing confidence and certainty. Members will undoubtedly have seen recent media reports to see how fragile this sector is. I am also able to share with Members some direct comment from development industry representatives. I would like to read out a direct quote from

members of the Development Industry Partnership Board, which I have established as part of my planning service reform to provide a conduit between my department and a wide group of stakeholders in land and development sector, including affordable housing provider. They say: “Board members report that a marketplace where many developments are already stalled and contractors struggling due to both local and macro circumstances it is difficult to understand how the proposition might result in doing anything other than ensuring the pending development in the emerging pipeline is further mothballed due to the impact on viability.” This statement provides further evidence, if any is needed, that a more flexible approach, as set out in the current parking standards, is essential to keep homes affordable and maintain a healthy pipeline of new development. I wanted to move now to the risks that this part of the proposition poses for the efficient and effectiveness of Island planning services and, as a consequence, the risk this poses to the performance of the development and construction industry in the Island. As Members will know, another of this Government’s key priorities, set out in the Common Strategic Policy, is to deliver a faster, more efficient and more predictable planning system. Planning guidance plays a critical role in achieving this. Why? Because supplementary planning guidance can provide clarity and certainty to applicants, officers and decision-makers by offering clear objective standards. Clarity and certainty builds trust, generates confidence, and drives improvement. Part (a) of the proposition proposes a minimum standard of one car parking space per home, with the caveat, and the Constable has mentioned it, where practicable. At first glance, this phrase may seem to offer flexibility, and some Members may feel this makes the proposition more acceptable but I want to challenge that view. Where practicable introduces uncertainty and introduces inconsistency. It leaves applicants and officers guessing what is or is not practicable, and this will inevitably lead to more negotiation, slower decisions and a higher risk of appeals. Planning guidance must be clear and it must be objective. Ambiguous phrases like “where practicable” undermine confidence. They threaten the fragile progress that we have made in improving the planning service so far. We must not allow uncertainty to erode the good work already done. That means setting clear standards, not vague ones. As Minister for the Environment, I feel it is my responsibility to highlight to Members that part (a) of the proposition would make development less sustainable, also less equitable and also undermine our efforts to create better places in Jersey. The Carbon Neutral Roadmap agreed by this Assembly in response to the climate emergency makes it clear, transport in Jersey is our largest source of emissions. Mandating a parking space for every home, which is what the Constable’s proposition would do, reinforces car dependency, it contradicts our climate and sustainable transport policies, and it takes us back to the outdated standards we had 30 years ago. The approach advocated by the Constable’s proposition also risks undermining the efficient use of land, especially in urban areas. Requiring a minimum of one space for every new home on the Island reduces housing capacity on each site and makes it harder to meet the Island’s housing needs. Building higher, as the Constable has already suggested, is not a simple solution. This would become more expensive due to the need to provide more basement parking and an efficient use of urban land risks pushing development into greenfield land. The effect of this proposition leads to less dense, inefficient development, which is exactly what the Island Plan is seeking to avoid. I now want to talk about economic and social equality. It may challenge some Members’ perception, but not every household wants or needs a car. Forcing everyone to pay for the provision of a parking space removes choice and it removes flexibility. It is also economically and environmentally inefficient. Evidence from recent developments reveals that there are unsold or unused parking spaces at Andium and S.o.J.D.C. (States of Jersey Development Company) development schemes in St. Helier. This suggests that some residents either do not want or do not need or maybe cannot afford a car parking space. I would also ask Members to consider the impact of increasing parking provision and parked cars on the quality of our neighbourhoods, especially in town. I would urge Members to ask themselves what kind of places do we want to create in the Island? Do we want car-dominated neighbourhoods which discourage walking, cycling, are less safe for children, older adults, and those with disabilities, and which undermine air quality and the safe use of outdoor spaces? Our planning system should

empower people to choose how they live and choose how they travel. We should not be imposing car parking spaces for everyone and every new home. We should be moving forward to a more sustainable pattern of living and development and not revert to outdated car-centric models. In concluding my remarks, I want to be clear, if supported, this proposition will take us backwards to an outdated one-size-fits-all model for car-parking provision in new housing developments. Why would this matter? This approach ignores the progress that we have made in supporting sustainable travel, in using land more efficiently, in building better quality homes at higher densities and making housing more affordable. What are the risks? It risks locking us into car dependency, into higher housing costs and it risks undermining the progress we have made in delivering a more efficient and effective planning system and placing further pressure on a very fragile development industry. This proposal is based on old assumptions about universal car ownership. It does not reflect the realities or aspirations of a modern sustainable Jersey. The risks of reversing to this old model are significant. Increased costs for every home. Reduced affordability for families and first-time buyers. Fewer homes delivered on limited land. Less efficient, more expensive and less sustainable development. An undermining of trust and confidence in the planning system. Finally, placing further strain on the development industry, which is in crisis at the moment. The potentially disastrous impact of this part of the Constable's proposition on the development industry is evidenced by reference to another quote from the Industry Partnership Board, and it is this: "It is a feature of the development industry that makes long-term decisions and requires financial planning. Effective and efficient industry planning, which has implications for the entire Island economy, relies on a stable policy context to enable properly informed resource allocation. The current residential parking standards were only issued in October 2023 and replaced guidance, which was unaltered for 35 years." Members of the board are very concerned that a further change in such a key policy so soon after it is brought in creates further uncertainty. It is reported by board members that this is likely to mean that many pending projects do not move forward from the drawing board. I urge Members to reject this outdated approach outlined in part (a) of the Constable's proposition to ensure that we steer clear of all those seriously adverse consequences. Instead, I would ask that Members offer support for the balanced, location-sensitive guidance that already exists. Now is not the time to change direction. In conclusion, I would just like to say - as I put my papers down - to three sections of the Assembly, and the first one is to my fellow Ministers and Assistant Ministers. I would just like to say the number one priority for this Government that I sit in was to provide more affordable houses for young families in Jersey. This proposition makes houses less affordable.

[10:15]

The second thing I would like to say is to those town Deputies, and it is that I understand the challenges they have but do we want a society of housing and living accommodation in town dominated by cars? Do we want more green open amenity spaces? Finally, I say this to those Members who represent constituencies out of town. I know that there are challenges and people who are not happy with the S.P.G. on parking, and I understand many of them. In the St. Martin Parish I represent, we have challenges coming down on a current planning application and I know, after discussions with the Constable of St. John, the challenges at Sion, and if these policies need to be changed and the evidence comes forward, we will change them. But I say to those that this is not about changing the planning policy now for those developments out of town. This is very specific to a single addition of a single parking space for each unit. It is extremely dangerous, I can only urge Members as strongly as I possibly can to resist this proposition.

#### **1.1.2 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South:**

I rise in a bit of a dilemma as I actually agree with both the proposer and the opponent of this proposition. I find it interesting that the Minister is choosing the words that this is a definitive because it is my understanding that we cannot direct the Minister on Supplementary Planning Guidance. In fact, if that was the case, the proposition that I bought back in 2023 would have been enacted now,

and I am still patiently waiting for that guidance to be published. But it does give me the point that the Constable is trying to make, that actually the current standards that are provided for St. Helier are actually very, very small. It is a one in 4 ratio, so that is 4 apartments for one parking space. For me, in my area of St. Helier, that is quite dangerously low. It makes it very, very difficult for people to either secure a parking space if they want one ... in fact, we were talking about Havre des Pas. There is a current planning application in there where the provision to provide 13 parking spaces for nearly 40 flats is not ... it is so small that in an area where there is very little public parking already, there is no residents parking scheme in that area, so that puts more strain on the already on-street parking in that area for people who do wish to have a car. Actually, the Constable of St. Helier, if it were a different day in a different debate, I am absolutely on my Constable's side in the sense that he made the point about people wanting to go on holiday and take the car. When we talk about emissions, actually putting a family of 3 or 4 in a car on the boat to drive into Europe is a much more carbon-friendly holiday than it is for them to get on a plane and fly to that same country within Europe. So we do need people to be able to have access to a car if we want them to go on holiday and to experience this world that we have on our doorstep just through into Europe. When I think more locally, I also think about the sporting achievements that this Island is very good at. This Island has a very good reputation for shooting in the Island Games but I think LibertyBus would be quite resistant if people who lived in St. Helier wanted to take their rifles on a bus to go to the shooting ranges. This Island is also known for its surfing, and in St. Ouen and in St. Peter trying to take a surfboard on to a bus is not always easy and convenient, let alone a sandy and wet wetsuit coming back afterwards. But even if we talk more locally, I used to live on Rouge Bouillon, and that was really well located if I wanted to use Fort Regent. I could quite happily walk there to use the gym, to use any of the sports facilities up there, and if I still lived at Rouge Bouillon, walking up to the new Oakfield site would be equally as easy. The challenge I always had in this area though, as I used to have an Active membership and before Active took over the Watersplash, I would have to go up to Les Quennevais. That is not always convenient. There is a good bus route, but it is quite a long bus route, so if I wanted to go swimming, I would have to try to catch a bus. It was always easier for me just to take my car. This is one of the points. We have many facilities, but if I think of my residents at the Waterfront, if they want to now use Oakfield to do any kind of sports activity that works around their schedule and timing, it is a longer walk now than it used to be to go to Fort Regent, so we are moving things in a way which is not always convenient. If we want our Islanders to be fit, active, and healthy, yes, walking is part of that, but also engaging in sports activities and team events builds a community. I feel that the parking requirements within town does need to be improved. I am not sure it needs to be one space per home, but that gives us another opportunity. When we look at developments like Cyril Le Marquand Court, this was one where Andium had developed a private car park for the residents, equated for roughly the number of residents that they have that would usually take a parking space. The other parking spaces are made into a public car park, and that is the Charles Street car park now, which has helped places like the Arts Centre be able to draw more people in. I think there is a balance to be struck within the parking schemes within St. Helier, especially in major, large developments, because these are opportunities where we can provide small pocket public car parks, as well as improve the access for residents. When we talk about the cost as well, the Minister is right, it will put up the price of a mortgage. But of course, if somebody wants a car and is living in town they will have to pay for parking anyway and that is getting close to £200 a month now to pay to park. To leave your car, if you work in town, you are parking it up, you are paying for your 8 hours a day during the week and then you are also paying for the Saturday. This is also inhibiting people from out of town coming in to do shopping, to bring their family, to do other things within town, which is impacting our economy because they are using public parking spaces. Yes, we also have tradesmen who live and work through and around town, so they have their white vans that they have to put their tools and equipment in to go and do jobs around the Island, to provide services for Islanders around the Island. Where are they to park their vehicles on the weekend? If these people are sole traders, they are allowed to have their vehicle but they have to take up a public

car park again. I will support this simply for the fact that we cannot direct the Minister to publish his Supplementary Planning Guidance but I will be using it as a voice for St. Helier residents and say actually this planning guidance does need to be revised. I would argue that somewhere between either one in 2, so one parking space per 2 apartments. or one in 3 was a much better ratio that would provide better access to parking for those that want it, but with a joined up and combined approach with the Minister for Infrastructure on the sites that would be good for a public car park. Because let us remember that the electric vehicles are getting heavier and we are not sure about our current parking infrastructure. If we had a full car park full of electric vehicles whether that would be safe. There is work going on there because there is a strategy around it because the batteries are heavier than a full tank of diesel or petrol. I think there is a strategy that needs to be involved here and also I believe that my residents of St. Helier deserve access to better parking if they need it. I will be supporting this proposition.

### **1.1.3 Deputy M.R. Ferey of St. Saviour:**

I rise in defence of the principles of sound urban planning. This proposition is framed as a corrective measure changing outdated assumptions and focusing on vibrant communities and a future orientated planning framework. But we must ask however at what cost. First, let us consider the urban context. St. Helier is of course not merely a collection of buildings, it is a living breathing community and this proposition implies that their needs are best met by expanding car infrastructure rather than investing in public transport, active travel and shared transport solutions. The assumption that every unit of accommodation must be paired with a parking space is laudable, but it presumes that car ownership is a universal necessity rather than a choice shaped by lifestyle and environmental values. We should not ignore that a growing number of Islanders, young and old, choose not to own a car. By embedding parking minimums into planning guidance we risk losing sight of the fact that shared E.V. (electric vehicles) vehicles and monthly subscriptions to car schemes will be the way forward for many people. This proposition has the potential to undermine the Bridging Island Plan's commitment to sustainable development. The plan rightly recognises that reduced parking dependency or car dependency is essential to meet our climate targets and improving air quality. It encourages compact walkable neighbourhoods and prioritises developments which support that shift. Yet this proposition could skew that logic, reintroducing car-centric planning under the guise of fairness. Let us not forget that parking minimums inflate construction costs, reduce housing density and limit the viability of affordable housing schemes. They force developers to allocate valuable land to vehicles rather than people. In the town centre where space is scarce and demand for housing is high, this is not efficient. The report accompanying the proposition cites examples of development with limited parking provision suggesting that town residents are being unfairly penalised, but fairness cannot be measured by the number of parking bays. True fairness lies in the creation of communities where all residents, regardless of mobility, income or lifestyle, can thrive. That means investing in accessible, non-personalised transport, safe cycle infrastructure, well-connected public spaces and, one day, autonomous vehicles. It means recognising that urban living offers unique advantages, proximity to services, reduced travel times and lower environmental impact. We should not conflate car ownership with car use or should we ignore the fact that most congestion in St. Helier is caused by inbound commuters, not St. Helier residents. Let us also consider the second part of the proposition, the creation of new off-street car parks prioritised for drivers with reduced mobility, shoppers and visitors. While accessibility is a legitimate concern, it must be supported for inclusive design. We must ensure that residents who have a disability and visitors can access services without relying solely on private vehicles. That means improving drop-off zones, enhanced pedestrian routes and ensuring that public transport is accessible and frequent. As for shoppers and tourists, their needs are best served by a town that is welcoming, walkable and well-connected. The economic viability of St. Helier depends on its character. We must resist the temptation to equate parking provision with prosperity. I can see the argument that this provision merely seeks to restore the balance that rural developments enjoying more generous parking and urban ones should follow suit. To square

this, it must be recognised that rural areas face different challenges, limited public transport, longer travel distances and dispersed populations. Our urban areas, by contrast, offer density, connectivity and opportunity. Planning policy must reflect these differences, not erase them. To be clear, I do not oppose all parking provision. I recognise that residents, particularly those with caring responsibility, shift workers or those with mobility needs, require access to vehicles, as do trades people who visit sites for maintenance works. This is a step forward, provided it is not locking us into a model of development that prioritises cars over people, short-term convenience over long-term sustainability, and that it does not undermine the principles of the Bridging Island Plan and sends a contradictory message to developers, planners, and residents alike. In this respect, the insertion of the words in the proposition, “where practicable”, gives me some comfort. While some people view this as creating ambiguity, I see it as providing a level of flexibility. We must be bold enough to imagine a different future, one where urban living is not defined by parking ratios but by quality of life, one where accessibility is achieved through innovation and one where fairness means meeting diverse needs, not enforcing minimum standards. I will, on balance, be supporting this proposition in both its parts.

#### **1.1.4 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:**

I had to wait to the last sentence there [**Laughter**] because I will not go on the attack so much now; it was not clear from most of the speech necessarily to me that he was in favour of part (a) and (b). That is welcome, I think, as a fellow Member who will also be supporting at least part of this proposition. Can I start off with the first part that I still have concerns about. I would like some explanation from perhaps both the Minister for Infrastructure and also the Constable, who is also coincidentally an Assistant Minister at Infrastructure. I was concerned about the comments he made about the private multi-storey car parks potentially appearing in St. Helier. I do not know if that was tongue in cheek or if it was genuinely part of his vision that perhaps there could be some private sector provision, because be careful what one wishes for, is what I would say in that regard. I think that there are questions about the state of our multi-storey car parks in St. Helier for a start, some of the ones that have been designed perhaps a long time ago and not really fit for purpose.

[10:30]

I think that there have been suggestions for quite a long time that some of them ... we can talk about the car parks, we are not going to offend them. Minden Place I think has a very strange design, it is not easy to get in and out of, and is probably designed for a time where cars were much smaller. I think that goes to show the risk, if you give premium space in St. Helier over to a private company which is going to build a multi-storey car park, you lose control over that area for a start and you may create a white elephant. You have no control over the prices and of course in 20 or 30 years' time, when that car park becomes redundant or there has been demographic or technological shifts, what do you do? Is Government forced to step in and buy the car park back off them? How do you decommission a car park from the private sector, I suppose, is the question I am asking much in the same way as questions might be asked about the wind farm. I am not that enthusiastic about part (b). I also see that part (b) says: “... where feasible under the terms of the Bridging Island Plan, the creation of new off-street car parks should be prioritised.” If that is already feasible under the Bridging Island Plan, why do we need to have part (b) to allow this, so I do not think that serves any purpose. I am wondering if tactically the Constable, being a very wily and experienced States Member, has just put part (b) there in as a shot to nothing, so to speak, that he does not expect to get much traction from it but the real debate, I feel, does need to be around part (a). I am just getting the words come to me when I heard the Minister for the Environment speaking about “double standards sophistry”. What was the other word we could use? Let us just say “double standards” again, shall we, until another word comes into the head. It is this unnecessary town/country dichotomy that is coming out again but also the dichotomy of saying that on the one hand we need to be reducing our carbon emissions, making Jersey greener, more environmentally friendly, reducing pollution but

doing nothing about cars outside of St. Helier which come into town every day commuting. I think it is right that I speak both as somebody who does not live in town and who does not represent the constituency in St. Helier either to say that we do need to think about the unintended consequences if we carry on in this policy of treating town residents completely differently under the Island Plan than we do to residents in other areas. Remember, it could be other areas which are suburban or really urban. We represent what is becoming and has now become the second urban centre, Jersey's second town. We will get into a debate shortly about whether we have the fringe benefits of being a town or just increasingly some of the disadvantages. I think the town needs to have both the advantages and disadvantages; rather, if they are going to have the disadvantages that come with being an urban centre, then there also needs to be some of the benefits with living in town. When I hear the Minister for the Environment speak I do not hear so much somebody who is looking out for the residents of the Island or the residents of St. Helier, I see somebody who could easily be described as the "developer's friend". I do not think he is talking about the quality of life for those who have to live in St. Helier but more about the profit margins that might be made by developments that are being put forward or that may not be viable if they have too many parking spaces or indeed any parking spaces at all. There is always a flip side to the coin. When the Minister talks about houses being less affordable, what he is also saying is that the houses will be less valuable. By not having a car-parking space of your own in your own unit that you have bought, which you might be living in or renting out, it is also a less valuable property. It is also very likely to be a false economy in the medium and longer term because not having a car-parking space means that if you have a car you have to rent a space somewhere else. You either rent a space or you rely on public parking and you rely on running the risk of not getting a space when you want to, driving around St. Helier in your petrol or diesel car making emissions, and then trying to find a space. If you cannot get back to your car in time, you get parking fines. This kind of stuff does not happen in the country. In the country, I have said it before, you can park pretty much wherever you like and no one will do anything about it. It is true, one does not need to shake their head, but you can park on main roads if there is no yellow line; I have seen it happen. There are differences in consequences for people living in town where there is of course some residents' parking, but that is not always in front of where people live. If we do not want people to use their car, we do need them to be able to park their cars somewhere when they are not using their cars. So guess what? If you have a car space, you do not automatically always need to park your car in them. You could park a moped, you could park an e-motorbike, you could park push bikes, electric bikes. Depending on the setup of your space, if it is self-contained, you might be able to even put a kayak there that you might want to use during the summer or during sunny and flat days during the winter. The Minister for the Environment said: "Do we want car-dominated neighbourhoods?" Well, looking at this Government and this Minister, the answer seems to be yes, they do seem to want car-dominated neighbourhoods because they want people to have cars to commute into St. Helier. He then had, I think, what I would call the cheek to talk about air quality and the effect on air quality in St. Helier by: "Residents having a parking space who might keep a car park there 5 or 6 days a week, use it once a week to visit Plémont", we will come back to this idea of Plémont, "or use it twice a year to go to one of the bounciest regions in France", which is of course the Dordogne **[Laughter]** ... not my joke, which I know the Constable of St. Helier visited in his clapped-out old motor car back then, and I hope he does visit again. These are double standards because if you live in the countryside you can do all of those things, but you can also commute to St. Helier every day, you can drive around St. Helier. You might have to drive to the top floor of Pier Road when the roadworks are going on to add a few more emissions to your output. If the Government was really serious about doing something about emissions they would be having a massive push now on decarbonisation and switching people to electric vehicles. Where is the initiative there? There have been some very good steps, I think, when it comes to decommissioning fossil fuels in terms of the house, in terms of our home usage. I had the lucky opportunity to sit next to someone at a dinner the other night who worked as a consultant in the decarbonisation area, so he advises people on how to do that. He said to me: "In Jersey, because you get all of your electricity

