STATES OF JERSEY

OFFICIAL REPORT

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[9:30]

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

Connétable A. Howell of Trinity:

I wonder if I may be excused to attend a funeral. I am leaving at 11 o'clock, and I will get back as soon as I can.

The Bailiff:

Thank you very much.

PUBLIC BUSINESS - resumption

1. Reduction of lodging period

1.1 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Before we move on to general business, I wonder if it might be a good juncture. As Members are aware that Deputy Maltman is *malade* today, and she will be indisposed I think for quite a while; we do not need to go into too much detail about that. But there is a slight contrivance that I have been in communication with the Greffe about. Ordinarily it is possible for an absent Member to nominate another States Member to propose a proposition or amendment in their absence but on this occasion that has not happened according to Standing Orders. So I have agreed with the Greffe to lodge, and I have lodged effectively the same proposition amendment that Deputy Maltman would have lodged herself. It is probably an appropriate moment to ask, I am entirely in the hands of the Assembly, I know it is unusual, but if Members are willing to accept a reduced lodging period now, we could proceed on that basis that I will effectively be bringing that amendment on behalf of Deputy Maltman in her absence.

The Bailiff:

Yes, Deputy Tadier was in consultation through the Greffier with myself, and the only way in which Members will be able to consider this amendment is for it to be lodged in the name of a different Member, as the Deputy has said, but the lodging period needs to be reduced. The amendment is in the same terms exactly as the amendment lodged by Deputy Maltman, subject to her amendment incorporated in the amendment. So the proposition is to reduce the lodging period. Is the proposition seconded? **[Seconded]** Does anyone wish to speak on the proposition to reduce the lodging period so that this amendment can be debated at the sitting of the Assembly?

1.1.1 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

I am happy to accept, and I think probably the Government is happy to accept that.

The Bailiff:

The reduction of the lodging period?

Deputy J. Renouf:

Yes, Sir. Are Members content to proceed on that basis? Thank you very much. The lodging period is reduced.

Deputy M. Tadier:

If they are happy to accept the amendment as well, it might save a lot of time. **[Laughter]**

The Bailiff:

I do not think they are necessarily doing that.

2. Common Strategic Policy 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): eighteenth amendment (P.75/2026 Amd.(18)) - Suitable housing development

The Bailiff:

We now return to the amendments, and the next amendment is the eighteenth amendment lodged by the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel. Deputy Jeune, there is an amendment lodged by the Council of Ministers to the amendment lodged by the panel. Is the amendment accepted or not?

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

No, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Thank you. I ask the Greffier to read the amendment.

The Greffier of the States:

After the words "report accompanying this Proposition" insert the words – ", except that, on page 13 of the report, under Action 6.1 for the words "Enable housing development to provide more homes for Islanders and assisted purchase schemes" there should be substituted the following – "Enable suitable housing development to provide more homes to Islanders where needed, and support aspirations for suitable home ownership, and ensure communities are appropriately equipped to meet future demographic, social and infrastructure needs."

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

This amendment relates to 6.1, and I know we have heard from the Greffe the replacing of the words, but just to remind everyone that the Government put: "enable housing development to provide more homes for Islanders and assisted purchase schemes", and we want to replace the wording with much more detail including the word: "enables suitable housing development to provide more homes where needed and support aspirations for suitable home ownership and ensure communities are appropriately equipped to meet future demographic, social and infrastructure needs." I am pleased that the Council of Ministers supports the principle of this amendment. In its response, the Council accepts their housing supply should be considered alongside housing need, aspirations for home ownership and the infrastructure communities need. It welcomed the panel's recognition that delivery must keep pace with infrastructure and community capacity, and it agreed that suitable housing development means homes that respond to identified need. Some key points on this were raised during the debate on amendment 24 from Deputy Alex Curtis. It begs the question why the Council of Ministers did not put this kind of wording in the first place. The only point of difference is related to assisted purchase schemes, which I will address when the Council of Ministers talks to their amendment. A housing policy should encompass more than simply increasing the number of homes. I think it should ask 3 questions: do the homes we deliver meet Islanders' needs; do they support people's aspirations to own a home; and do they come with infrastructure and community facilities that growth requires? Therefore our amendment broadens that 6.1 so that it better reflects the complexity of housing challenges facing Jersey. Members will be aware that housing delivery depends on many factors. Many of them sit beyond the direct control of Government; land availability, land price, development viability, construction costs, wider market conditions. The panel heard this directly at our panel hearing with the Minister on 22nd October. The Assistant Minister told us developers were saying they can no longer viably build. The head of strategic housing just described a cost price squeeze, bill costs going up, house values coming down and margins too tight to bring sites forward. She told us sites have been banked and planning consents granted with no spade yet in the ground.