from France, you are already green, so you are electric green.” We can debate whether nuclear is fully green; it is not renewable but it certainly is green to an extent. Jersey really needs to concentrate on 2 areas: it is the areas of reduction of fossil fuels in the home and in your cars. Those are the 2 areas that we can work on. As I said, good steps are being taken, partly by Government, but mostly led by the industry with grants being available, *et cetera*, to change your boilers over, but very little is being done in the area of pollution. As somebody who has increasingly started running - I think I have mentioned that before; I might mention it one or 2 times as I hopefully prepare for a half marathon in March - you really get to taste and smell the air pollution, even in the countryside. When you are on a main road, when you are out walking or running, you can taste the air pollution. Yesterday when the Constable who is moving this proposition talked about Central Park and he mentioned Frederick Law Olmsted, I am wondering if he has been reading the same book that I am just reading at the moment called *At Home* by Bill Bryson. There is a chapter in there where he does dedicate it to this remarkable engineer who did not just work on Central Park but on other campuses, as the Constable said. Bill Bryson obviously goes on later in the book to talk about the terrible conditions of the not just working classes, but primarily the working classes in big cities like London and other cities throughout the world, who died of many avoidable illnesses that were largely caused either by water pollution or by air pollution. They were drinking contaminated water that gave them cholera or they were breathing in heavy fumes that were polluted through coal burning or, indeed earlier on, breathing in fumes from factories or even their own middle-class homes where the wallpaper was giving them poisoning through arsenic. I do wonder sometimes how history will judge us in the 21st century when they look back at us, even maybe 50 years’ ahead, and say: “Look, they knew all of these things. They knew not only that carbon emissions were destroying the planet and causing forest fires but they were polluting their own communities. They still had tunnels that you could walk through where cars were going through at peak times and foot passengers, *piéton*”, pedestrians, as we say in English, “would walk through the tunnels and they were breathing in those fumes twice a day with their children, and planners in government thought that was perfectly all right. Why did they not just switch to electric cars, why did they not have initiatives? How many lives, how many asthmatic cases could have been resolved from that?” I think we will be judged in similar ways by not having taken action. These are false dichotomies, that is why I raise this, the idea that somehow residents in town should not have cars, even if they end up using their cars less, is I think not helpful to this debate. The last thing I would also say about why it is beneficial to have a car space is that you do not need to use your car space, it gives you value and it gives you potentially another rental source of income. About 15 years ago I was a tenant in St. Helier; I had a new-build flat which I rented out. Can you believe it that it was only £1,000 a month for a 2-bedroom flat in St. Helier? It was very well insulated, I did not need to put my heating on at all, perhaps once for a couple of weeks in February, and I had my own car-parking space. I did not need the space for a lot of that time and I was allowed to be able to rent it out, to sublet it. I managed to get £120 a month for a car-parking space, so that is already 15 years ago. I do not know what currently an undercover parking space in St. Helier would go for but it means that somebody in that situation whether they are ... if I were paying a mortgage back then, I would be able to use that £120 to help pay off my mortgage. Nowadays it might be £150, £200 a month. I come back to this idea about properties being more expensive if we include parking. No, properties become more valuable, they become more sought-after, they become future-proofed. If you are somebody who is a white-van man or woman or that you are disabled in later life or you are disabled when you take over a tenancy or when you decide to buy a flat, the things many of us take for granted: that you can go to the shop in a different Parish, in a different part of the Island, do a big shop once a week, what is the advantage of doing a big shop? That there are economies of scale, of course. Rather than going to your corner shop every time you run out of milk or cornflakes, you can do your big shop but you need somewhere to transport that back. When you get back to your house, do you want to be parking right across town and then walking perhaps with your children, with your partner who may be in a wheelchair or have difficulty walking? Or do you want to be able to park up where you live, which most of us take for

granted, unload your car into your home? I think that is what most of us would expect, and these are the counterfactuals we are talking about when we listen to what the Minister is proposing versus I think the much more Utopian, not perfect vision, that the Constable of St. Helier is selling to us today. Certainly for my part, I think (a) is vital if we are to have some increasing parity between town and country. I do have concerns about part (b). I will be listening intently to the comments made to see if I can support that but I would say on that part, again, let us be careful what we wish for when it comes to urban planning.

#### **1.1.5 Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin:**

I am supportive of the Connétable's proposition. How can we, who live out of town, believe that we should own cars but make it more difficult for anyone in town to own one? This really is double standards. Today, as other States days, I car-shared with my husband; tomorrow I will drive in for a Scrutiny hearing. My family cycle very often and I am pro-cycling; I am also a terrible cyclist but my husband cycles in every day, apart from when we share for the States. I do live in the real world and we need to look at parking planning conditions across the Island. For example, in St. Martin a developer has submitted a housing scheme awaiting permission but the current planning guidance for cars is simply ridiculous. St. Martin is keen for right-sizing and more first-time buyer homes but we simply cannot support the lack of car parking. As in town, how will anyone have visitors? How will the elderly, who have right-sized, have carers or have any trades people pop in? If you are on a shift, you cannot take an overnight bus into town or out of town, I do not believe. Deputy Luce, the Minister for the Environment, is a Deputy in my constituency. He knows that our Parish car park is a victim of our own success; we never have enough car parking, it is a daily problem. I need the Minister to let me know with this S.P.G. where all the extra cars will be parked. It is a short speech, and I know I have gone slightly off-piste, but I support the proposition. I make a plea for Planning to look at car parking holistically, not just in St. Helier, but across the Island. We need a sensible real-world approach to parking.

#### **1.1.6 Deputy A. Howell of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:**

I think probably what I was going to say has been already said by Deputy Tadier and the Constable of St. Martin. I do appreciate that not every unit of accommodation in town can have parking.

[10:45]

But I do think we have to be mindful of people who need carers; we have got people with disabilities. If you need a plumber or an electrician it is very difficult to take a whole set of tools to a home on a bicycle; I could not do it on my bike. I do think we have to be more mindful of providing space for cars so all the homes that we are providing in St. Helier can be provisioned. I also feel very sorry for people who are those electricians and plumbers who we need because they do need somewhere to put their vans; they need the parking for their vans. I totally understand we need to encourage people to walk, to cycle, to go on the bus, but it is not always practical. I feel really bad as well that in our garage we have got some surfboards and boogie boards and a kayak. I feel bad that I have got that because poor people in town in their flats, where do they have these? How can they enjoy their free time if they have not got somewhere to store these things? Anyway, that is all I wanted to say. I sympathise and I understand why the Constable has brought this proposition.

#### **1.1.7 Connétable K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour:**

I have got a great deal of sympathy with this proposition but my opinion is it is not a St. Helier problem, it is an urban area problem which many Parishes have. I remember as a young boy my father's first car, which was a very old Morris, any colour you like as long as it was black, 2 channels on the television, and there was no problem with parking because you parked in the road. But obviously as time went on, families grew, and the children of the parents wanted their own cars and that is where things really begin to mount up. As a young Deputy I was called out on, I think, day 4

of my election to a gentleman who had lost his wing mirror to somebody whizzing past his car late at night parked on the road. So I said: "Well I am very sorry but it is a police matter." It happened again, so he applied for permission to remove the front wall of his garden to make a parking space in front of his house but there was no net gain there because no one can then park on the outside of that car. So there is no net gain in parking spaces until he discovered that somebody did park on the outside of his car; he could not get out. The following night he parked his car on the road and, guess what happened? He lost his wing mirror. It is a major problem. I am not quite sure what the answer is but, as I say, it is an urban problem, not a St. Helier problem. I do remember many years ago when I was first Minister for Infrastructure, I did make an enquiry to officers regarding an N.C.P. car park and I was informed that N.C.P. were not interested and if they were it would be horrendously expensive. There would be a premium if any of the private, shall we say, companies came to Jersey so, as they say, be careful what you wish for. Our multi-storey car parks are well-served and well run and there are plenty of spaces but not necessarily where people want it. Pier Road is often quite empty, so there are plenty of parking spaces up there, but it is a bit of a trek to get up there, especially during inclement weather. I will park it there. I am not sure how I will vote on this; I will wait to hear from Members.

#### **1.1.8 Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade:**

I hope the Constable, that is, the bringer of the proposition, will be bringing this in parts because I am supportive of part (a), particularly because it does refer to "where practicable". Part (b) I am not supportive because basically there is a process for amending the Bridging Island Plan and this is not it. The Minister for the Environment referred to meeting housing needs and I say, what about meeting people's needs? People where professions that need to drive, and we have heard mention of carers, plumbers that we cannot predict in advance how many of those will be in a particular apartment building. But we can anticipate that they have their needs too: people with surfboards, pushchairs, prams, beach paraphernalia, heavy shopping, an ageing population with a greater need for mobility scooters. Maybe the needs of people who live in shared accommodation who perhaps do not want to fight over communal parking places but to have their own so that is clear. I would say that those are needs too. When it comes to this concern about affordable housing, I would point out that property ownership is a privilege but properties require maintenance and servicing and I think that is something that people forget. We also want productivity in the Island and this is not going to be served by plumbers having to travel by bus to rural places where bus stops are a fair walk away from premises. I am going to come back to this whole business of how planning policy is done in this Island because it just seems to me that perhaps the needs analysis that goes on behind the scenes does not quite fit with what the community needs really are. The Constable of St. Saviour described this as an urban problem. Well I can point to - not that I regard St. Aubin as an urban area necessarily - but we really do have this problem. We have tradesmen who cannot park their vans because there is so limited room to park anywhere. This has not really been thought out well when it comes to Island planning again. Indeed, not so long ago, I said: "Why can we not have an actual visual aid to show where we are planning our parks and our car parks?" What are we doing saying we should not have car-parking places for people in town when in fact that means that Government itself is more likely to be going to have to find more room to park cars? Why is this not being done more on private premises? I do have friends who live in London who have not got cars, or even room for cars in London. As Deputy Tadier says, they may well use public transport more, but they have a garage somewhere further out of town that they use, so the problem just gets pushed elsewhere. The thing that struck me about the Supplementary Planning Guidance is that really horrible line in paragraph 5.5.1 "no minimum standard" and that is what you have in St. Helier. Yet, in the same guidance, paragraph 3.3.5, it says: "All forms of residential development should give consideration to the provision of space for servicing." Again, by having a minimum standard for parking in urban spaces, you are doing 2 jobs, you are creating that space for servicing. It says: "Visitor parking is generally best served by unallocated parking which allows for changes in car ownership between individual

dwellings over time and provides for both residents' and visitors' needs." I think that needs to be looked at too because it is almost like you have got a free-for-all and you can have a massive argument if all of you have to get people to service properties on the same day or have that number of visitors. I just do not see why you should not have this minimum standard because you are already expecting developers to somehow work it out. I want to come back to the developers' needs because I think the need is consistency and clarity in planning decisions. I think the way that the planning policy is constructed does not help; it is not particularly clear. We do have conflicting policies. I do understand it is supposedly in the interests of flexibility but the fact is that even the methodology for creating it is crazy. In the last process whereby the Bridging Island Plan was created, we had a St. Brelade character appraisal that was not even used anywhere, it was not even turned into a Supplementary Planning Guidance. I would suggest there needs to be a much more fundamental look at how we do planning in the Island, think more about neighbourhood plans in which communities can be involved, think more about residential design codes where you can create on-floats, where you can more or less come up with a shape of how things are and allow people to fill in the detail. That would really assist developers. Not to know that ... they are just going to come and it is all a bit of a lottery about whether you are going to have something approved or not because more thought goes into the whole process beforehand. The long and short of it is that I do not see this as unreasonable. I do feel that there have been needs considered for servicing in any way and that this does mean that there is less demand for off-street parking on Government.

#### **1.1.9 Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South:**

I have a huge amount of empathy with the Constable's proposition, particularly when there are so many spaces in town owned by the States of Jersey and all their arm's-length bodies completely abandoned. I turn to my favourite topic "meanwhile use". The reason the Constable wants further parking capacity is because we do not make appropriate use of large spaces that already exist in town. The Esplanade site owned by the Jersey Development Company has lain empty for years. That is to the detriment of the town's economy and potentially for residents who do not have their own private parking space but own a car. Why can we not force a meanwhile use that meets the needs the Constable describes? Why is it possible for a privately-owned site such as Les Sablons to deliver a parking provision, yet our own A.L.O. (arm's-length organisation) does not see the need? Then we have Kensington Place, once again, easier to leave empty rather than going to the effort of providing public parking for both private individuals and for the customers of the businesses in the area. Is it right that we leave places like this empty for years because one day we want to use it for something else? There has to be a change of culture. This is not just about private interest, it is also about supporting the economy. It is interesting that the social housing provider, Andium Homes, have been asked to provide 0.7 spaces per unit. Nobody spoke about how much this added to the cost of building their homes. In the Havre des Pas area why, if Andium Homes have spare capacity, can we not flex their use? Let us get creative with the space we have, let us proactively use meanwhile use planning rules in a much more proactive way. I agree with the Minister for the Environment that the additional cost will not help affordability of homes, but if we are not prepared to proactively use unused spaces because we will not force a meanwhile use, then the concerns raised by the Constable in this proposition remain very valid. I would like to hear from the Minister for the Environment exactly what he will do to ensure that those wasted spaces are used more effectively now. After all, the need is now.

#### **1.1.10 Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John:**

This proposition at its core is about being fair to Islanders and being practical in how we plan new homes. I want to start positively. I am delighted to be able to inform Deputy Warr that we are in discussions with our colleagues from Health about accessing some of that space at Kensington Place. We have made real progress on sustainable transport, we have more safe crossings, we have better paths and pavements. We have introduced up to 70 new parking spaces for cycles in town, we have

got partnerships with schools and Parishes to support walking and cycling, and clearly there is a lot more to do. The hopper bus, which is a great way of getting around St. Helier, either from St. Helier to another part of St. Helier, or using a through ticket coming in from anywhere on the Island, has seen a 67 per cent increase in ridership. We want to double that; we are really keen to increase that. These investments matter. They are making daily journeys safer and easier for many people and we will continue to support that direction of travel. Progress on sustainable transport does not remove a simple truth, many households still need a car some of the time. Earlier this week, I and a number of Ministers attended a question-and-answer event at The Bridge.

[11:00]

It was clear, listening to those in attendance, that some families need a car and it is certainly not seen as a luxury. Our job is to strike the right balance, supporting active travel and buses, while recognising the day-to-day realities of family life: shift work, care responsibilities and trips that are hard to do without a vehicle. Our Sustainable Transport Policy states that more than two-thirds, 68 per cent of people who lived and worked in St. Helier walked to work; however, just under a quarter, 24 per cent, used a car. Why do they use a car? Ensuring it is safe and pleasant to walk around our urban centres and enabling more people to buy good-quality housing within them will support an increase in the proportion of people walking to work or school. How many of those who drive to work do so as they cannot leave their car in the same place as they do overnight? Interestingly, people who live in St. Helier are also twice as likely to not own a car compared to those living elsewhere in the Island. That is why I support the Connétable of St. Helier's proposition. Yesterday morning on the way to the States Chamber I was sat next to a young father on the bus and he asked me what was on the agenda this week. I told him about this proposal. His view was that we need more family-friendly parking in town, especially on Saturdays, so creating additional spaces, in his view, was a positive. The discussion on the way back with a lady was about liberation in St. John. There we are. Deputy Coles spoke about access to Oakfield. Well I am delighted to tell Deputy Coles that if you get the number 3, the 23 or the 33 they offer regular services, either to Oakfield or nearby Oakfield. Part (a) asks that where practicable at least one space is provided per dwelling. This is not about rolling back our sustainable transport ambitions, it is about restoring basic fairness and averting avoidable problems. This is about choice for households; Islanders should not be forced into a no-parking outcome at the planning stage. Some will choose to live car free, and good on them, but many will still need a car for work patterns, family logistics or off-Island travel. This proposition respects that choice. The proposition puts less pressure on public car parks and streets. The public parking estate is finite and expensive to operate. Creating more government car parks is not a cheap or easy answer and suitable sites are limited. It is more efficient for developers to meet a reasonable baseline onsite rather than pushing demand on to taxpayer-funded facilities on nearby streets. The proposition should mean fewer unnecessary car trips. We all see in town people moving cars early in the morning simply to avoid charges. That behaviour adds traffic with no social or economic benefits. Providing reasonable on-site residential parking can reduce those needless vehicle movements. We must also take practical lessons from recent schemes and the Minister mentioned a scheme in my Parish in St. John. Concerns were raised around Field J1109 in St. John where roughly one space per unit is too tight. The result will be pressure on surrounding lanes and private lands. I am also concerned about the pressure it will put on relationships. The catchment areas for schools, Trinity School, St. John's School and St. Lawrence School, there is no public bus that gets children or their parents to or from the schools. The pressure that will put on relationships, partners deciding who is going to take the children to school or who is going to work, I think is really under-recognised; we need to think about people. "Where practical" means design-led and site-sensitive. In well-served central locations the right solution may be a mix of on-site spaces, shared pool bays, car club provision, E.V. readiness and a strong cycle storage with the Highway Authority retaining discretion to insist on safety, access and good urban design. In the more peripheral or rural areas with limited alternatives, providing at least one space per dwelling should be seen as the

absolute minimum and there should be far more recognition of the location of those sites. Looking at part (b), more off-street parking would give us the opportunity to create more cycle-friendly facilities if we could get cars off the streets. Part (b) speaks to enabling additional off-street parking where feasible under the Island Plan and, again, the aim is balance and clarity. Prioritising spaces for drivers with reduced mobility, shoppers and visitors can support town vitality and inclusivity if it is done carefully. We do have a number of private car parks that operate on the Island in St. Helier, and I understand that they charge significantly more than we do with our public estate. The return on investment for a private operator to come in and take over our estate would see prices rise significantly. Also I think it is right that we remain open-minded about potential sites on the ring road subject to policy tests, safety and design quality. Minden Place has been mentioned in the debate and has served the Island well but is not as good as it could be and so we need to look for alternatives. I want to address one anticipated criticism that supporting this proposition is somehow inconsistent with sustainable transport. It is not; we can do both. We must and we will keep investing in safer walking and cycling routes, better bus stops - we have added 3 to the St. Helier hopper bus in the last 2 months - and active travel connections. We will expect developers to provide a reasonable level of on-site residential parking so that neighbouring streets, Parishes and public car parks are not asked to pick up the bill. It does not have to be underground; there are lots of examples of ground-floor parking in St. Helier that others could follow. This is the balanced, pragmatic approach Islanders expect. It supports families, it protects the public purse and it keeps us moving forward on sustainable transport by design, not by creating parking shortfalls that frustrate residents and push the problem elsewhere. That is why I am supporting this proposition. Let us give Islanders choice, ease pressure on the public parking estate and set a practical, site-sensitive baseline for new homes while we continue to deliver the safer crossings, better pavements and cycle facilities that make sustainable journeys more attractive every year.

#### **1.1.11 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:**

I am at a crossroads with this application and I will touch on the relevant guidance with some experience. I must get my head off the planning process a little more than I do. Anyway, Members, I do want to say that I am not happy with the current parking standards and I believe that they are leading to the delivery of an increasingly large number of homes that do not adequately meet parking requirements across the whole Island, and I will touch on the different areas. I should add that I live in sustainable transport zone 1. I own my home, which has no parking in it, and there is no world in which it could be provided. I would also like to add that all Planning Committee members and the Ministers put aside our opinions on whether policy or guidance should exist and instead follow what is stamped and approved, which leads to a reality that we both approve and refuse development that personally we may feel the opposite opinions to. This allows us to debate policy and then apply it despite our own positions. This proposition has, in my view, arisen like many others on planning guidance due to this kind of general growing frustration with a policy and a feeling that something needs to be done. The challenge, however, is today deciding whether this is a best way to fix it. The Minister has proposed in his speech that the policy gets the right balance at the moment and I would urge him to reconsider this. He rightly highlighted that the wording of part (a) of this proposition does not help him or his policy officers draft precise guidance that ensures confidence to the industry. But to suggest that no change is needed, in my view, will fail to recognise what is clearly a mood of Members and the public that the balance has not been struck at quite the right level. There is a balance to be had and if we know that the Minister recognises this and is keen to address the problem, may allow a different, more evidence-led approach of finding that balance. To give some examples we should turn to the active guidance, not just for parking, but for density and what also is missing when it helps to design and help people create proposals to come forward for approval or decision. I want to also make it clear that this proposal by the Connétable is not just about St. Helier. We have heard that others are well met or maybe not well enough with the current standards, but this is largely about St. Helier. The Minister himself said this dealt largely with town but he also mentioned that

there are 6 sustainable transport zones across the Island. I think that, while a focus has been on St. Helier, we should note that 5 out of the 6 sustainable transport zones allow for a minimum parking provision of less than one parking space per dwelling based on the rooms. Some examples of this include sustainable transport zone 4, which I am sure we are all well aware of the boundaries of that. For those who are not, it runs all the way pretty much from town up to Gorey in the built-up area, and likewise heading westward. In sustainable transport zone 4, the minimum level of provision for a one-bed home is 0.5 cars which realistically means for every 2 one-bed homes, one parking space should be provided. In a 2-bed home it is 0.75 cars and then for 3-bed homes, one car, 4-bed homes, 2 cars. This does lead to a position where, when developers are looking at sites and working with those who own the land to assess the value, they might be thinking about some units which will not have car-parking space. In these areas there is a genuine debate to be had: is that the right provision? I just want to touch on that Members would be, if they approved this, addressing 5 sustainable transport zones which all have a minimum provision of less than one. They should all be well aware of the guidance that they would be influencing when they make a decision today. It is also worth recognising that the thrust of the Bridging Island Plan adopted in 2022 was able to operate under the very old 1988 parking standards for 12 months and was compliant under those. So guidance can be changed, and I think we should be happy to say a balance can be struck that meets the Bridging Island Plan but is not currently where we are today. Turning to town, as I mentioned, I think there is a genuine link between parking provision, density and housing mix and they all relate to each other. It should be obvious and clear to Members that not every site in town can provide one parking space per unit; indeed some cannot provide any. It is also fair to say we have seen developments come forward with insufficient parking to what they could have provided on that site, and that is disappointing. One argument made by the Minister has been density; however, turning to the approved density standards, developments in town must meet a minimum of 50 dwellings per hectare. The draft guidance, which was not adopted, proposed a higher density for flats but this is not what was approved. I may have shared with Members before example densities but 50 dwellings per hectare is Langtry Gardens; Le Clos Couriard on Rouge Bouillon is 150 dwellings per hectare. Clearly, there is a balance that can be struck that might be lower density, fully compliant with adopted density standards that would allow for greater parking. But the other concern is that not all dwellings in St. Helier need parking; the Minister says not everybody needs a car in their life. Well part of this I think comes from the concentration of one bedroom and 2-bedroom units we are seeing built. Perhaps for those who come to Jersey for a short time, they do not want a car, but the over-concentration on housing stock of this type is perhaps preventing those creating families but this proposition does not solve this. The Minister needs to be clear with a housing mix guidance so that we are building homes for the right people in the future, yet this has not been forthcoming. The reason housing mix plays into this is because 5.5.1, the guidance on car-free development, states that normally, and the Minister has said, there is a requirement to provide car-free development, that it is well located, with good access to services, it will provide fewer than 10 homes and the predominant type of accommodation is less likely to accommodate families. When we are building houses that are predominantly one and 2-bed, this policy is engaged more, but if we changed the policies around the housing mix, the expectation of a greater amount of parking provision also changes. There is no guidance for Members to make decisions on the long-term needs of housing at the moment, only old and out-of-date assessments of housing needs. We have a lot to debate here but this debate is not about all those topics. In some ways we are debating on the fringes of what it means to live and belong in Jersey, and we have heard many arguments about this, but that has to be within the remit of all policies developed in the round. It is interesting to note that the existing guidance went through a consultation and what is telling are the responses to question 12.

[11:15]

Question 12 asked quite simply whether you agree or disagree with the proposed standards of provision for residents' car-parking space: 12 per cent strongly agreed; 24 per cent agreed; 20 per

cent neither agreed nor disagreed; 20 per cent somewhat disagreed and 24 per cent strongly disagreed. Again, I think it is important for all Members to recognise that we do need to address this. Turning back to the proposition and, as I highlighted, the wording is problematic. Members have, I think, taken some relief in “where practicable” but what does that mean, because the guidance will have to be clear as to the balance being struck about what is practicable? Does this mean that we should be allowing substandard visibility splays? Should we be compromising because we know that any redevelopment of site may not be able to achieve these? Should we be making a statement that therefore density has to have a limit to allow for a suitable ratio of housing? A really interesting one is what is the impact on parking at the expense of active shop fronts? The Connétable mentioned a recent approved development on 70-72 La Colomberie. The only, perhaps, way to provide a greater ratio of parks on that site would be to change the housing mix and have fewer apartments, go down, which some of us might be quite in favour of, or lose some of the active or semi-active frontage on La Colomberie which had one retail unit and a large stretch of office space. If that was turned to parking, there would be a compromise to the vibrancy of the feeling of a main artery into town. That is a level of detail we need to think about when we talk about the balance of planning policy. My challenge is, the Connétable, while using this word to make it in some ways easier for Members to support makes it harder for the Minister to find a balance in policy. Where does that leave us? We have an issue to solve, we are at risk of voting on the wrong wording. We could reject this, we could say we agree with the thrust of the Connétable, we could move to the next item or, as Members may or may not like, we could ask the Connétable for a reference back. The Connétable has used the wording. He must understand his thrust of what he expects that to deliver. As Connétable he will have in his mind, and with his Roads Committee, a balance as to what St. Helier should give up in return for greater parking. While I know it is not always good to do a reference back to a Back-Bencher, I believe the Connétable is well-suited with resource and experience in this area to provide more detail. I want us to make an informed decision. I want the Minister to recognise there is clearly a growing issue and a frustration, but I want this Assembly to make a reasoned decision about how to set planning policy and ensure that we are doing so in a holistic way. I will listen to the next couple of speeches but I may then, depending on what those words have said, request a reference back on this.

**Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour:**

Can I raise a point of order just on that process? Is the Member allowed to intervene later on a reference back because he has just spoken I think. Can he do so during the concurrence of his speech?

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Yes, let me just consider that.

**Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:**

In other words, he can invite another Member to do it later but he cannot.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Yes, thank you for raising that, Deputy Ozouf. We take the view that someone who has spoken can nonetheless propose a reference back during the course of the debate. .

**1.1.12 Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central:**

I feel somewhat more comfortable with the wording than the previous speaker. I am conscious when listening to this debate that people are talking about people living in St. Helier and the words “others” or “them” are used quite a lot. As a St. Helier resident, a resident and representative of St. Helier Central, I am going to talk about “we” and “us”. It is interesting following the previous speaker who spoke about the different types of housing and housing density because my experience in St. Helier is there are very many family homes that families do not want to necessarily move into because of the practicality of living without parking. I think, to be honest, the Constable here has taken a very

measured approach. He knows of a problem, he lives in St. Helier as well and represents the Parish where we have parking issues, and is seeking not to exacerbate it. I think us as an Assembly, we do have a role to seek not to exacerbate problems that we know already exist. I did want to speak on behalf of residents and talk about my own experience and what the practicality of living without parking means. As St. Helier residents, as it has been said by many speakers before, we are the ones that tend to walk to school and work and use our cars for very specific reasons, and one of those will be on a Saturday. I challenge any Member who thinks that living without a car is a practical thing to do for a family to park around the corner, maybe several streets away, and get your shopping back home. That is the reality for residents in our urban areas. You either stop on the streets and do a quick dash in, hope that nobody pulls up behind you and starts beeping their horn, or you find the nearest parking space that you can get, which may or not be a resident's parking zone 1. If you do not have a resident's parking permit, you may be hoping that the traffic warden does not come and find your car and give you a fine while you carry your bags. The other practical note is entertaining elderly family members. If you are lucky, you might have a disabled space on your street or nearby. You may well have to go and collect those members from where they live in town. I can use an example; I am sure my mother-in-law will not mind me referring to her. When we pick her up from her over-55 development which is in central St. Helier, we have to stop on a yellow line while she - and she does have mobility issues - makes it into the car. Again, there may well be people hooting and beeping at us because we have not been able to find a car-parking space as she makes her way to the car with her walking sticks. Then for families who are parking - and I am one of those that is currently and have been on the resident's parking zone waiting list for I think it is 2½ years now; I have been told I will probably need to wait another 6 months at least - you take your children out to evening things after school. For example, my daughter does girl guiding. We drive her up to where that is, it is not always in walking distance, and we have to cross our fingers when we bring her back that there is still a parking space in the nearest car park to us. That is a reality for families in town. If we go and visit family on a Sunday, go out for a Sunday lunch, we keep our eye on the clock because we know if we are later than about 4.00 p.m. we are not going to get a parking space and going to have to drive around and walk down around town. I was with Constable Jehan on Monday at Brighter Futures when we were told of a family, I think it was 4 or 5 children or 4 children with another one on the way, and having to rent a private parking space a good walking distance away. That reminded me of the real cost-of-living pressure on families that are living without parking that is linked to their home. They are either having to pay for public parking or pay for private parking and that is a real cost pressure on those people. I am going to support the Constable's proposition. My concern is it probably does not go far enough to cease exacerbating the issues that we already know exist but it does give the Minister a clear indication that we value people living in urban areas. We understand the practicality of living in those areas and we think that people living in urban areas should be treated equally with people living in the country Parishes. I do urge other Members to support this proposition as well because I do think it is our role not to continue to exacerbate issues that already exist and to seek to make life better for our community.

**Deputy A.F. Curtis:**

As you may have guessed, I know others mean to speak, but I would like to operate Standing Order 83(1)(b): "A Member of the States may propose without notice during the debate on a proposition that the proposition be referred back in order that (b) any ambiguity or inconsistency in information relating to the proposition which has already been provided to the States be clarified." The information I require for a reference back - and I hope Members agree - is the ambiguity in what "where practicable" means as I think it is too ambiguous for officers to apply that in guidance that will give the required effect.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

The difficulty with your suggestion, Deputy, is it is not really consistent with the purpose of a reference back under Standing Order 83(2) because Standing Order 83, as you know, and I will read out to Members who have not got it in front of them: “A Member of the States may propose without notice during the debate on a proposition that the proposition be referred back in order that (a) further information relating to the proposition can be provided to the States”, so that is more information, “or (b) any ambiguity or inconsistency in information relating to the proposition which has already been provided to the States be clarified.” What you are really concerned about is difficulty in interpreting the term to the proposition. You are not really asking for further information in respect of the proposition. Do you follow?

**Deputy A.F. Curtis:**

Respectfully, I do not follow.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Well if you insist on your reference back, I am not going to stop you having a reference back, but to my mind, your concern is about the interpretation of the proposition if adopted and that is really a matter for the Minister to deal with if it is adopted, in terms of any guidance issues. But if you wanted to make a reference back, I am not entitled under Standing Order 83, I do not think, to refuse it. But it seems to me that the purpose of your reference back is not entirely consistent with Standing Orders. Other people want to talk about this briefly.

**Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:**

Sir, can I raise a point of order just in relation to your point?

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Yes, you can, Deputy Renouf.

**Deputy J. Renouf:**

Sir, is it possible that both you and Deputy Curtis are right in a sense in that the reference back would both ask the Minister, were the reference back adopted, to ... sorry, if the proposition was passed then the Minister would be asked to do something? But it is also the case that a reference back would ask the proposer to provide more detail on what he means where possible by in his proposition.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

It is simply an ordinary English word. It is a question for determination of Members what they think of where “practicable” means.

[11:30]

It is a word we can look up in the dictionary but that is my view. I am not stopping a debate on reference back, if that is what the Member really wants; that was just my concern.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

No, I think that is the debating point, is it not? I think we do set a very dangerous precedent if we can refer back on grounds of differences in interpretation of just ordinary English words. A reference back normally seeks additional information where there are policy ambiguities that we might have difficulty in knowing what the intention is of this. I think this is not one of those areas. I think it will be up to planners and applicants when they make an application saying: “Look, we do not think it is practicable for us to have a car parking space here because it will be so difficult and it will be so costly and there is such little space to do it. But it is just not practicable for us to do that.” It would be what a reasonable person thinks, which is, ultimately, what the planner and the Planning Department or committee is there to do. I think we just get into semantics if we are going to refer things back on the basis that: “I am not quite sure that we know what that word means.” It has an

ordinary English definition that we can look up in the dictionary and we can just substitute that. I think we get very much into the Lewis Carroll world of rabbit holes if we go down that route. There is not any substantive more information that the proposer of this who, let us point out, while there is nothing in Standing Order 83 that says that you cannot refer back to a Private Members' Bill, effectively, what this is, that has certainly not been the convention for the most part in my memory of 15 or 17 years in this Assembly, We do not tend to refer things back to private Members if they are in order. It tends to be the case that when Ministers are proposing things which perhaps lack detail in their application, then if the majority of Members want to refer them back for that detail and ambiguity, that is fine. But I do not think this is a suitable use of 83 and Members might simply wish to vote against it if they think it is a badly worded proposition.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Deputy Scott, any observations?

**Deputy M.R. Scott:**

I just would point out that the context of this is in relation to a minimum standard. I do not think what is being asked makes sense. We are talking about minimum standard and that is of a minimum of one parking space.

**Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:**

Sir, may I raise a little point just while ...

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Yes.

**Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:**

Yes, thank you, Sir. I apologise for taking up the Assembly's time. But I wondered in advancing the requirements of a reference back I would have suggested that the reference back could be including remarks made by Members, such as myself, that would ask not only just the limit of what the proposer has said but, for example, that the matter be consulted by the Constable with the Planning Department and developers. My question is, is one able to add an additional requirement in a reference back? I will leave it at that.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

What you have suggested, Deputy Curtis, is that the reference back is for the purpose of determining what effect the proposition will have if paragraph (a) is adopted, effectively, is it not?

**Deputy A.F. Curtis:**

No, it is more that there is ambiguity or inconsistency within the information of the report to explain the interpretation in the Constable's view. It is not for the Connétable to provide the direction as to how that will be interpreted. But Members are voting with no advice as from the Connétable as to what he means and I take that as ambiguity in the report and in line of 83(1)(b).

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

Sir, can I ask for a point of order? We do not vote on the report, Sir. The report is irrelevant and if the report could not exist at all we vote simply on what is being proposed in the proposition.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Yes, but there would be information in the report that is relevant to the proposition. You say the ambiguity arises from the Constable's report as to what practicable means.

**Deputy A.F. Curtis:**

Yes, his understanding as to what that should mean. Of course it would not be his power to dictate it.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

With some reservations I am permitting the debate on a reference back under Standing Order 83, on the footing that it is said by the proposer that there is an ambiguity in the report and the Connétable's proposition generally as to what the meaning and effect of "practicable" means and there should be a reference back for the purpose of further information on that issue. We are not having any more debate on whether or not the debate starts because we are going to start it.

**Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central:**

I was going to ask a question of the S.G. (Solicitor General), if I may.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

No, not on this matter. You are left with my view. **[Laughter]** That is how Standing Orders work. There it is. Do you want to speak in the debate?

**The Connétable of St. Helier:**

The proposition requires seconding, I think, Sir.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Yes, it does, you are absolutely right. I was going to come to that. Do you want to say anything in support of the proposition?

**1.2 Supplementary Planning Guidance: Parking (P.54/2025) - reference back**

**1.2.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:**

I would, Sir. Members may feel it is not appropriate for a reference back on this and they can vote accordingly. However, I think there is a huge amount of ambiguity and confusion within the report as to what is being directed in part (a) of the proposition, although I am sure he will speak on it and I will speak on closing. For example, I do not take that the wording "where practicable" requires that to be the exact implementation of the Minister. He will have to come up with guidance and there is no steer at the moment as to what that guidance would be. Because the report, which does guide the proposition, has no inference of balance. I will listen to Members on the reference back and I will of course sum up and make the reference back.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

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

**1.2.2 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:**

References back, in my experience in States debates, tend to happen fairly near the beginning of the debate and they are quite often synonymous with wrecking motions. It is a shame that this one has happened several hours into the debate. Without suggesting any criticism of the chair, it is certainly one of the oddest reference backs I can remember. The word "practicable" has a meaning in English and, as the report has been invoked, I direct Members to the fourth paragraph of the report where I sought to explain it as far as I thought it needed explaining. I quote: "The Parish of St. Helier's Highway Authority, the Roads Committee, in its capacity as a statutory consultee on planning applications, has consistently requested the Planning Department to ensure that adequate parking is provided in new developments or rebuilds. The committee has accepted that this is not always possible." Or one might say practicable: "Especially in the conversion of buildings or where there are concerns about built heritage. However, much of the new housing which our Parish has had to accept are large flatted developments with ample opportunity for car parking, albeit that underground parking provision affects the profit to be made from such developments." End quote. To summarise,

“practicable” means where it is possible to achieve more parking without damaging the built heritage, the shop fronts that were mentioned by the Deputy in his first speech. He mentioned, I think, turning areas and obviously road safety considerations. It is impracticable, it is impractical, it is impossible to support a car park which is going to endanger life, and that is why I put the words in. But if it simply affects the bottom line of a developer, the ability to make money, then that is something that the planners ought to not take into account. They should say to the developer: “Go away, sharpen your pencils and provide these town residents with a little bit more parking”, as Dandara did in West Centre. I urge Members to reject the proposition.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Thank you. Three Members have asked to speak, I am then going to close the debate and move to the vote; Deputies Morel, Renouf and Bailhache.

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

I am pleased to follow the Constable because his explanation of “where practicable” strikes directly at the heart of why I think Deputy Curtis’s reference back is an entirely valid point. While the Constable referred to affecting the profits of developers, which is a wonderful way to characterise developers, what he does not refer to and what I think is absolutely vital to understand is, does “where practicable” include financial viability of the project, full stop? Because that is linked to profits but it is most importantly linked to whether the actual building of a development goes ahead or not. Until we have clarity on whether the financial viability of a project is to be seen as practicability or not, then I think we are very dangerously treading into territory, as an Assembly, where we are basically going to make housing more expensive in Jersey because we will ensure that less housing is built in Jersey; that is something that this proposition is going to do. It will force the price of housing up and it will make sure that less houses are built.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

You need to focus only on the merit of the reference back.

**Deputy K.F. Morel:**

That is correct. Therefore, understanding whether practicability includes financial viability or not, I think is absolutely vital. As it stands, neither the report nor the proposition give us clarity on whether practicability includes financial viability or not.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Deputy Renouf, you wanted to speak on this.

**1.2.4 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:**

Yes, I am pleased to follow Deputy Morel, who I think has amplified a concern that I have. I think, if anything, the Constable of St. Helier’s speech amplified also the reason why a reference back would make a lot of sense here, which is that already in making his quote from his proposition from the report he began to elide “practicable” with “possible”. Those are 2 very different things. The word “practicable” is doing all the heavy lifting in this proposition. All the heavy lifting is done by that which is being quoted repeatedly by Members as the get-out clause, if you like. The Constable raises the question as to why it was not made earlier, this proposition. I think it has become clear through the debate that that heavy lifting is being done. Everybody who is supporting the proposition is making reference to that. “Where practicable” is the nub of this proposition in a way. I think it would be interesting just to focus on how that might be interpreted. One of the points I was going to make in my speech is if you look at a particular example of how that might play out, the J.D.C. (Jersey Development Company) development on the waterfront. If this proposition is adopted, then “where practicable” will come into effect but so will the planning guidance, the new planning guidance, which is that every single dwelling in that development, however it is proposed, must have

a parking space where practicable. Potentially, it is practicable to dig out more of the contaminated ground there at a cost of £90,000 per car parking place. It might be practicable or is it practicable? Is practicable in this sense feasible? It is possible, which is the synonym the Constable reached for when he described what he meant by practicable. It is certainly possible to dig out all that ground and find somewhere to put it and so on. But is it feasible? Is feasible what we are looking for as a synonym here? I think it would be quite useful to clarify this for Members. I think the issue here is, are we about making good policy? Are we about making good policy? Would this policy be improved by having greater clarity around what is meant? Surely this Assembly is about good policy. It would surely be better to make sure that if there is going to be some change to policy around this that we are clear what that new policy is, what it will mean in practice. I think as the debate has gone on it has become clear to me certainly that there is incredible ambiguity around that. I think it would be very useful to have that, press the pause button on that, ask the Constable to clarify what he means, possibly by way of an addendum to the report or possibly just by a speech when he comes to bring it back. Therefore, I think this is, potentially, a good move in terms of the Assembly thinking on its feet to make sure that decisions it makes are ones that will make sense in the future.

**Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:**

Sir, may I raise a point of order? It is about the wording in the proposition.

[11:45]

Is my reading correct that even if we do adopt this today with the current wording it will be for the Minister for the Environment, he has to come back and amend Supplementary Planning Guidance, which he will do as he sees fit in accordance with what is being voted on here?

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

If the proposition is adopted it is a matter for the Minister to consider what the Assembly has adopted and make adjustments to the guidance accordingly in the usual way.

**1.2.5 Deputy P.M. Bailhache of St. Clement:**

I cannot help feeling that the 2 previous speakers have followed the invitation of Deputy Tadier and have gone down the rabbit hole. It seems to me that there is absolutely no ambiguity about this whatsoever. It is necessary to look at the whole of paragraph (a) and not simply to extract one word from it. What the paragraph (a) says is that the Supplementary Planning Guidance should be revised: "To ensure that a minimum of one parking space is provided per unit of accommodation." Nothing could be more straightforward than that. But the Constable has qualified it and he has qualified it by the words "where practicable". "Practicable" is an ordinary English word. I looked at a dictionary definition on my phone and it says: "Able to be done or put into practice successfully." That is what it means and that will be a question for the planning officials to determine. One can only express the hope that planning officials will use their common sense. They will act in accordance with whatever the circumstances of the particular application require. I oppose this reference back.

**1.2.6 Deputy R. J. Ward of St. Helier Central:**

I always have problems with reference back. I am very late I have to say but I understand why the Deputy is bringing it. I did ask the S.G., I think I am allowed to share that information from our conversation and you can always correct me, Sir, if I interpret it wrong. "Practicable" has no legal standing whatsoever. It is a word, as was suggested earlier, that just means ...

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

I said to you it was an ordinary English word.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Yes. Therefore, there is no legal precedence. I do not know, I am not a lawyer, I would be better off if I was, probably I would imagine.

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

But the legal profession may not be though. [Laughter]

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

It is always good to get support from your colleagues. Now I have lost track of what I was saying. But I think with regards to this reference back, I think we are at a point where we just need to vote on this. If you do not agree with it, do not vote for it. If you do agree with it, vote for it. Because I think we know what “practicable” means and it does need to come back for the Minister. I will also say that I am a St. Helier resident too and I think we do have to think about St. Helier. It is a really challenging place. Even if you do have space outside your house, getting permission to knock down a small wall takes ...

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Do you remember we are confined to the reference back?

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Yes, Sir. But my point being the word “practicable” for St. Helier is very clear, I think. It may be different in the countryside because you may have a lot more space. But it is clear what is practicable and what is not when you are trying to build in St. Helier. I did not speak on the main proposition because I did not get a chance to. Do we get to speak on that still, Sir?

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

If this is rejected then we will return to the debate.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I will wait for that if this is not referenced back because there are some points I think to be made on that.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Yes. Thank you, Deputy Ward. Deputy Millar, do you want to speak?

**1.2.7 Deputy M.E. Millar of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:**

I do not think we should support the reference back at this point. We have talked about this for now almost 2 hours and what we will be seeing is kicking it into the long grass, over a question of interpretation is entirely wrong. I do have issues over what practicability will mean but I will come back to that if we return to the debate.

**1.2.8 Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade:**

I think that the proposer has raised a valid point for Planning policy officers to consider. But I do not believe that it is the Constable of St. Helier’s role to develop the policy. I believe that is the Planning policy officers under the direction of the Minister for the Environment. In that respect I am going to draw a parallel because the actual point that has been raised has been one about whether the extent to which commercial viability needs to be taken into account when considering matters such as practicability. It is a point that I myself have raised with the Minister seeking further Supplementary Planning Guidance in the case of policies ER1 and ER4, which I am sure, as the proposer knows, relates to the use of retail outlets and the extent to which their use can be changed if they are shown to be no market demand. In my own constituency we were seeing a long-running saga here where a developer is proposing that a site in the Coastal National Park area in St. Ouen’s Bay should be converted. A planning inspector comes for appeal, supports this and the Minister is

rejecting it because he believes that the actual premises should be offered at a commercially viable price or market rent. It is indeed valid and it is something that should be taken on board by Planning Policy Officers. But I really do think that the Constable of St. Helier should be spared that task and will not be supporting reference back.

#### **1.2.9 Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin:**

Very briefly, I highlighted in my speech that when I saw the words “where practicable” my alarm bells started ringing. I think the fact that we have spent some time now focusing on those 2 words, with not a complete agreement on what they mean or how we interpret them, shows the challenge that my policy officers and my planning officers would face. I leave it there. But what I would say is I will support this. I think it possibly would give my department and myself an opportunity to work with the Constable, should he be agreeable, to potentially refine this proposition, then we come back with something which would be more acceptable. I take the mood of the Assembly; I think we all do that. But I think we can do better and here is an opportunity.

#### **The Deputy Bailiff:**

I call upon the proposer to reply. Deputy Alex Curtis.

#### **1.2.10 Deputy A.F. Curtis:**

I will thank, firstly, Deputies Morel and Renouf for highlighting the fundamental challenge, highlighting in the Connétable’s remarks on this reference back that there is already inconsistency with what he has just said and what is in the proposition. Turning to specific examples of inconsistency, Deputy Renouf mentioned the waterfront and Members will know that the previously refused plans had *circa* 1,000 units and 525 parking spaces, not all of which I think were for the occupants. “Where practicable” may mean that only 525 units can be delivered on that site; I pass no judgment on the merits of lowering the density of the waterfront development or it may mean digging lower or putting the car parking higher. But that fundamental tension between the density of development and the ability to provide parking and has highlighted the cost and the financial feasibility is essential. Deputy Morel highlighting the financial viability, on a complete blank site one would say maybe it is very hard to argue with the words “where practicable”. You could do anything, you must be able to hit that but there will be policy constraints. I think there is still a large amount of ambiguity in this. I think the Minister has offered a good way forward by using this time to firm up what this means. I will leave Members with the fact that I believe that they will be sorely disappointed with the outcome if this wording is adopted. To take Deputy Scott’s point, that officers will draft guidance on this because officers, when they use the word “practicable”, will put on their hats understanding the policy context and they will, in my expectation, balance economic viability, balance active shopfronts. They will create something that may not deliver at all what Members in this Assembly are trying to vote on. That to me sounds inconsistent, it sounds ambiguous and it will lead to sore disappointment for some, maybe many in different quarters. That is not, as Deputy Renouf says, how we make policy and I justified a productive and constructive way to refine and commit to changing this policy in a slightly more nuanced way. I think the reference back will help and I call for the appel.

#### **The Deputy Bailiff:**

The appel has been called for. Members are invited to return to their seats. Deputy Tadier, you need to return to your seat as well for voting.

#### **Deputy M. Tadier:**

Just give me a moment, Sir.

#### **The Deputy Bailiff:**

All right. Members are voting on the proposition that there needs to be a reference back because there is an ambiguity in the report and proposition as to the meaning of “practicable” in the particular context of this proposition. I invite the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members have had the chance of casting their votes, I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce that the proposition has been rejected.

| <b>Pour: 16</b>         |  | <b>Contre: 25</b>         |  | <b>Abstained: 0</b> |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Connétable of Trinity   |  | Connétable of St. Helier  |  |                     |
| Connétable of Grouville |  | Connétable of St. Peter   |  |                     |
| Connétable of St. Ouen  |  | Connétable of St. Martin  |  |                     |
| Connétable of St. Mary  |  | Connétable of St. John    |  |                     |
| Deputy C.F. Labey       |  | Connétable of St. Clement |  |                     |
| Deputy S.G. Luce        |  | Connétable of St. Saviour |  |                     |
| Deputy K.F. Morel       |  | Deputy G.P. Southern      |  |                     |
| Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat  |  | Deputy M. Tadier          |  |                     |
| Deputy L.J. Farnham     |  | Deputy L.M.C. Doublet     |  |                     |
| Deputy D.J. Warr        |  | Deputy S.M. Ahier         |  |                     |
| Deputy H.M. Miles       |  | Deputy R.J. Ward          |  |                     |
| Deputy J. Renouf        |  | Deputy C.S. Alves         |  |                     |
| Deputy R.E. Binet       |  | Deputy S.Y. Mézec         |  |                     |
| Deputy H.L. Jeune       |  | Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf       |  |                     |
| Deputy A. Howell        |  | Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache |  |                     |
| Deputy A.F. Curtis      |  | Deputy T.A. Coles         |  |                     |
|                         |  | Deputy M.R. Scott         |  |                     |
|                         |  | Deputy C.D. Curtis        |  |                     |
|                         |  | Deputy L.V. Feltham       |  |                     |
|                         |  | Deputy M.E. Millar        |  |                     |
|                         |  | Deputy M.R. Ferey         |  |                     |
|                         |  | Deputy B. Ward            |  |                     |
|                         |  | Deputy K.M. Wilson        |  |                     |
|                         |  | Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson  |  |                     |
|                         |  | Deputy M.B. Andrews       |  |                     |

### **1.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance: Parking (P.54/2025) - resumption**

#### **The Deputy Bailiff:**

Going back to the debate, the Connétable of St. Peter.

#### **1.3.1 Connétable R.P. Vibert of St. Peter:**

I think virtually everything has now been said. But my point is really about discrimination on the residents of St. Helier, where I was also at Bright Futures this week. The importance to some families of having a car and having somewhere to park it and being able to afford to park it was very apparent. I think it is absolutely essential that we do not discriminate and that fairness is restored. I can support part (a) of this, part (b) I am less certain. I would certainly like to see the disused or unused development site in St. Helier used for temporary parking. I think that is probably a better alternative to building private car parks. I fully understand the problems that tradesmen face trying to do work in properties in St. Helier and why they refuse to do so in some cases. This is not just tradesmen, this

is a problem for health workers, for people who work for Children's Services, for child carers. There are some properties where they simply cannot park. They try to park somewhere and the end result is that they probably get a parking fine. I think that is something that even in the rural Parishes the attempts to reduce the number of parking spaces on developments will simply result in people parking on roads where we do not want them. I fought for more parking spaces on the large developments in St. Peter with the developers and eventually we got to a compromise. But the very first sketch plans I was shown, they were suggesting 0.7 parking spaces per 3-bedroom house and that is just not practical. Yet that is probably the standard that is set in St. Helier. We cannot do that. There are reasons why people need cars. We are moving to electric vehicles. From a sustainability point, yes, it is some years away but gradually petrol and diesel cars will disappear. Nevertheless, people will buy electric vehicles; in fact, strangely enough, we have encouraged them to do so with subsidising the price. Therefore, if we are going to do that then we need to provide the parking spaces for those people to park. Yes, certainly I will support part (a), less decided on part (b).

### **1.3.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:**

It has been very interesting listening to the debate. Because as so often happens, I think, in this Assembly it has become a repository of a great many issues, as Deputy Curtis has outlined. There is clearly deep dissatisfaction with the level of car-parking provision in some developments and I get that and that is fine.

[12:00]

But I hope that when Members come to vote they consider the actual impact of what the proposition says. I should say that the Supplementary Planning Guidance that we are debating was brought in by me. I hope that that simple statement does not doom the Minister's case against this. I hope that Members will listen very carefully to the arguments that he is making and that I will also, I think, amplify to some extent. Just the origins of this, it is worth bearing in mind where this came from. I did not invent this S.P.G. out of thin air. I did not wake up one morning and think we need to reduce car-parking provision. I am going to produce some Supplementary Planning Guidance. It was an instruction in the Bridging Island Plan, proposal 33 to be precise. Instructed the Minister to bring forward a new policy developing sustainable transport zones, which is what the policy does and to ensure that whatever was brought forward was consistent with the Sustainable Transport Policy. It was also part of a package when I brought it in. I brought it in with minimum space standards for properties. In fact there was a deliberate trade off in that, in the sense that I increased the minimum then space standards in that Planning Guidance, they were also out of date, so new developments would have more space in them and that of course increases the cost of development. At the same time reducing car-parking provision, not eliminating, reducing car-parking provision reduces the cost of development; the 2 were designed to interact and that is not a bad thing. There has been talk made by the Constable about the profits of developers. But, as Deputy Morel said, this is about viability. This is about viability, what can be built? We are asking the development industry to make developments that will deliver affordable housing number one priority; number one priority, and we have to have that in our minds. There is no free lunch when it comes to car-parking provision. That is why there was a trade off in the Supplementary Planning Guidance. There was a balance, it reduced the amount of car-parking provision in some areas and increased the size of flats and houses. If you increase the number of car-parking spaces that are required in a development, you will either be increasing the cost of homes or reducing the number supplied; it is very simple. The Supplementary Planning Guidance, I hope Members have read it, is about creating flexibility and choice. It removed rigidities in the planning system and created a situation where we could have planning applications approved that were responsive to the particular nature of the place where they were being proposed. If you were proposing a development in the centre of town in a pedestrianised area, it allowed to be a car-free development because it was in a car-free zone. The Constable's proposition reduces choice and reduces flexibility, undeniably reduces flexibility; that is the entire intent of the policy. It is to

introduce a one-size-fits-all. Every dwelling must have a car-parking space. I will come to the “wherever practicable”; thank you for the heckle. The other point is that these policies, as I say, did not spring from thin air. They are consistent; the Supplementary Planning Guidance is consistent with a long direction of travel. It is consistent with the Sustainable Transport Policy. It is consistent with the Carbon Neutral Map. It is consistent with the Bridging Island Plan. All of which have sought to reduce dependence on the car, reduce dependence, not eliminate the car but to reduce dependence. It is a nudge, there is a strong nudge; we are trying to nudge people away from dependence on the car. That is not to say that there should be no cars; of course families need to use cars in many circumstances. Of course they do. This policy change would not change that within St. Helier or anywhere else. It would not affect the ability of people to use cars. The strongest bite of this policy is in sustainable transport zone 1 where it allows some developments in specific narrow circumstances to be car free. That is a sensible response to the particular place. We have agreed through the Sustainable Transport Policy, through the Bridging Island Plan and through the Carbon Neutral Map to try and reduce car usage and to reduce dependence on private vehicles. We further agreed that we should focus our efforts on reducing dependence on cars in areas where alternative transport options are available. It does not mean the policy seeks to get rid of provision for cars, even in the centre of town. It does not mean that parking will not be provided. It simply says that in certain clearly defined circumstances with clear conditions that have to be met there is an opportunity to build car-free dwellings in one small area. It creates an option that the planning system did not previously allow. This proposition would close that option down again. Many houses still need a car - yes, they do - even in town but not all; not all. This policy says every new development, the default position is every new development must have a car-parking unit; every unit. The only get out is “if practicable”; if practical. I alluded in the speech on the reference back to the difficulties with “if practicable”. It speaks to a much wider point, which is tensions in planning policy. How many times have we heard Members say: “The problem with the Island Plan is it is contradictory”? There are many different things, policies that are in tension and to some extent policy tension is built in. But this is not a policy tension, this is a policy contradiction. The Island Plan makes clear that we should be reducing car dependence and car usage. The Supplementary Planning Guidance that the Minister will be instructed to bring forward does the opposite. What are applicants to make of this? What are objectors to make of this? It means that when applications come before the Planning Committee one side will be able to stand up and say: “Here is a long series of quotes from the Island Plan saying we should reduce car usage.” Another side will be able to stand up and say: “But we have got Supplementary Planning Guidance that increases it.” That is a contradiction and a recipe for chaos. It does not seek to bring clarity to the planning process. It does not help us approve new developments. It is much more likely to lead, as the Minister has said, to developments not coming forward at all. There is just too much ambiguity. What bit of policy are developers supposed to listen to? There is this argument that simply providing car spaces will not increase journeys. Let us examine that contention for a moment. We are going to encourage developers at vast cost to build car parking spaces; owners are going to pay for them. Is the purpose of this policy to encourage a whole load of car parking spaces that the owners of property or renters will be able to sit and look at, admiring their empty car parking space or perhaps admiring a car that they have bought to put in the car parking space but not use it? Of course there is a link between car ownership and car usage. It is explicit in every speech that has been made. The aim is for people to be able to use them. We are not trying to stop people using cars. We are simply saying that the nudge should be fewer cars and the nudge should be greatest in areas where sustainable transport is most available. I want to tackle this notion of discrimination. It is not discrimination to have different policies apply in different parts of the Island. It is the very essence of planning policy. I am lucky enough to live in the green zone. I cannot build certain things in that green zone. My neighbour, who is in the built-up area, can. That is not discrimination, it is planning policy in action. The whole basis of planning policy is to provide different policies that are specific to the different areas. That is not discrimination. Sorry, I have messed around with my speech on my iPad and that is always a recipe for disaster. I

have to say I am disappointed with the Minister for Infrastructure's comments. The Sustainable Transport Policy has been airily cast aside and the argument - extraordinary argument - that more parking will lead to less journeys because fewer people will be moving their cars first thing in the morning. I would like to hear officer advice on whether usage in the morning to move cars would compensate for the wider use of cars that will be encouraged by this policy. I remind the Minister and indeed the Assembly that private car use is at the bottom of the pyramid of sustainable transport; the bottom of the pyramid. Everything else is a priority before that. I get that there is mood music here that says that planning policy has been too restrictive on car parking. In conclusion, I would say you can be against the current Supplementary Planning Guidance and still vote against this proposition, for the simple reason that in voting for this proposition you are not voting just against the existing Supplementary Planning Guidance, you are voting for new Supplementary Planning Guidance. The job is not just to judge whether or not the current Supplementary Planning Guidance is right or wrong, it is to answer the question: will the new Supplementary Planning Guidance be an improvement? No, it will not. It will put huge contradictions into the planning-making process. It will mean we overprovide for cars for years to come. Look at all those developments where we already know that there are unused car parking spaces and yet we are saying that we will provide more car-parking spaces, even for people who do not need them. I lived until I was in my 40s without owning a car. Not everyone needs a car at every stage of their life. The planning system should have the flexibility to provide that. It will increase the cost of housing and, in particular, of affordable housing. Because the Constable may not believe that increase putting car parking spaces in but, unfortunately, evidence says it will increase the cost of housing. It will also deter development that might otherwise have taken place and it will undermine a development industry that is already struggling and it will make it harder to improve air quality. I urge Members to vote against. I think the issues are too important to ignore the actual detail. The vote is not a free hit to say more parking should be provided. It is a concrete proposal to ask the Minister to bring forward a new Supplementary Planning Guidance. If he does that he will create blatant contradictions in the policy framework for decision-making. If he does not do what the proposition says he will be blatantly defying the Assembly. There is a potential for reform of this S.P.G. but it would be a much finer-tuned policy concentrating on particular aspects of the S.P.G. This is not that and I ask Members to reject it.

### **1.3.3 Deputy M.E. Millar of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:**

I am very pleased to follow Deputy Renouf's very well-considered and thought-through speech. I would like to be sympathetic to this proposition and I am sympathetic to it.

[12:15]

Because I have worked out this morning over the course of my life I have lived in 7 flats and in only one of them, which was a relatively new build in St. Helier, was a dedicated parking for one car and it was a small block with 4 flats. I absolutely understand the frustration of driving round in the evening trying to find a place to stop, to unpack your car with your shopping. I did not have children to worry about then, so it was just myself. But I know how frustrating it is driving round trying to find a parking space close to your own home. The first thing I would say, however, is that I only got my first car when I was in the fourth of those flats, which was the first flat that I owned or the bank owned, as the case may be because I could not afford it. I could not have hoped to afford a car and buy a flat at that time. It was some years before I did buy a car because that is what people do. Perhaps in the old days outside Jersey you start off perhaps in a flat share. and then you get your own place which you rent, and then you maybe manage to buy a place with one bedroom, and then you might manage to buy a place with 2 bedrooms and that is how people do it in other parts of the U.K. My big concern with this is we talk time and time and time and time again about how we want people to be able to buy their own homes. We want affordable homes and this will do nothing to create affordability. It will make, particularly for first-time buyers and possibly also for people who are

buying retirement flats, retirement homes who may not be able to drive, will be creating a cost that people will not be able to afford. It will be adding to the building cost and, therefore, add to the sale cost. Andium, for example, in their Maisons Les Arches development have first-time buyer flats and there you can buy the flat alone without a parking space or you can opt to buy a parking space separately at a cost of £40,000. If you are adding a parking space to every first-time buyer flat, to every retirement flat and you put up the price by, let us say, £40,000 or that would be £50,000 or £60,000, that will be putting those homes out of reach of first-time buyers. We have already been told the construction industry is on its knees. We have had construction companies going out of business at a rate. We have been told that the buy-to-let market has gone through the floor; that is one of the reasons for that. We have been told, although we have not heard about it for some time, that there is a block of flats sitting unsold because landlords are not buying and other people cannot afford it. This will have a huge impact on the construction industry if they have got to build parking spaces. I absolutely agree anybody who is building homes with 2 or 3 bedrooms, which are clearly family homes, should be including at least one parking space. It is absurd to think otherwise in my mind. But we have to remember that every time we make an intervention in terms of how builders have to build we add a cost. We are meant to be reducing red tape and bureaucracy, this is adding, in a way, its own red tape and bureaucracy. It is adding more hardness in the planning process. It is adding more work for everybody and it will add to the cost. Our interventions have a real world impact on builders and the people who are trying to buy what they are building. We must bear that in mind. We must bear that in mind. My simple point on “where practicable” is, yes, it is a simple word. Is it practicable to do something? I had the benefit of visiting the homes that Andium are building at Sion and in St. Peter and I saw around them and, yes, they look like lovely homes. I was particularly interested in St. Peter’s and I have to confess I did not ask how many parking spaces each home is allocated. But the developers in St. Peter were very proud of how they have designed that development. Every house does not have a parking space near it but they have a very large piece in the middle. They have tried to create a real village environment and have a space in the middle for the environment, for greenery, for leisure, for play. Practicality, is it practical to build a car-parking space? Yes, but at what cost? We build developments which have got loads of parking but they have no green space and they have no play facilities. We talk time and time again about play facilities. We spent a long time yesterday talking about green space. By building parking, is it practicable to build parking? Yes, it is. Is it practicable to also have green space and play facilities? Probably not. What will we lose? We will lose the green space and the play facilities, as well as increasing the cost. We cannot have it all. We cannot have it all. I often say this to people when they come to Jersey, you may have your dream house. We all have an idea of what our dream house looks like, I am sure we all do. But when you come to Jersey you have to compromise something. You maybe have to compromise your view. You would love a sea view and perhaps if you lived some place in the U.K. you could afford a sea view but you cannot have it in Jersey. You may want a huge garden but you cannot afford it because you want 3 bedrooms and a garden. Everybody has to make compromises in Jersey with what they buy, and that includes people at the very, very high end. Because those people also have very clear demands about what they are wanting. Everybody has to compromise. This will lead, I suspect, to more compromises around green space and play facilities. We have to be realistic. We have to realise about what developers can afford to build and what people can afford to buy and, crucially, what Government can support. Because we cannot now support everybody with an extra £50,000 to buy a place with a parking space because we do not have the money either frankly. We have to be realistic. Much as I agree that parking has to be available when it is practical, I do not think I can support this proposition.

#### **1.3.4 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour:**

I do cautiously rise because while I share the environmental ambitions of many Members, my overriding concern is that of the confidence of the market. For months we have been living with a housing market that is not overheating but cooling rapidly. Developers are delaying schemes.

Builders are scaling back and buyers are still standing. Every signal that this Assembly sends, however well-intentioned, is read by the industry, is what I thought the Minister for the Environment was trying to warn us of and I heard him, is read as either a further green light or a red light and for too long we have been, effectively, living in, and we are living in, a situation of a flashing amber light. There is uncertainty baked into this Government. It did not start with this proposition. At the heart of the Constable's proposition is a policy that emanated out of the Bridging Island Plan. That Bridging Island Plan, I hate to remind Members but I know that it will be with the support of the Constable of St. Helier, it failed to basically deliver enough homes to meet the demographic pressures. That is why we are seeing, I think, the intensity and have seen the intensity of development in his Parish and then the parking issue because families are forced not to be able to live in homes, which everybody wants to do. The extent to which we can do it is obviously an issue but it is a matter of public policy. It is this Assembly's policies, effectively, we are in a pretty dreadful situation. I said yesterday, that it was supposed to have been a Bridging Island Plan until 2025, and there is no prospect. But at the same time, I also know that the Minister for the Environment is working as hard as he can, and he is doing what he can, and I commend him for the efforts that he is doing. It is, of course, contradictory planning guidance in one paragraph saying: "Developers, there is no minimum standing for parking", and then next insisting that they must consider parking provision. The Constable of St. Helier, and the rather confusing thing for my constituents and myself is he is also the Assistant Minister for Infrastructure, and, so, forgive me if I do not quite understand which way Government is working at the moment, because he is the Assistant Minister for Infrastructure. I do not criticise him for that, I just make that observation. I commend him in whatever capacity he is doing it, I think as the Constable at St. Helier, for attempting to fill a vacuum. I was surprised to hear some of the hectoring voices that I heard from behind me that the car is not important, because I think the Constable is quite right; the car is important, and that well may be electric car, and it may be a driverless car in the future, and we need future-proof policies for that. I am not at all convinced that we have. I might suggest that we need supplementary guidance on lots of things; electric car policy, are we up to date on that? I do not know. Electric cars are different from diesel cars, and more people are going to buy them as they come down in cost. I hope not with a government subsidy. Ministers are claiming that requiring a parking space will push up costs. They are right, but I would suggest that prices have already risen for more serious reasons than a strip of car park, and a car park above ground or below ground that costs £90,000. They have risen because of, unfortunately, policy uncertainty and policy failure. Dare I say it, it is not only planning. If Members really want to do affordability, which is what some people are saying, and I am just simply confused by this debate because we are talking about affordability, yet I am looking forward to the Budget debate, and a stamp duty surcharge that has frozen private rentals. Renters have not really been mentioned much in this proposition. I think the Constable, in his summing up, may well voice the concern of renters who are able to rent a car parking space with their property. Because they cannot because there is not one there as part of their unit of accommodation because of the underlying issue that is there. I have met a number of people who are living in St. Helier who are basically spending hours of their time trying to find a car parking space, which they cannot do because there is no car park provision in their rented accommodation. I do not need to go on about the problems with the rental market. The rental market is now also in limbo because you would not be a developer building rental accommodation with a surcharge in place. I am sorry if that riles some Members, but it is true. The economics are absolutely clear. If Members want to do something in relation to affordability of homes, and deal with the fact that a car-parking space is going to be required, then one of the policy instruments to do would be to abolish stamp duty and get the housing market moving so that people can upsize or downsize to the right sort of accommodation. At the moment, it is basically nothing and it is basically in aspic and the Government is not working. It is not only St. Helier that really is in this situation. Urban pressures are equally existing in the greater St. Helier, as one planner once described in error, the areas of the town in St. Saviour and Georgetown, and all those other areas. But, of course, St. Clement and the representatives of St. Brelade are quite right in their observations.

They are basically increasingly urban and there are challenges in density and demand. Families across the urban areas face that daily calculation about where to park, how to reach to work, how to balance caring needs with modern life. One of the most important things was said by an earlier speaker, in my view, is the fact that where people are in a home and require a home help or a carer, the carer cannot find a car-parking space. I mean it is a real issue, and therefore the Constable is right. The phrase “where practicable”, gives the necessary discretion, if I may say. It does not oblige planners to carve out car-parking space into impossible plots. It simply provides a reasonable baseline, a measure of fairness and foresight. I think that is what Deputy Bailhache said. The Constable’s proposition, therefore, has the real possibility, knowing that he is a Member of Government as an Assistant Minister in getting some predictability into a policy where there is clearly a wrong, and there is policy confusion. I will not want to see the Island paved over. I want to have a realistic opportunity for people to get into home ownership and in the rental market, and to have the ability of having a car if they want one. I think that the majority of families and individuals do want, if they can afford it, a car.

[12:30]

This Assembly has the opportunity in supporting the Constable and being very mindful of the challenges that the Minister for the Environment said, the solution is to get on with the supplementary guidance as quickly as possible and not make it retrospective, and get on with it, because it is the uncertainty that is killing the market and killing expectation. I will be supporting the Constable, but the offsets can also be to give the developers confidence in the upcoming Budget where we have some opportunities to advance policies. I hope we can rebuild confidence because nobody said anything about this in this debate. In the period of time I have been involved in politics, I cannot remember a period where confidence is so low in virtually every aspect of the housing market. Prices have fallen in real terms, and yet first-time buyers are not buying. There is a problem, and nobody seems to be talking about the elephant in the room, the housing market is in crisis, but it is not the crisis that the Minister for Housing spoke about. It is a crisis of being in a no person’s land. I do not believe that car parking will cure the housing crisis, but clarity may help. Clarity, consistency and credibility. They are the real blocks of affordability. The Government can and will, I am sure, deliver a rejuvenated confidence and a faith in policy with this decision. Victor Hugo was not in St. Saviour, but he was across the way in St. Clement, but we do have his, we do have *Le rocher des Proscrits*, The Rock of the Exiles, and I think he said: “The future has several names. For the weak, it is impossible; for the fainthearted, it is unknown; and for the courageous, it is an opportunity.” So, let us show a little courage. Let us bring some coherence, some fairness, and some practicable opportunity into the housing market. We can discover a sense of balance to create places that are not only economically viable but also human, beautiful and enduring. The Island needs us to get a housing market working with the right planning policies. It is for the reasons of balance and humanity that I will gladly support the Constable of St. Helier in his proposition, and encourage the active and very, as he described it, purposeful Minister for the Environment, with hopefully the Constable’s boss, the Minister for Infrastructure, to sort out the parking problem, because it is real.

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

I will state at the outset that I will not be voting for this proposition. It has been an interesting morning. I have, as well as sitting in the Assembly, had the pleasure of enjoying the precincts of the Assembly and talking to colleagues in the tea rooms. It was less of a pleasure to learn many of the things that I have learned because it has been a very educational morning. Some of the things I have learned are when it comes to election years too many States Members are willing to jettison their principles. When it comes to election years, as, in fact, I would argue we have just heard from Deputy Ozouf, Members are willing to tie themselves in knots in order to justify a position that is unjustifiable. It was sad to learn this because I have great respect for States Members. I do find it incredibly upsetting that the mere fact of an election will see Members voting for a proposition that

they know will increase the cost of housing in Jersey and will lead to a reduction in the provision of housing in Jersey. They know this, not just because I am saying it, not just because Deputy Millar is saying it, not just because others are saying it as well, but because it is a simple fact of economic life. It reminds me of the debate we had a year or 2 ago about the trainee wage, where it was clear, and on any basic understanding of economics, by removing the trainee wage it was clear that young people would then start to become excluded from jobs. This Assembly refused to listen to that. Members who should have known better because they were employers, *et cetera*, voted for that because they felt it was the well-intentioned thing to do. The result was young people started not to be offered jobs because why would you ask somebody into your firm who has zero experience when you are paying the same amount to someone who has got some experience? It was a simple fact of life, and this is very similar. It is a stated aim of the Common Strategic Policy. It is our priority, as the Council of Ministers states in this Common Strategic Policy, to provide more affordable homes for Islanders. This proposition will do the exact opposite. Any Member and any Minister voting for this proposition is voting against the Common Strategic Policy. If they want somebody other than myself to explain to them why they are now voting to support more expensive homes and fewer homes in Jersey, then perhaps they would prefer to listen to the president of the Jersey Construction Council rather than myself. He has very kindly given his view on this proposition. Yes, this will stop many projects as they will become unaffordable. It is very simple. This proposition will stop many projects because they will become unaffordable. That goes against the Common Strategic Policy. That goes against the Minister for Housing's own aims he states to create more affordable housing for Islanders. I understand, because I believe the Reform Jersey are going to vote with the Constable on this proposition, that to mean that the Minister for Housing is quite simply voting for more expensive accommodation in Jersey and more expensive homes in Jersey. It is also very interesting, and if I cast my mind back to my first term as a States Member, and I say this cheekily, yes, but purely to identify something. One of my favourite little phrases that came out of one debate was Senator Gorst, as he was at the time, coining the term "Reformonomics". It seemed to capture a lot at the time. I believe this is a fantastic example of Reformonomics in action. But another thing I have learned this morning, is that Advance Jersey subscribe to Reformonomics and they are indeed subscribing to more expensive housing in Jersey and fewer homes being built in Jersey by supporting the Constable's proposition. We now have a clear joining of left and right together across the economic table. The question in my mind, is this due to economic naivety or is this due to effectively wilful ignorance because they feel there is an election in sight and they prefer to try to pander to an electorate while discarding their claims to leadership? Because as we all know, leaders do not do necessarily what is seen as the populace thing to do. I will go back to the president of the Jersey Construction Council: "This will stop many projects as they will become unaffordable." He continues: "It is very frustrating if this proposition is passed. Some more developments will not happen or the accommodation will not be affordable. It is that simple." Those are not my words. Those are the words of the president of the Construction Council. Members, if they choose to vote for the Constable's proposition, need to do so with those words ringing in their ears, because this is a proposition that will make housing more expensive in Jersey. It is a simple fact of life.

### **1.3.6 Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central:**

It is good to see that the phrase "wilful ignorance" is acceptable in this Assembly. I did not think it would be, but there we go.

### **Deputy K.F. Morel:**

If I may just apologise if that was seen, I did not mean to insult anybody. I apologise.

### **Deputy R.J. Ward:**

That is all right. I am sure we can get on. It is interesting, I was going to coin the phrase: "Morelonomics", but it is very difficult to say. The world according to Deputy Morel was always an

interesting one, particularly when you are in Reform, but we can carry on that. I love the notion of left and right joining across a table. I do not know, it would probably be a lovely oak table, I would imagine. I do not know, perhaps an IKEA table, but that is imported; we will not do that. There are some very interesting points here, and I do speak as a representative of St. Helier, and sometimes I do think there is a St. Helier phobia that ensues, where whatever happens in St. Helier is seen as either not important or not valued. During some debates we have had the idea that even representation here is not valued, and the votes of the St. Helier residents are not valued, and that is a real shame because I find that very insulting for the voters of St. Helier. I certainly do not prescribe to that. It is very interesting that we talk about ... let us go on to some more positive things. I agree that not using cars is a great idea. I am the one who years ago brought the proposition to have a free bus service, which I still firmly stand here and say that is what we are regretting in this Assembly today, that we have not imposed that free bus service, giving the ability for people. Because we do not want to spend money on those types of things, oh no, we do not want to do that and make transport genuinely accessible. But let us not go on about that, because that is my obsession with buses, as I remember the former Senator or whatever he was, Deputy Le Fondré had said to me. I thought it was a sweet thing to say, because it is a nice thing to be obsessed with. But it is great to be cycling about and using bikes and walking. I would ask the Deputy of St. Brelade, when he cycles in, where does he put his car? Probably parked outside his house, because he has got a parking space. Now, for St. Helier residents that may not be the case. So, you have a choice, do not have a car, do not have access to a car for those too many St. Helier residents who have to work 2 or 3 or 4 jobs just to make ends meet, who have to start very early in the morning and travel across the Island to start their first job. That very inexpensive car, is a very important thing for them to have to get to the jobs in order they can earn perhaps minimum wage in order to carry on paying their very high rents. That is one of the issues that we have to face here, and this is a real challenge for us, because, yes, in an ideal world we would have car-free zones, we would have car-free environments, and I would support that, absolutely. To give people accessibility to get around though was voted against in this Assembly because we cannot afford to subsidise buses. We do not want to do that. But we do not want St. Helier residents to have cars or able anywhere to park them. What we do need in St. Helier is a much more joined up approach. I think the reason I am happy to support part (a), I have got a question over part (b), is that the “where practicable” makes sense. I think that is enough for me. If it is genuinely not practicable because the development will not go ahead, then it is not practicable. It seems common sense to me. I think some of the fearmongering needs to be not worried about. But I think we need to discuss what happens in St. Helier in a much wider view. Many of the parking spaces in St. Helier may well be taken up by cars that are not from St. Helier, but they are convenient for people. It may be one-person businesses. I get that it is convenient to park them in town, pay for Saturday, stay all day Sunday, and take up that parking space. Perhaps that is some of the issues we need to be looking at for St. Helier as a whole, across St. Helier, so that we can have them parking in other ... and if we work together as Parishes, there may be other Parishes who can find spaces for those cars to be in, and then we create those parking spaces for people in St. Helier. Perhaps the parking spaces we have already got made could have residential priority on some of the floors so that we can create parking spaces for new developments without that extra cost. There needs to be some creativity here. But if we start from a principle where it simply does not have to happen, it will never happen. We have seen that many, many a time, that things simply do not happen if we do not make them happen. My problem with part (b) is I do not want to see lots of private car parks created across Jersey. I think we lose control of costs, we lose control of charges, we lose control of what they are there for, we lose control of fines, we end up with a situation that we have in the U.K., which is absolutely insane about fines and costs and not knowing who has fined you, what you are paying. We will end up with wheel clamping. I really think we need to be cautious with that. So, I am not so sure about part (b). I think we have a contradiction here for St. Helier, and the contradiction we have with St. Helier is that we will refuse certain developments in some areas of St. Helier over parking with the Bridging Island Plan, which is not my speciality. Well, some areas are because I

changed it. We will change certain areas of St. Helier over parking when it suits us, for reasons that I do not think can be justified in the way that they are.

[12:45]

It is difficult, this part (a) of the proposition, because I know how challenging it will be, but I think that, where practical, we will fix that. We also have to have the Minister come back, and I do agree with Deputy Alex Curtis - I think it was him - who said that ... my concern is, and I think that may well happen, it will come back with something that is not a massive change because of the practicality bit. However, that will strengthen the Bridging Island Plan because we both say “where practicable”, is the evidence that it is not practicable, so let us get on with it. I do not see a problem there if that comes back not particularly changed. Yes, there is an issue for St. Helier residents and, I am afraid, Reform gets mentioned a lot. I sometimes think we have to be better than good in order to even be heard, and with good criticism, whereas individual Members can just say: “We will do that, and we will change their mind, that is fine.” There has been a lot of change in mind in this Assembly at times. We have been consistent with this to represent the residents in St. Helier. Their votes are valid. Our representation here and our position here is valid, and it will continue to be, and we look ahead to the next election with optimism that the validity might grow. Absolutely. I am happy to support part (a). I would ask the Constable to be really clear about what he means by “practicable” and explain that again, because I think it will really help the situation. If he is clear as to what that word means, it might convince some other Members of this Assembly. But try and convince me about part (b) because I do worry about the development of private car parks across St. Helier because I do not think they are a good thing on such a small island.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

It is 12.50.

## **LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT PROPOSED**

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Are Members content to adjourn? The Assembly is adjourned until 2.15.

[12:47]

## **LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT**

[14:17]

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Who would like to speak next on the proposition?

### **1.3.7 Connétable P.B. Le Sueur of Trinity:**

I will not take up much of the Assembly’s time, but I absolutely understand the need for parking. There is never, ever going to be enough parking. But this proposition does give me concerns, and I think we missed an opportunity this morning not to send it back, because I think there was a will to look at again or revisit the S.P.G., and I think that as a member of the Planning Committee, we identify all too often that we have difficulties working within that S.P.G. But important to me, as other Members have pointed out, is the risk to the industries. Development is a risk business and if we do things in isolation, we risk damaging that market. Property developers are not philanthropists. We may say, well, they can take a cut in their profits, but the reality of the situation is that they appraise every site individually. They look at the opportunities and the profits that can be made, and they are not going to lower their margins, they are just going to put up their costs to the end user. So really, I think that we need to wake up and realise that one of the problems with property prices in Jersey is the actual cost of land, and unless we can do something to address that, we cannot control the construction costs, we cannot control materials, we cannot control the cost of borrowing money

to do developments. That only leaves, really, land as the only other element that can be looked at. I think that we need to look at the thing in the round, as Deputy Curtis said this morning, in terms of what we are looking for in terms of density of the developments that we do. How much longer can we go on just developing small one-bedroom, 2-bedroom apartments? We need to be looking at this thing in the round. We need to be looking at providing good quality family apartment living, as our continental cousins do, with adequate parking, because we are never, with a finite resource of land, going to be able to provide everybody with the ideal 3-bedroom house with a garage and a garden. We are never going to do that. We have got to look at what is the need that we have today. I would put a call out to our own development company to really be taking a lead on this and say, why are they still squeezing the pips to get as much out of every development and still coming forward with small flats? Why do they not set the benchmark, raise the standard and show what can be done? So, I am afraid I cannot support this today, but I would appeal to those concerned that we really should be looking at the parking standards in the round with the density that we require out of developments these days to satisfy the genuine need of what the housing requirements are for our population. So, sympathy to Constable of St. Helier, but I am afraid I cannot support this today.

### **1.3.8 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South:**

I think I was encouraged to speak by others following the speech from Deputy Morel earlier in this debate, in particular where myself and my party and St. Helier colleagues were singled out for some criticism. I just wanted to calmly rebut. One of those was the suggestion that people's voting patterns change depending on what part of the electoral cycle we are in. I have no doubt that that will often play a part in how people choose to vote, but I would point out to him that the Reform Jersey St. Helier members voted in favour of P.50/2023 when the Constable of St. Helier brought that last time on a parking strategy and Supplementary Planning Guidance. I think we have maintained quite a consistent position on that irrespective of how near or how far an election is. The second was his disparaging assessment of how we view economics, and making a blunt point that if this goes through that makes housing affordability worse, which of course is an extremely contested position, and it is not automatically and definitively certainly going to be the case. If we wanted to make it more affordable to develop new homes, we could scrap all planning requirements and restrictions and just say: "You want to build whatever, you can just go ahead and do it. No standards you have to meet, nothing on space, nothing on safety, nothing on anything else, and we can have a building bonanza where everybody goes ahead." Yes, okay, that will probably bring down the cost of housing in monetary terms, but at what wider cost for our Island? We would end up a concrete jungle with homes that are not suitable for the kind of lifestyle that our community aspires to and expects our procedures and processes through Government to help support. That is why we have standards that we impose in the planning rules that say if you are building homes they have to meet these standards or cannot fall beneath these ones. Every now and then, I have had people approach me as Minister for Housing to say: "We have got a brilliant proposal we want to put to you about how you can improve affordability of delivering new housing." I go: "Okay. That sounds brilliant. I would love to hear more about that." I will sit around a table with them, and it turns out that that idea is to slash minimum space standards for homes and say: "Let us build more box flats, because then we can build more and therefore we can sell them more cheaply to people." I have to say: "Okay. There is a place for small forms of accommodation, but if you want to tell the young people of Jersey that the solution we are pursuing to make housing for them more affordable is to ensure that in their 20s and 30s they are going to end up living in box flats and have the reduced standard of living that comes with that, I do not think that is a particularly inspiring thing to offer those people." In the debate yesterday where the Constable was proposing reviewing the plan for a new school on the gas works site, I spoke about the dilemmas of politics and how we cannot always have everything that we want and we have to make compromises and choices about priorities. It is that dilemma that does make me look at a proposition like this and have great difficulty with it because, yes, I want us to get to a position where it becomes less necessary for as many people as possible to own a private vehicle. I want us to have

much better cycling infrastructure. I want us to have more sustainable transport methods in place for the whole Island and for everyone to be able to make the most out of, and I always support initiatives that try to get us in that direction, like when Deputy Ward, her support for cheaper access to buses, I have always supported that. I want us to be an Island with less traffic congestion and less pollution as a result of that. We find ourselves in a really awkward moment in history where technology is advancing and electric vehicles are more commonplace than they were even just a few years ago, and who knows what technological advancements are coming down the line. Maybe in 20 or 30 years nobody will need a private vehicle because we will have pods of driverless vehicles that you book on an app and can take you from door to door whenever you want. Who knows what the future holds for us, and planning for that or designing things today is really difficult to get all of that balance right. But what I cannot tolerate, as a St. Helier representative, is what I do think is a constant expectation that if you live in town, you should expect less. That I cannot agree with. There was some of that yesterday, I thought, in suggesting that if you are a child in town, you should just expect to not get to go to as good education facilities as children who live outside of town. For those who are buying homes in town, where they want to live and want to be happy, not everybody in Jersey aspires to live in our beautiful country Parishes. Some people like an urban living. I am one of those people. I could never see myself living anywhere other than town because I love it so much. Those people deserve to have a decent lifestyle and systems in place that support their aspirations, and for those people in town who may need a vehicle because of what they have to do to provide for their children or for their own hobbies and everything else, we should have things in place that try to enable that. Deputy Coles talked about people wanting to go surfing out in St. Ouen's Bay. That should be something people in town are able to do if they want to, and if they want a vehicle for that then that is something they should have the option for. Myself, I could never fit a Marshall 4x12 cabinet on a bus to take to gigs. I have to use a vehicle for that. That is one of the reasons why I have one and why I would struggle with telling my neighbours: "Sorry, I have got a car, but you cannot have one." But what I think saves it for the Constable, and I know that this has been contested in this debate so far, but for me the bit that does save it is the words "where practicable." Because to me, I understand what that means. I understand that that means; yes, of course there are going to be situations where it is not appropriate to provide parking spaces. They are going to be old buildings that somebody might want to convert, or existing buildings that they want to extend, where it simply is not going to be possible to provide for any kind of parking provision there, or an amount of parking provision. Obviously there should be flexibility on that and I think the proposition accounts for that. I would say that the most successful housing developer on the Island is the one we own, Andium Homes, who have specific rules about affordability for homes that they let out and sell to first-time buyers built into their business plan. They have managed to make it work to a degree providing quite a bit of parking, in fact, providing more parking than there is demand within their client base itself. They are still managing to make it work, which says to me that with the right will and creative thinking, or whatever it is you have got to do to make that happen, it is possible. Okay, but perhaps without those requirements we could make things cheaper but at what cost ultimately, and for those who live in town, and the opportunities that they will not have as a result of it. It is a very difficult issue, and I find myself struggling with it on the basis that I look to the future, and I want us to be a society where we are far less dependent on private vehicles. But I also live in the real world today and know that for particularly those who live in town, the debate that we have about transport, about parking provision and affordable housing, we may as well be 2 totally different islands; St. Helier and the rest, because the standards appear to be totally different, and what we are prepared to tolerate for those in country Parishes is completely at odds with what we think people in town should put up with.

[14:30]

We need to move beyond that, and I believe that the Constable of St. Helier's proposition will help us move in that direction, and that is the reason that I will be voting in favour of that.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Does anyone else wish to speak on the proposition? I call upon the Connétable to reply.

**1.3.9 Connétable A.S. Crowcroft of St. Helier:**

If we had finished before lunch, as I thought we might, I would have offered Members an abbreviated summing up, but as it is, they can have the long version. But there are a few important remarks I need to make before going to the vote. First of all, I would, with the Assembly's approval, like to withdraw part (b), because I acknowledge there are drafting problems. At best, as the Minister says, it makes no difference to policy. So, it might just be easier for the sake of the voting if I ask Members' approval to withdraw part (b).

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

You need the consent of the Assembly. The proposition is the Connétable requests to remove part (b). Is that seconded? **[Seconded]** Those in favour, kindly show. Thank you very much. Those against. So, part (b) is withdrawn.

**The Connétable of St. Helier:**

Thank you. I will deal first, if I may, with the Minister and ex-Minister's comments. I do acknowledge the difficulty that the current Minister has in dealing with this. He did say that there was a lack of clear evidence that the current S.P.G.s are not working, and I would refer him and Members to the table I provided on page 4, and just perhaps highlighting 4 developments on that page where there is a complete mismatch between the number of units and the number of parking spaces in places where I would contend it would not be deleterious to provide the extra parking. South Hill offices, 139 units, 63 spaces. Randalls, involving a lot of demolition and potential for new spaces; 13 spaces approved for 30 units of accommodation. Romerils, which has not started yet, but 53 units and a mere 18 parking spaces. Finally, and very much on the people's agenda in town at the moment, St. Joseph's care home on St. John's Road, 62 units with only 23 spaces, and masses of space up there where more parking could be provided, and indeed, given it is a care home where you really would think more parking would be provided for carers and visitors, even if the residents for the most part have given up their wheels. So, I do think there is evidence. The Minister says that the S.P.G. is working. I think if it was working I would not have brought this proposition. I think the S.P.G.s do need to be revised, and that is the purpose of my proposition. He and the ex-Minister both spoke about transport in Jersey being a problem, car-dominated neighbourhoods and so on, all the commuter traffic pouring in and out of St. Helier every day. As I have said in my report, I absolutely agree with that. But if we are going to tackle Jersey's car dependency, if that is what it is, then it should be tackled across the whole Island and not just in St. Helier. I am grateful to several Members who spoke who pointed out that this is not just a St. Helier problem. There is an undersupply of parking in new-build estates in the rural Parishes. My fellow Connétables are concerned that their country lanes are going to be clogged with people parking out of sheer frustration because they have not been provided with the spaces that they need. I am not going to refer to everyone who spoke. I am sure Members are pleased with that. I would like to endorse the Minister for Infrastructure's comments about the excellence of our bus service. But notwithstanding that, I think he acknowledges that there is still a need to have fairness and practicality. On the subject of the Infrastructure Department and Ministry, a couple of Members referred to the fact that I am Assistant Minister for Infrastructure, therefore what hat am I wearing? It is a fact that Assistant Ministers, and indeed Ministers, can bring propositions to the States if they are in their manifestos. I quote from my manifesto, as on vote.je from 2022: "I will continue to press Government to deliver on promises to make walking and cycling easier and safer to produce the long-delayed hopper bus network." Well, that has happened, that is good: "And a parking strategy which does not disadvantage St. Helier car owners and provides sufficient parking for shoppers and visitors to town." I make no apologies for bringing this. It is in my manifesto, and I believe that it was something I

needed to do. I think, perhaps for me, the most compelling argument, and one might have expected this, came from Deputy Feltham who described in some detail about what it is like living without parking in St. Helier, what it is like bringing up a family when you are worried about getting a ticket, you are having to move your car. You are entertaining, and you have to ask your visitors to leave because the visitor's space expires at 10 o'clock. Waiting several years, and that is normal, to get a resident's parking permit. One of the frustrations of my particular job, and we do have a mature residents parking system in St. Helier, is that 3 years is the norm for waiting for a space in the residents parking zone, and every time a development is approved with inadequate parking where more parking could have been provided, then the new tenants or owners of those properties will park on the street and they will put their names on the waiting list for a residential parking space. I have seen so many examples of the kind of frustration and misery that Deputy Feltham is talking about, particularly when these people are getting hit by parking tickets, sometimes several times a year. So, if they are not going to splash out on an expensive private parking space, they are going to have to splash out on the parking tickets, which they simply feel are unfair. I found what was missing from the speeches against my proposition was any recognition of the frustration experienced by not just town dwellers, but people who cannot afford to buy a large house in the countryside with many parking spaces, the difficulty of organising their lives and their children's lives when there is inadequate parking provided. I have been asked what will happen, and there has been some apocalyptic speeches from the Chamber today. The housing situation is going to implode. Developers are going to throw up their hands and give up. I simply do not believe that these visions are realistic. If my proposition is accepted, and the Minister said this himself, it will lead to parking standards being revised with, hopefully, the requests for change that have been made today being incorporated and a lot of consultation going on with Parish Roads Committees and other bodies, who I must say, whose views were not taken into account when the S.P.G.s were developed before. I think there is a real positive outcome here. We could have better parking standards. One of the Ministers for the Environment, I forget which one, said that they were trying to nudge us with their policy towards this green future. It is not a nudge; it is a squeeze. It is a squeeze that is being applied. I believe that, as I say, if we are going to have an environmental policy that restricts car use in the Island, it must be done across the whole Island and not just in the urban parishes. I maintain part (a) of the proposition.

### **The Deputy Bailiff:**

Is the appel called for? The appel is called for. I invite Members to return to their seats. I will ask the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members here and attending remotely had the chance to cast their votes, I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I announce the proposition has been adopted.

| <b>Pour: 26</b>           |  | <b>Contre: 11</b>       |  | <b>Abstained: 0</b> |
|---------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Connétable of St. Helier  |  | Connétable of Trinity   |  |                     |
| Connétable of St. Peter   |  | Connétable of Grouville |  |                     |
| Connétable of St. Martin  |  | Connétable of St. Mary  |  |                     |
| Connétable of St. John    |  | Deputy K.F. Morel       |  |                     |
| Connétable of St. Clement |  | Deputy S.M. Ahier       |  |                     |
| Connétable of St. Ouen    |  | Deputy L.J. Farnham     |  |                     |
| Connétable of St. Saviour |  | Deputy H.M. Miles       |  |                     |
| Deputy G.P. Southern      |  | Deputy J. Renouf        |  |                     |
| Deputy M. Tadier          |  | Deputy R.E. Binet       |  |                     |
| Deputy S.G. Luce          |  | Deputy M.E. Millar      |  |                     |
| Deputy L.M.C. Doublet     |  | Deputy A.F. Curtis      |  |                     |
| Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat    |  |                         |  |                     |
| Deputy R.J. Ward          |  |                         |  |                     |

|                           |  |  |  |  |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Deputy C.S. Alves         |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy S.Y. Mézec         |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf       |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy T.A. Coles         |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy M.R. Scott         |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy C.D. Curtis        |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy L.V. Feltham       |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy A. Howell          |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy M.R. Ferey         |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy B. Ward            |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy K.M. Wilson        |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson  |  |  |  |  |

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Could I just make an apology to the Assembly in my trying to contact people who have not been able to get online. I just pushed the button, and I obviously voted pour, and I should have voted contre.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Thank you, Minister.

**Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

Is it possible to ask who is not excused from the Assembly, but was not present for a vote?

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

We can work that out, but not necessarily immediately. I do not want to hold things up, but I am sure we can work that out.

**2. Jersey Police Complaints Authority: Re-Appointment of Members (P.66/2025)**

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

The next item is Jersey Police Complaints Authority: Re-Appointment of Members, lodged by the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs. The main respondent is the chair of the Children Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel. I ask the Greffier to read the proposition.

**The Greffier of the States:**

The States are asked to decide whether they are of opinion – in accordance with Article 2 of, and the Schedule to, the Police (Complaints and Discipline) (Jersey) Law 1999, to appoint the following persons as a member of the Jersey Police Complaints Authority for a period of 3 years, commencing immediately: Ms. Allison Le Couteur Mr Blake Albert

**2.1 Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier North:**

I am very pleased to recommend that the Assembly reappoints Allison Le Couteur and Blake Albert as members of the Jersey Police Complaints Authority for a second 3-year term. The Authority's role is to oversee, monitor and supervise investigations into complaints against the police undertaken by the Professional Standards Department to ensure that the investigating officers carry out the investigations thoroughly and impartially. The Authority is constituted under the Police (Complaints and Discipline) (Jersey) Law 1999 and, in accordance with that law, must consist of a chair as well as not less than 6 or no greater than 8 members who are appointed by the States Assembly. Both

candidates for reappointment have served an initial 3-year term and are highly valued members of the Authority. I am grateful that they have both expressed that they would like to continue their service for another term in this important role within our community. I make the proposition.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

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

**2.1.1 Deputy M.E. Millar of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:**

I hesitate to stand on what should be a straightforward proposition, but I just feel I need to point out that Ms. Allison Le Couteur is my private secretary. She became my P.S. (Private Secretary) in August last year. She was already in the role with the police complaints body. It has not been a problem. I do not believe it to be a problem. She discussed it with me. But I just feel for the sake of good order, we have made a couple of minor changes to seating arrangements, but I just feel I should mention that. But I do not believe it is a problem.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Does anyone else wish to speak on the proposition? I call upon the Minister to reply.

**2.1.2 Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

I thank the Minister for Treasury and Resources for highlighting that. I too, do not really see that there is a problem with this. This is a role that that person has taken on and has been a valued member for 3 years and there have been no concerns brought to my attention in relation to their membership. Before we move to a vote, Members will be aware that the previous Assembly voted to adopt the Draft Police (Complaints and Conduct) (Jersey) Law in March 2022. This law will be brought into force subject to the Assembly's approval of new underpinning regulations, which Members will have seen are now lodged to debate along with the Commencement Act. If approved, this will bring the new law and regulations into force on 5th December 2025.

[14:45]

Among other changes in relation to police complaints, the new law provides appointments to what will become the Police Complaints Commission, are no longer required to be brought to the States, and will instead be made by the Minister in line with all other boards in my area of responsibility, in a process overseen by the Appointments Commission. This is therefore likely to be the last appointments to the Authority which the Assembly are asked to make. With that in mind, I would like to extend a note of thanks to all members of the Authority, past and present, who have been appointed by the Assembly for their service to the community. I ask Members to support the proposition and call for the appel.

**The Deputy 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 had the opportunity of casting their votes, I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce that the proposition has been adopted unanimously:

| <b>POUR: 34</b>           |  | <b>CONTRE: 0</b> |  | <b>ABSTAIN: 0</b> |
|---------------------------|--|------------------|--|-------------------|
| Connétable of Trinity     |  |                  |  |                   |
| Connétable of St. Peter   |  |                  |  |                   |
| Connétable of St. Martin  |  |                  |  |                   |
| Connétable of St. John    |  |                  |  |                   |
| Connétable of St. Clement |  |                  |  |                   |

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| Connétable of Grouville   |  |  |  |  |
| Connétable of St. Ouen    |  |  |  |  |
| Connétable of St. Mary    |  |  |  |  |
| Connétable of St. Saviour |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy G.P. Southern      |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy M. Tadier          |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy S.G. Luce          |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy L.M.C. Doublet     |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy K.F. Morel         |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat    |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy S.M. Ahier         |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy R.J. Ward          |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy C.S. Alves         |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy L.J. Farnham       |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy S.Y. Mézec         |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy Sir P.M. Bailhache |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy H.M. Miles         |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy M.R. Scott         |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy J. Renouf          |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy C.D. Curtis        |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy L.V. Feltham       |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy R.E. Binet         |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy M.E. Millar        |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy A. Howell          |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy M.R. Ferey         |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy A.F. Curtis        |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy B. Ward            |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy K.M. Wilson        |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson  |  |  |  |  |

### **3. Les Quennevais Parade and Precinct (P.67/2025) - as amended (P.67/2025 Amd.)**

#### **The Deputy Bailiff:**

The next item is Les Quennevais Parade and Precinct, lodged by Deputy Miles, and the main responder is the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development and the Minister for the Environment. The amendment has been lodged by the Council of Ministers. Deputy Miles, do you accept the amendment?

#### **Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade:**

Yes, I accept the amendment.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Are Members content for the proposition to be taken as amended? I ask the Greffier to read the proposition as amended.

**The Greffier of the States:**

The States are asked to decide whether they are of opinion – (a) to extend the Future-Fit Retail Roadmap to specifically include the regeneration of Les Quennevais as the Island’s second retail hub and to request the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development to undertake the necessary steps to give effect to this decision by 31 December 2025; (b) to extend the scope of the West of Island Planning Framework and area masterplans, as approved within the Bridging Island Plan, to include Les Quennevais Parade and Precinct and to request the Minister for the Environment to undertake the necessary steps to give effect to this decision by the end of March 2026; and (c) that the regeneration of Les Quennevais Parade and Precinct should be considered at meetings of the Regeneration Steering Group, with consideration to be given to options which would enhance this area for the benefit of the public and its residents, including but not limited to the potential acquisition and redevelopment by the States of Jersey Development Company of all the commercial units and to request the Chief Minister to update the agenda for meetings accordingly with immediate effect.

**3.1 Deputy H.M. Miles:**

As a long-term resident of Les Quennevais, and now as a Parish Deputy for St. Brelade, I rise today not only as a political representative, but as someone who lives and breathes as part of that community every single day and has done so for decades. I am proud to call Les Quennevais home. It is a lovely part of the Island to live in, with numerous services close by, good connections, and some beautiful Island landmarks on our doorstep. But pride alone cannot sustain progress. We must be prepared to recognise where we are falling short, and we must be prepared to act where necessary and where we can. Les Quennevais is growing. We see new homes, new families, and new opportunities emerging all around us, and I embrace that. The area has changed dramatically in recent years, bringing both benefits and responsibilities. We have much to celebrate. The Enid Quenault Health and Wellbeing Centre is a modern, accessible facility for the whole Island, based in our Parish. The new Les Quennevais School is the best in the Island, offering a first-class education for our young people, and some successful and long-established local businesses continue to serve the Parish and the west of the Island from Les Quennevais. Yet amid this progress, there lies one area that has quite evidently not kept pace, the Les Quennevais Parade and Precinct. For too long, the Parade and Precinct have been described as tired, and today even that description feels a little generous. Whereas much of the Parish has embraced the 21st century, going to Les Quennevais Parade and Precinct feels like stepping back in time. Years of neglect by a disengaged commercial owner have left this once vibrant centre in a poor and deteriorating state, a visible reminder of what happens when private neglect is left unchecked and when public attention drifts elsewhere. Members will have seen the photographs attached to the proposition. It is not a pretty picture. We can see the consequences of what social researchers have long called: “The broken windows effect.” The idea that visible signs of neglect, even small ones, invite further decline. When the paving is cracked, when shop fronts are empty, when lighting fades and maintenance stops, it sends a signal that nobody cares. When people feel nobody cares, standards fall further still. That is precisely what we are witnessing at Les Quennevais. The longer this decline goes unaddressed, the more it risks spreading, eroding community pride, discouraging investment, and driving people away from what should be the beating heart of our Parish. I want to be quite clear. This is not a criticism of the residents or the businesses who operate there. Quite the opposite. They are the ones keeping the lights on, quite literally, in an environment where investment has been absent for too long and where increasingly they are being surrounded by decay. Indeed, some of the commercial units are not even fit to let anymore. Their care for the area

- often at their own expense - their care for each other, and their determination to see change gives me some hope and it is worth fighting for, but they cannot and should not be expected to shoulder this burden alone. They are being let down by circumstances beyond their control. The real issue lies with a disengaged off-Island commercial owner, lack of investment, and - if we are honest - a lack of co-ordination and focus at government level. When it comes to retail we seem only to have thought about town. The impact of this neglect is not just aesthetic, it is social and it is economic. It affects how people feel about where they live. It discourages footfall and investment and it sends the wrong message to visitors arriving from the airport, whose first impression of Jersey via the number 15 bus is of a retail centre that looks forgotten. That is not the image we should wish to project of our Island. I work with the Parish to deliver Britain in Bloom and we do very well indeed, but I am ashamed to admit that we make sure the judges' route totally bypasses the Parade and Precinct as it does not fit with the image of the beautiful Parish of St. Brelade. That needs to change. The buildings are ageing; the environment feels uncared for. The sense of pride that once defined this retail centre has been eroded over time. In the run-up to this debate many people have reminisced in person and on social media about Les Quennevais in its heyday: Lines - the fishmonger - Panico's, the Hot Bread Shop, Roosters, Tramps, meeting Father Christmas. These days we can just about get a tree up there at Christmas. But this is not about a rose-tinted view of the past or of reminiscing. If the Parade and Precinct was successful years ago then the best years should be ahead of us. There are now more people living in the area, there are new services and better connections. So in this context how can we have a shopping centre that resembles an area that has been hollowed out and in visible decline. It is illogical and, therefore, it is not inevitable. With a renewed energy and focus I think we can instigate change. I want to remind this Assembly that I stood on a manifesto commitment to reinvigorate the area. Along with the reintroduction of Senators, it was one of the most frequently raised issues with me on the doorstep. It was raised again at the recent question time event that was held with all the representatives of St. Brelade at Communicare. Since my election I have done everything within my power to make tangible improvements. In the last 3 years I have tried to co-ordinate and encourage improvements, to repair the paving, paint the mushrooms, plant flower troughs to add colour. I have asked for the installation of benches and bike racks to promote sustainable transport. I have proposed community art projects to bring some life back to the area. I have even explored the idea of using one of the empty retail units as a joint Parish and government hub, particularly following the closure of Lloyds Bank. But despite these efforts, progress has been minimal. It has often felt like banging my head against a brick wall. The myth of Sisyphus; rolling the boulder uphill only to watch it roll back down before it gets to the top. Yes, the private ownership of the site has proven a serious obstacle, even to the Parish authorities, and the lack of co-operation has stifled progress at every turn. But this should not be an excuse to give up. This cannot be the end of the story. Ownership should not be an excuse for inaction; not in an area that has such public importance. Les Quennevais is one of the largest suburban communities on our Island. Policy identifies it as our secondary urban centre, second only to town, so it serves not only the residents of St. Brelade but also St. Peter, St. Ouen, St. Mary, St. John and beyond. It is not a peripheral matter; it is essential to the Island's balanced growth. I think the time has come to match that recognition with real, co-ordinated policy action, and that is what this proposition seeks to achieve: a constructive, forward-looking call for attention, focus, and ultimately some regeneration. My proposition is in 3 key parts and each one reinforces the other. The first part (a) relates to the Future-Fit Retail Roadmap, and this excellent roadmap aims to nurture a strong, modern retail economy; vibrant, productive, customer-led. My proposition simply asks that the regeneration of Les Quennevais be included in this work. It may seem a small request but its symbolism is powerful because at present Les Quennevais is absent from the roadmap; an omission that perfectly encapsulates the wider neglect that I have described. If we are serious about sustainable retail across the Island we cannot continue to focus all our attention on town. A thriving Les Quennevais would relieve pressure on St. Helier, reduce unnecessary car journeys, promote local life, and strengthen an already cohesive community. That is good for the environment, it is good for business and it is good for people. I am very grateful

to the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development and his officers for meeting with me, discussing the retail issues at great length, and for supporting this part of the proposition. Part (b) of the proposition relates to the West of Island Planning Framework and area masterplans. Members will recall that the Bridging Island Plan approved by a previous Assembly in March 2022 required the Minister for the Environment to bring forward a West of Island Planning Framework; a vital piece of work designed to guide sustainable development and regeneration across the western Parishes. The framework was to be followed by detailed masterplans, including one for Les Quennevais. Yet here we are in late 2025 and progress has stalled. Despite repeated commitments and despite the Assembly's decision through my amendment to the 2025 Government Plan to allocate £100,000 specifically to prioritise this work, the framework has not been delivered. It has not been commenced. When asked why, the Minister cited the consultancy freeze and the need to redeploy departmental resources. I understand the financial constraints but restraints cannot become paralysis. I do not criticise the Minister at all. The Minister for the Environment needs the tools to be able to fulfil the wishes of the Assembly. If he cannot recruit to vacancies or utilise limited consultancy resource - even when the funds have been allocated - he is operating with his hands tied behind his back. The consequences is that the lack of planning work is now actively undermining the communities this Assembly pledged to support. The consequences at Les Quennevais are visible: 8 vacant retail units in the area, a café that closed in June and has still not reopened, some of the units have been empty for years, others in such disrepair that they are effectively unlettable. This is not sustainable. It is the product of inaction and it demands a co-ordinated response in partnership with Government, the private sector, and the community. Again, I am very grateful to the Minister for the Environment for meeting with me and for discussing at length and in detail the issues raised by this proposition. I am grateful for his support and pleased to accept the minor amendment to this section of the initial proposition. Finally, my proposition at part (c) asks that the regeneration of Les Quennevais Parade and Precinct becomes an item on the agenda for the Regeneration Steering Group. Again, following a discussion, I was happy to accept the minor amendment which reflects the current operating practice of that group. That group was created precisely to improve governance and co-ordination across our built environment, and yet Les Quennevais - our designated secondary urban centre - has not featured in this work. I can think of no clearer example of an area in need of attention. Over the years we have lost so many vital local services, banks as well as retail, and these businesses were part of the daily rhythm of parish life and their absence is felt deeply.

[15:00]

By making Les Quennevais an area of interest and by keeping open all our options - including the potential involvement of S.o.J.D.C. if that was seen as beneficial and necessary - we can maintain focus on a complex problem, one that I fully accept cannot be solved overnight, but which demands consistent attention, co-ordination and leadership. By signalling once again that Les Quennevais is a priority we can begin to reverse years of decline and build momentum for the future. I move the proposition.

#### **The Deputy Bailiff:**

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

#### **3.1.1 Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin:**

I rise to endorse everything that the Deputy said and I am very grateful for her and her endeavour to regenerate Les Quennevais Parade and Precinct. This is something that is needed and it is important for all of us to pursue. Les Quennevais Parade and Precinct, developed in the 1960s, is a product of its time but, like many centres of its era, it now faces challenges: a car-dominated design, tired buildings, an increasing number of vacant retail units, and a loss of local services. Despite being Jersey's second urban centre it is evident that Les Quennevais is not immune to the pressures facing retail across the Island and beyond. Changing consumer habits and their effects on the vitality of a

traditional local shopping centre like Les Quennevais are taking their toll. Regeneration is never simple. Fragmented ownership in this case and the lack of investment can present barriers to progress, but at least we are not starting from scratch. The Bridging Island Plan already recognises Les Quennevais strategically and supports retail and mixed use development in this area. We need, however, to look ahead and plan for change and for regeneration. That is why I am beginning work on a comprehensive planning framework for the west of the Island, which will of course include Les Quennevais Parade and Precinct within its scope. This West of Island Planning Framework will help us understand the barriers and opportunities for change here, and shape the next Island Plan. As I have already stated, I wholeheartedly support the spirit and intent of the Deputy's position, and I believe that the original reference to a detailed scheme for regeneration in the Deputy's proposition just went a little bit too far, so I am grateful to her for accepting my amendment. Planning frameworks and masterplans are intended to identify the challenges and set the strategic direction. My role is to set that direction to help enable change, and it is not about the detail. That responsibility of course lies with the landowners and the developers. The Deputy and I have met, along with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, and we have agreed that we are all aligned on the way forward. So I can reiterate to Members I am committed to the work with local Members, including the Deputy, to define the scope of this important initiative and to ensure that the West of Island Planning Framework might deliver what the area needs. I, therefore, ask Members to support this proposition as amended so we can all make progress on a clear and sound basis. I look forward to working with the Deputy and other States Members on this really important piece of work.

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

I would like to thank Deputy Miles for accepting the amendment and for working so well with the Minister for the Environment and myself. There is no question in my mind I wholeheartedly support Deputy Miles's proposition. I think it is interesting that both Deputy Miles and Deputy Luce quite rightly refer to the Bridging Island Plan referencing Les Quennevais as the Island's second urban centre, but I think it just shows how putting something into a document - as important as the Bridging Island Plan is - does not necessarily in itself create any change. There are many reasons for that, not least, as Deputy Miles has referred to, the very complex and fragmented nature of the ownership of Les Quennevais Precinct. I have lived most of my life in St. Lawrence and so as a child in the 1980s Les Quennevais was very much the first port of call when it came to going shopping, as opposed to St. Helier. It was easier to get to; probably closer as well. It was a vibrant and modern - just 20 years old at the time - shopping centre. That cannot be said to be the case today. I was just realising, as I was listening to Deputy Miles and Deputy Luce, that this is a very St. Brelade-heavy side of the Assembly. I have Deputy Tadier, I have Deputy Scott and Deputy Miles as well, and I am sure that they would all agree that Les Quennevais Precinct is not what any of us would want it to be today, and it is certainly a long way past its best. I am very concerned about the reports, principally by Deputy Miles, about landlords' lack of engagement. I think we likely need to look at the responsibility of landlords when it comes to such large public areas, and their conduct and responsibilities with regard to not just maintaining at a minimum standard, but when it is such a large area of public space maintaining at a high standard the quality of buildings in a particular area, and particularly a commercial area. I do remember - and I think I have said this here before - once when I was on the Planning Committee driving past Les Quennevais Precinct with the then chief officer of Planning and commenting relatively humorously but definitely seriously as well, that if I were King of Jersey the one thing I would do would be to wave a magic wand and redevelop Les Quennevais Precinct there and then, because even then, 5 or 6 years ago, it was an eyesore. Five or 6 years ago it was down on its heels in terms of the way it appears, and that is something we need to change. Another thing that I find quite interesting - and this speaks to the Island Plan involving Les Quennevais Precinct but very little having happened over the last 3 years since the Island Plan was passed - is the fact that there is a kind of capital versus provinces divide in Jersey that you find everywhere else, whether it is Paris or London, our 2 closest neighbours. A lot of our focus around

urban regeneration talks of St. Helier and very, very little of it talks of Les Quennevais, almost as though it is too far out in the provinces for any of us to notice. But there is a reality there; Les Quennevais is home to thousands of people, it is home to a new and important part of our health estate, it is home to a major secondary school of which the catchment area extends as far as where I used to live, Le Carrefour Selous in St. Lawrence, and Bel Royal, so it is a very important school for my constituency. It deserves better, quite simply. Just the fact that it is not the Island's capital does not mean that it should be ignored, and so I think part (c) of Deputy Miles's proposition about the Regeneration Steering Group having an eye and a focus on Les Quennevais Precinct as much as St. Helier is absolutely valid. I must be honest, and I think Deputy Miles will probably share this although I cannot speak for her - and I do urge Deputy Miles in summing up to say if she disagrees - but I think this will not solve the problems. This proposition I think is Deputy Miles's way ... the way I read it is Deputy Miles's way of forcing it on to the agenda, and I think that is absolutely the right thing to do because the past 3 years have shown that it is not effectively on the agenda, for many reasons. I hope that this is the starting point for the next 4 years with a new Assembly coming in, where the new Assembly and new Government will really grasp the issues at Les Quennevais Precinct and do everything within their powers to ensure that Les Quennevais Precinct is brought up to standard and does become once again that high quality community centre - which is what it effectively is - for the whole Island to enjoy. So I thank Deputy Miles and Deputy Luce for working together to try to ensure that this is successful. I do urge all Members to support this proposition.

### **3.1.3 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:**

Several Members commented this morning that I was carrying this with me - the Bridging Island Plan - as I came in, and there is a reason for that, which I will get to in a moment. But I should also say that 2 Members also commented that it did not look anywhere near well-thumbed enough, and I have got an explanation for that, because this is Deputy Ahier's copy. **[Laughter]** I forgot to bring mine in. But, as I say, there is a reason for mentioning this because this is my third speech in this Assembly meeting arguing for consistency in policy making and, in particular, my third speech arguing in support of policy consistent with this much-maligned document: the Bridging Island Plan. So far only one out of 2, let us hope we can make it 2 out of 3. I want to start by commending my St. Brelade colleague, Deputy Miles, for her tireless efforts to address the challenges at Les Quennevais Parade and Precinct. She has walked the streets, she has gone to meetings, she has asked for meetings with relevant stakeholders; she has been tireless because it is a difficult issue to deal with. The ownership structure does make it hard to address problems in a systematic and strategic way. There are people living in those houses and people whose businesses are there, and their views are central to this. Deputy Miles has taken the trouble to go and meet them and talk to them and find out more. It is difficult but one day this is going to have to be addressed. Les Quennevais Parade and Precinct is not going to last for ever. It is a concrete structure built in the 1960s; it will not last for ever. These issues will have to be addressed, however difficult they are. I think it is more likely that we will be successful if there is a determined, consistent resolve on the part of all government agencies to deal with the issues. That focus is something Deputy Miles has consistently sought to provide. An important part of the Bridging Island Plan was that it upgraded Les Quennevais to the official status of second urban centre. This was both a recognition of its de facto position as a significant centre for shopping, leisure and sport, but also a call to action to enhance Les Quennevais. The key mechanism, as we have heard, was supposed to be the West of Island Planning Framework, which is why Deputy Miles started there last year. She won her battle last year but, as we have heard also, nothing has yet come to pass. The second urban centre that was so trumpeted in that Bridging Island Plan is a concept that is currently empty. It is devoid of content. It might as well, so far, not have been included in the Bridging Island Plan. So Deputy Miles is back with another try, to try and make things happen. It is worth remembering why action is necessary. The Bridging Island Plan said that Les Quennevais is: "A thriving urban area" and that the intent was to introduce "a policy regime that seeks to protect and enhance the range of local services currently provided in the area."

How well is that going? Well, as Deputy Miles said, there are currently 8 empty units - 9, but one is about to come back into use thankfully. The fabric of the Precinct and Parade is deteriorating. Some shops are unlettable. So if policy intent is to “protect and enhance the range of local services provided in the area” it has failed. It has failed. We have to face that we have failed so far in that attempt to enhance. I said we should not shy away from the issues at Les Quennevais when we have a clear policy intent to do something about it. This proposition seeks to put a bit of a jolt into existing government structures and processes. Government interest is important; I think it is a precondition for wider action. The private sector will have much greater confidence - both the people with direct interest there now, but also potentially people who might be interested in the future - to get involved if they can see a clear, co-ordinated Government focus with a clear strategy, clear policies, and integrated approach to it. The key point I would make in summarising is that Government can be a catalyst for development, and perhaps we could say that this proposition could be a catalyst for that catalyst. This proposition attempts to start something. It attempts to get the Government to focus on something. It is something I think everybody would admit needs to happen. I commend the Deputy for bringing it and I hope we get a strong support for it.

[15:15]

### **3.1.4 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:**

I am also happy to support this proposition and what it is aspiring to do. These have been longstanding issues in Les Quennevais and they are not issues that are easy to resolve. I think first of all it is helpful if we can all agree what the problems are and that we can perhaps identify the small changes at first that can be made, and also perhaps start the conversations which I think for too long just were not being facilitated with the right people who can effect change. It will - if anything positive is to happen with the area to improve - need action from multiple partners who are in this, and we will talk about who they are. Before we get on to some of the issues I think we have to paint a realistic picture as well. I do not think it is all doom and gloom in Les Quennevais. I will turn in a moment to some of the comments that I had speaking this week with residents of Les Quennevais Precinct and Parade, whether it was via their email correspondent or in person, because there is still a great deal of local pride in the area. Whether they are tenants who are living above the shops, or indeed the shopkeepers themselves, or the owner-occupiers of the flats in Les Quennevais, they live there for a reason: it is because they either grew up there or they have chosen to buy or rent there because it is very convenient. Some have children at the local secondary school just up the road, and they have all the amenities on their doorsteps, not just commercially but all of the leisure activities that go with Les Quennevais; the playing fields, the great infrastructure and of course the sports centre. Les Quennevais in particular is still a very sought after place to live, as no doubt the rental and the house prices will still reflect. That is the first point to make. But the second point is that these have been longstanding issues, and as I go back over my emails I find a press release that I myself sent to the media in 2015 - can we believe that is already 10 years ago - where I am saying I counted a total of 7 shops which are closed and empty and that is worrying. There will no doubt be various reasons for that but a key factor is no doubt the high rents. Constituents have expressed concerns to me that smaller businesses are being forced out by the high rents, that there used to be a unique area with an eclectic mixture of local independent shops; they are now being replaced by generic high street franchises as they are the only ones who can afford the rents. In fact they are the only ones who can have the business models increasingly that give them stable and regular incomes to be able to pay the rents. I went on to say that small businesses are not just the backbone of the economy but they are also part of a vibrant local community. I do then question ... there are still some great success stories, so I see what I referred to 10 years ago as the independent bike shop. That is still there. It is still booming right next to Miller's Bar ... incidentally I have not been there for quite a few years, but it is still active, there are still people who use that as a community hub, with the barber right across the road. The old barber might have retired but somebody else has taken over. Those are still there. There is not the Roosters that was there when I grew up, there is not the Bona

Togs or the Machon's or the Golden Fry up the road, or the Panico's or the Pickwick's, there is not the fishmonger. So obviously life does change and I think this brings me to the next part of the question that I would ask all of us, is that there has to be a question at some point about what level of appetite there is for if not state intervention but at least some kind of state oversight to be involved in those conversations that need to be had. This is where the proposition is really vital because it does re-put on the table, so to speak, that Government does at least have a facultative role in this to facilitate those conversations that need to happen between the owners, Maillard, who currently manage the area ... they have got a sign up there, by the way, which I notice is new, saying if you have got any comments or issues about this area please contact Maillard. That has been put up. Of course, as some of the residents say ... I will turn to their comments because the other point I want to make is that it is really important to hear the voice of the local community directly, so let us hear from some of the local residents, anonymously of course. The first comment I would like to highlight is somebody who says: "I have lived there for 12 years. Honestly I love living here. I would say that 95 per cent of us that live here feel that we are really part of a community." They go on to say, and I noticed this the second time I went up because they pointed it out, that the flooring outside in the communal areas ... they have got this kind of ruberoid flooring of tiles, it has been broken and an elderly person caught their frame when they were walking along and had to be taken to A. and E. (Accident and Emergency) to get some medical treatment. That is an ongoing issue which another resident has told me is being looked into at the moment, because she is on the residents' committee there. So there are issues that are being dealt with. One of the big questions here is in a situation where you have multiple ownership and also multiple tenancies; so you have owner-occupiers, you have tenants who are renting, you have got some of the flats still owned by the wider parent group, but most of them are in private ownership, and then you have got a whole load of commercial rentals underneath which are perhaps long term or have been interrupted and been passed on. It is really difficult to first of all know what collectively can be done there. There does need to be that centralisation of somebody somewhere pulling things together. Also we know that the ownership structure there is very complicated. This is part of the rub here: you do not have a local owner who necessarily takes the same interest and pride in the local community when you have got a foreign-owned entity owning this, and also owning it as an investment opportunity. The imperative for the company that owns this is not one necessarily to keep all of the shops occupied all the time to maximise their rental income; it is because the properties are sitting on a book somewhere, probably as part of a pension portfolio, and they are looking at the longer-term value of those commercial units rather than the vibrancy of the local community. Another resident goes on: "As a resident I want the area to look its best. I am up for regeneration so long as I do not have to lose my home. I am extremely lucky that where I rent at the moment is affordable and I could not necessarily afford to rent properties elsewhere." They do raise issues with the car parking because of course their car-parking spaces are also mixed in with the visitors who come up to Les Quennevais to shop who are generally not there for too long, but they do talk about vehicles perhaps being abandoned there and vans also being parked there. So, again, a very complicated scenario but not one which is without opportunities. I do remember my brief time when I was an Assistant Minister at Economic Development I was already starting to have those conversations with ... I think it was Voisin Hunter at the time who were the management agency and they said: "Look, we are not opposed to doing something there but when we have approached Government in the past it has not really been easy for us to see what the opportunities are and for us to invest there." So I think there are development opportunities. I would particularly look to the lower car park and see if there is a way perhaps to provide parking which could be done on a more sustainable method, which could be covered over so that on the top you could potentially have parks, and also other amenities above and underground. But these are options which if they work commercially and make sense for the developer and the owner they could also bring some fringe benefits to the wider community. One comment about the Christmas tree of course, they say: "If we have a Christmas tree put up can it be decorated as in the past because at the moment it has not even had lights on and it looks worse than not having anything

festive up at all.” So it should not be beyond our wit, should it, whether it is done at a Parish level or at States level or through the owners there to put up a Christmas tree with some lights on. Who knows, it might even generate more commercial activity for the area. This person goes on to say: “The main issue is not the residents’ side but the shop landlord beneficial owner side and the fact that the management company are not that bothered as long as they are getting paid.” I think this comes back to the issue about what we think is acceptable in Jersey. We do have quite strict rules about who can own and live in property in Jersey. We say if you want to buy a house in Jersey and live in it you have to be here for 10 years. We do not have any such restriction, I do not think, when it comes to commercial property. I am not saying that it would be easy or even desirable to go down the route of saying that if you own commercial property in Jersey you have to be a locally-based person, or indeed that you have to be a natural person, but we could say that if you are a company that owns property in Jersey, especially when it is in such a strategic location, that maybe you should have to have directors who are present in the Island to be answerable for what goes on within those premises. All of these questions are much easier to ask than they are to answer of course, but I think this proposition does give us the scope to start having those conversations. I will simply finish by saying this, because of course I could talk even more on this subject. It is an area I grew up in; I know the people who live and work in this area. I will just leave Members with this and ask them of course to support the proposition: “We want to express our full support for Deputy Miles’s proposal. In the 6 years that we have lived here it has been disheartening to see how much the area has deteriorated with residents unable to do anything to improve the situation. It is particularly upsetting to see headlines describing the Precinct as derelict or to hear people refer to it as a dive or a poor area. This kind of perception only further damages the community pride that we have.” With that in mind, I do think that of course let us be able to have those conversations, whether it is us or whoever comes after us, whether it is the Regeneration Steering Group - who I do hope will have this as a standing item on their agenda, despite the amendment - and Government and the company that owns this area. I think we can do better. Let us have those conversations. We would like to see flower boxes put out. There will be a Parish in Bloom competition that is being hosted in the next few months; we would be delighted if you could enter and there will be prizes for the best displays that we have got. So that in future that tour bus that Deputy Miles talked about that comes from the airport does not have to do an embarrassed little detour around the Parish of St. Brelade and that it can take those visitors right down La Route des Quennevais, up to Red Houses and through on to Noirmont into St. Aubin, because Les Quennevais Precinct and Parade will be not an embarrassment as some think it might be now, but part of the pride of St. Brelade.

**Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour:**

I wonder if the Member would answer a genuine question. May I ask him a point of clarification?

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

If it is clarification of something he has said.

**Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:**

Yes, it is. I am aware that there is probably one more St. Brelade Deputy going to speak so if the Deputy could clarify. When he speaks about the ownership of the site, there have been various comments made about being a pension fund. Could he just clarify because I am not clear and it depends what I would say. Is it a single owner or is it a multiple? My understanding was it was split up and that is the heart of the problem. He is talking about pension fund but whether he could clarify his remarks; who owns the shops?

**Deputy M. Tadier:**

I will simply quote from what one of the residents has said, they said: “As residents we feel powerless because a faceless U.K. company holds a 51 per cent share and there seems to be no accountability

of investment.” So there is an entity that runs the whole of the area. Obviously some of the overall company will be owned through shares via the residents who own their own flats through share transfer, but ultimately, yes, there is one other company involved which is the major shareholder. I will not give the name in the Assembly, I do know it, but in the same way that we would not name an individual I think it is probably not appropriate to name the company, but that is certainly what I have understood from my conversations in the past.

### **3.1.5 Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:**

I just briefly wanted to add my support, also as chair of the Regeneration Steering Group, and I thank Deputy Miles for accepting our small amendment. Because we now meet monthly it is not necessary to have this as a standing item but I just wanted to reassure Members it will be a regular and important part of our portfolio and our agenda. We look forward to working on that to help rejuvenate the area. Of course, as has been explained, the ownership of the area is fairly complex but I think that is something we will all have to work on.

[15:30]

But I just wanted to reassure the Deputy and Members, we will discuss it at our next meeting for the first time in the Regeneration Steering Group and make sure it gets our full attention. I too think that is one part of our Island that we have neglected for too long, and I think it is a challenge we should all take by the horns, as it were, and try and make some improvements. So I will be supporting the proposition as amended in its entirety.

### **3.1.6 Deputy M.R. Scott of St. Brelade:**

I welcome the focus of Deputy Miles and the Chief Minister and the Minister for the Environment on this area. I think it is quite appropriate, having debated how St. Helier has drawn the short straw on minimum parking standards, to have a look at an area that is outside St. Helier and to give a bit more thought about how policies can divert attention away from some really important parts of the community. Like St. Brelade’s Bay, Les Quennevais is both a community and a separate and small economic centre. One of the reasons - coming back to something that Deputy Renouf said - why I believe the Bridging Island Plan has been maligned has been some of the processes, and it was a bit half-baked really in terms of how it was produced, but we know that there was a pandemic. But basically you have got representative bodies like the Jersey Hospitality Association - rightly or wrongly - mainly represent businesses outside this area that has its own needs, its own unique way of operating, and in that sense it has been like St. Brelade’s Bay. Deputy Tadier’s suggestion ... I sympathise when it seems like you have got a landlord who is not really perhaps as emotionally invested in the community and how that may come over, but I think we do have to be careful about introducing any policies that discourage inward investment generally because we do need investment from outside the Island. Deputy Miles needs to be applauded for her efforts, nevertheless, to make the area look less run down. Coming back to the Bridging Island Plan and some of the processes which I have already criticised in this Assembly, one of the things that I think is an interesting question is how was this area around Red Houses, Les Quennevais, designated a secondary urban centre. It was a question I raised in the examination in public and never was answered. You have also got St. Peter’s Village, so how did one get designated that way rather than the other. Talking about the vibrancy that once was in the area, let us point to the number of hotels that have reduced in that area. We know that plans for a new hotel have been approved, that happens to be again closer to St. Peter than St. Brelade and Quennevais but it may make a difference. But this comes on to the whole economics of the area around it, what I would call the supporting economics, because there is only so much you can do by ... and there are certain things you have to think about when prettifying a place; the motivation is the success of the businesses that are operating there. There is a lot more to think about in terms of Quennevais, and I have tried to do some work in that area because you have got residents in those flats that will have some challenges when it comes to their increasing

limited mobility. We have suffered a bit in the Parish in terms of we have had a lovely new health centre but we have got very restricted areas for people to move into in terms of housing. So we have seen some people who have been displaced, moved to St. Helier, even though they have been in the community for quite a while, and that is not ideal later. So I am saying that there is a holistic need in having some thought turned away from St. Helier and thinking a bit more about the needs of that community is appreciated. I am just coming to the separate parts of the proposition and just to offer some thoughts there. One of the first things is to do with the Retail Roadmap. I think it would be useful to have a definition of success for Quennevais in that respect; to what extent is it sustainable to have that number of units in that way when the economy is the way that it is. Is it putting the cart before the horse? The West of Island Planning Framework, that is Strategic Proposal 4, an actual proposal there. Strategic Proposal 1 is a much more holistic proposal, and again we have not seen much work there, and I would invite Members to think more about the desirability of doing more to get our economy going and perhaps not relying on selling retail and hospitality when in fact they themselves feed off other industries, and we have not seen much growth or real inward investment there. Bearing in mind - again coming back to the Retail Roadmap - that it does have a focus on St. Helier, so again to have more of an actual understanding about what is it we want for this area and what really can be achieved is vital. We move on to the Regeneration Steering Group, and I found this interesting because again I believe it was established with particular reference to St. Helier, so again we come to what is the definition of success here. What I think is a potential plus here is that you have got the States of Jersey Development Company. We know that consultants were discouraged and that is one of the reasons why the planning framework was not updated, even though the Bridging Island Plan is half-baked, and if we can find a way of getting some sort of work on a masterplan - notwithstanding that I still think that certain policies perhaps need to be revised to benefit the area - then that would be a plus. So I very much appreciate the Chief Minister saying that he will be bringing the matter up in the Regeneration Group because if that work towards some sort of realistic vision can be done ... if the States of Jersey Development Company or somebody else can have a proper discussion with the landlord in terms of what can be done I do think that would be useful, so I commend the Deputy for bringing the Assembly's attention to this matter.

### **3.1.7 Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf:**

I rise very briefly to support the proposition from Deputy Miles, but also to ... during my years as a Senator I had Island-wide responsibilities, as the Deputy may well have in future of course, there may be and has always been an extraordinary vision for Les Quennevais and Deputy Miles and the other St. Brelade representatives ... it is a shame that the Constable is not here but we know why he is away and doing good work. Les Quennevais has been of course honed and grown by formidable individuals, some of them elected and some of them unelected. I cannot help but recall Canon Halliwell who was the inspiration behind the Community Centre across the road, which is so absolutely well-loved and used. It was as a result of his work, putting money that he had privately in order to make that happen, and I do not know whether that is known in terms of Communicare. It is of course a great facility, and all the other places at Les Quennevais, but of course the shopping parade is dreadful. I am sure that the still very active former Constable Quenault, who rightly has her name on that health facility, would wish that the area that they represented would be in a better condition at the moment. It is not the community, it is not the tenants, and it is not the Parish; it seems to me - which is the reason why I asked Deputy Tadier - it is the ownership of the property that seems to be the issue. I would be most grateful if the Deputy could confirm her understanding - that is certainly mine - that there was - and I would be grateful to be corrected - a single owner but deliberately or knowingly split it up a number of years ago. So the apartments above, you can see them on the Land Registry, you can see them changing hands for fairly modest amounts of money. They cannot be in great shape, I imagine, some of them, but they are what they are. But I think this is a very interesting example, and it is worth saying that this is an example where there was an entity that owned a majority and they basically carved it up and sold it off in slices. Why am I saying that?

Well, the consequences are that ... because Members would be shocked if I said anything else, private ownership is not the enemy of regeneration; indifference is. Where the present market failure persists, which it clearly is for reasons that I am not sure the Deputy ... but maybe she is trying to get that understanding of what the economics of that area are. I do think that there is a duty of Government to step in, as the Deputy and the representatives in St. Brelade are asking us to do, and I absolutely support that. I am sorry that the Minister for the Environment is going to have some more work, I do not want to do that, I know he is trying his very best, and I am not sure my oral question is about Five Oaks Masterplan, but we have got just as much of a challenge in terms of a retail centre that is looking pretty tired and does not have an overall plan, as the Deputy in St. Saviour. Now, I do think that the States of Jersey Development Company could play a very constructive role here, and that is really good to hear. It needs more commercial projects, to be honest. It needs to, I think, maybe be given some westward respect and some work because they will do good work if they are asked to do it, and this is a perfect opportunity: limited, carefully structured, partnership, perhaps starting with public realm, carpark, access roads to catalyse wider renewal. It may require a bold decision that may require compulsory purchase. It may, if that is a problem. If that is the blocker that as S.o.J.D.C. has done previously, and the Assembly has approved the assemblage of land that is required, whether by roads or other things, may be required. I just want to send a very positive message to Deputy colleagues in St. Brelade that we should not shy away from that. Where there is an opportunity to publicly purchase public realm, and whether that be the roads or the car park, we should not shy against that, and this Member certainly sitting here would not be against putting the money. The Government is advancing an Infrastructure Fund; infrastructure is at the core of creating good communities, and sometimes if you get a private sector blocker you cannot do it. But the good news is we have got the States of Jersey Development Company, and that is exactly what it was set up to do. It did not have St. Brelade in it, it was about St. Helier, but it can be about St. Brelade too. I commend the Deputy, and I will ask her if she could comment on the issue of ownership because I think it was a quite well-known Channel Island company that basically split it up, and I think the Assembly should know.

#### **The Deputy Bailiff:**

I call upon Deputy Miles to reply.

[15:45]

#### **3.1.8 Deputy H.M. Miles:**

I would like to thank everybody who has spoken, and I note that everybody has very kindly spoken in favour. In view of the long day we have had I am not going to say too much, but perhaps I can address some of these things in reverse order. The first thing I think, I would just like to address some of the comments that Deputy Ozouf made about the individual flats. I do not think we should make any assumptions about the condition of the individual flats; they are people's homes. Those homes are beautiful and they are still changing hands, it is more about the context of where those residents are having to live, and I would just like to make that clear. I absolutely take the point about States of Jersey Development Company. Nowhere in this proposition have I mentioned compulsory purchase. I think we are a long, long way from compulsory purchase. This is about the first steps to understand ... and I totally agree with Deputy Ozouf about the role of the States of Jersey Development Company. It has a very clear mandate to deliver regeneration and strategic property development that benefits the Island socially, financially and environmentally, and that mandate applies to St. Brelade just as much as it does to St. Helier and elsewhere. Of course you have to bear in mind that they have expertise in this area and may well get further with the commercial owners than I ever have, and if that is the case I would very much welcome their intervention. Deputy Scott, again, thank you for the support. She mentioned the landlords, and again I just want to be clear here. The ownership of the Precinct and Parade is complex. There are technically 39 owners; 38 of those are the flats, the other owner is a U.K. company who owns the entirety of the commercial units, bar

one, because the old Freedom building was sold off independently a few years ago. So while they retain majority shareholder, it is less of a shareholder than it was. Now, that has changed over the years. That was bought in 2006 for the pricey sum of £22 million. For the last couple of years I have been looking at Companies House. Clearly they sold off a lot of the units; 2022 it was valued at £14 million, 2023 it was valued at £12 million, and last year, 2024, I have just looked it up, it had a valuation at £10.4 million. That is not as much as I thought for 50 per cent of Les Quennevais Parade and Precinct, but those are the figures, as I understand them, from my personal research at Companies House. I would like to thank the Chief Minister for his support, and I am confident that being on the Regeneration Steering Group agenda will inject a bit of momentum into this. I thank Deputy Tadier for his support, again he totally acknowledges the role of the tenants in this. The commercial tenants pay rent directly to the U.K. company. They have to pay a service charge in a sinking fund to the local managing agent. The tenants obviously pay to the owners, but the owners of the flats also pay a sinking charge and a service charge. This is clearly not sufficient, that funding, to provide the repairs and dilapidations that are required there, and that is a problem. I have had a lengthy discussion very recently with the managing agent. I think it is fair to say that the managing agents are equally frustrated. Six months ago they stopped acting as letting units for the commercial units and they are now simply restricting themselves to managing the association, and I think that is a message in itself. So I just wanted to clear up those. Deputy Tadier also mentioned comments about managing agents and the nature of commercial leases. As Members will know, I was due to bring P.68 during this setting, and that focuses specifically on the improvement of commercial leases and property. That will be debated in the next sitting and I will address those issues, but of course using Les Quennevais Precinct and Parade as a context for that. Deputy Renouf, yes, thank you, it is all in the Bridging Island Plan. We need consistency in policy development. I would like to assure him that I am not a street walker. I have walked around Les Quennevais Precinct and Parade and engaged with residents and tenants and businesses, but that walking was with a purpose. Yes, he says it is difficult, but the issue is this has been in the too difficult tray for too long, we need to get it out of the too difficult tray, and the idea of this proposition is to provide a starting point so that we can go on a journey. Indeed the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development used the “journey” word. This is a starting point; it is not going to happen overnight. But again, thanks to the support of the Minister for the Environment. He has articulated his commitment to start the work soon, to identify the challenges, to define the scope, and to set a positive direction for change in that area. Again, this proposition is not a quick fix, it does not call for hasty spending or sweeping redevelopment or compulsory purchase; it calls for a first step; a very deliberate, measured and necessary one. I think it recognises that the status quo is not acceptable. The people of Les Quennevais really deserve better, specifically the tenants at that residential accommodation. I am grateful to my fellow Deputies for supporting me in this proposition. It is about leadership, partnership, and fairness, and with that I ask for the appel.

### **The Deputy 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 that the proposition has been adopted unanimously [**Approbation**]

| <b>Pour: 38</b>           |  | <b>Contre: 0</b> |  | <b>Abstained: 0</b> |
|---------------------------|--|------------------|--|---------------------|
| Connétable of Trinity     |  |                  |  |                     |
| Connétable of St. Peter   |  |                  |  |                     |
| Connétable of St. Martin  |  |                  |  |                     |
| Connétable of St. John    |  |                  |  |                     |
| Connétable of St. Clement |  |                  |  |                     |

|                              |  |  |  |  |
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| Connétable of Grouville      |  |  |  |  |
| Connétable of St. Ouen       |  |  |  |  |
| Connétable of St. Mary       |  |  |  |  |
| Connétable of St. Saviour    |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy G.P. Southern         |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy M. Tadier             |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy S.G. Luce             |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy L.M.C. Doublet        |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy K.F. Morel            |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat       |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy S.M. Ahier            |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy R.J. Ward             |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy C.S. Alves            |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy L.J. Farnham          |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy S.Y. Mézec            |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf          |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy Sir P.M.<br>Bailhache |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy T.A. Coles            |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy D.J. Warr             |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy H.M. Miles            |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy M.R. Scott            |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy J. Renouf             |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy C.D. Curtis           |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy L.V. Feltham          |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy R.E. Binet            |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy H.L. Jeune            |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy M.E. Millar           |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy A. Howell             |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy M.R. Ferey            |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy A.F. Curtis           |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy B. Ward               |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy K.M. Wilson           |  |  |  |  |
| Deputy L.K.F.<br>Stephenson  |  |  |  |  |

That concludes Public Business for this meeting and I invite the Chair of P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee) to propose Public Business for future meetings.

#### **ARRANGEMENT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

##### **4. Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North (Chair, Privileges and Procedures Committee):**

Members will have noted that P.3, Draft Harbours (Inshore Safety) (Jersey) Amendment Regulations, brought by the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, has been deferred to 11th November, which means that the sitting on 11th November will be quite a heavy one and I advise all Members to leave the continuation days open. I expect to be sitting through Thursday. That also applies to the future meeting of 25th November, which again will need the continuation days and may well be sitting through to Thursday. Looking even further ahead, the sitting on 9th December which is the proposed Budget week, as Members will know, normally - as has become custom - we

sit on the Monday for the Budget week to try to ensure that we do not have late sittings, which is rather spurned by most Members. So I would like to take this opportunity, since we are finishing early, to propose that we sit on Monday, 8th December, starting at 9.30 a.m. for questions.

**The Deputy Bailiff:**

Is that proposition seconded? **[Seconded]** Are Members content to start on Monday at 9.30 a.m. on 8th December? Yes. Are Members otherwise content to proceed in accordance with the proposition of the chair of P.P.C.? Are Members now content to adjourn until Tuesday, 11th November at 9.30 a.m.? The States so adjourns.

**ADJOURNMENT**

[15:55]