[9:45]

She said that what underpins that all is the price of land. For that reason, the panel considers that the Government's role is fundamentally to enable and facilitate suitable housing development rather than to imply that the delivery of housing is Government's responsibility and it should all be about build, build, build, which we believe 6.1 at the moment relates to. The word "suitable" therefore matters. Yes, it is another specific word that we can focus on after yesterday's debate. It is about building the type of housing that the community actually needs. Statistics Jersey's latest data, and that was also discussed during the debate on amendment 24 for Deputy Alex Curtis, shows why. In the owner-occupied market there is a shortfall of 810 2-bedroom homes but a surplus of 530 4-bedroom homes. With an ageing population and a declining birth rate, the right homes matter as much as the number. Again, we heard that in the debate yesterday. Our amendment also replaces the specific reference to assisted purchase schemes with broader wording related to aspirations for suitable home ownership. Though we will discuss this further during the Council of Minister's amendment, I wanted to touch a little bit on it here. The panel does not oppose assisted purchase schemes. Indeed, such schemes may continue to form part of the policy toolkit available to the Government. We heard that on Tuesday from the Minister. However, the issue of housing affordability and housing delivery challenges extend well beyond the availability of assisted purchase schemes alone. A strategic policy should therefore set the objective. It should not tie that objective to specifics that may or may not happen, as the Minister stated on Tuesday. The amendment also seeks to recognise an important principle that a successful housing policy is about creating sustainable communities, not simply delivering housing units. New homes require supporting infrastructure. They require transport connections, utilities, healthcare provision, community facilities, open spaces and services capable of meeting the needs of a growing and changing population. In my own district of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity, for example, the question I hear is rarely whether we need more units. It is whether the services and infrastructure will keep pace. In Sion alone we are currently seeing over 60 new family homes being built. I have yet to see how local amenities will be developed to support the potential 240 more parents and children moving into the village to ensure we are a sustainable community. Future Jersey and the Island Outcomes framework both emphasise the importance of planning for long-term demographic and community needs. Future Jersey envisages sustainable communities, not simply build more buildings. So the panel believes that action 6.1 should therefore reflect this more wider ambition. This amendment does not alter the Government's commitment to increasing housing provision, rather it strengthens the action by ensuring it reflects the broad objectives of housing policy, meeting housing need, supporting aspirations for home ownership, and ensuring communities are equipped to accommodate future growth. In the panel's view, that provides a more balanced, realistic and future-focused statement of the housing challenge facing Jersey. For those reasons, I commend the amendment to the Assembly.

The Bailiff:

Is amendment seconded? **[Seconded]**

2.2 Common Strategic Policy 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): eighteenth amendment (P.75/2026 Amd.(18)) - amendment (P.75/2026 Amd.(18).Amd.) - Suitable housing development

The Bailiff:

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

The Greffier of the States:

After the words, "and support aspirations for suitable home ownership," insert the words, "including assisted purchase schemes,".

2.2.1 Deputy M.R. Ferey of St. Saviour (The Minister for Housing):

I am pleased to support this amendment to the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel's amendment. The Council of Ministers agrees that housing policy should not simply be about the number of homes we build, it should also be about ensuring that new housing is suitable, that it meets identified needs, that communities are properly supported by infrastructure and that Islanders have opportunities to access home ownership where it is right for them. Ministers are therefore pleased to support the broad intention of the panel's amendment. One thing that has become clear during our debate on the Common Strategic Policy is the level of interest across the Assembly in home ownership. Members have approached the issue from different perspectives, but there is a broad recognition that many Islanders aspire to own a home of their own, and that supporting these aspirations is an important objective for Government. Ministers therefore wish to ensure that assisted purchase schemes continue to be recognised as one of the practical ways in which Government can support Islanders into home ownership. Assisted purchase schemes are not the only way in which Government can support Islanders into home ownership. They are, however, an established and recognised policy tool that has helped Islanders who might otherwise have faced barriers to purchasing a home. Demand for assisted home ownership remains strong. Schemes such as First Step and Andium Homes assisted Homebuy demonstrate the level of interest among Islanders seeking to buy a home of their own. For many people these schemes provide confidence that home ownership remains an achievable ambition rather than something permanently out of reach. This amendment does not commit Government to any particular scheme or programme, nor does it elevate assisted purchase schemes above other housing priorities. It simply ensures that an important policy tool continues to be recognised within the Common Strategic Policy. The Council of Ministers therefore supports the panel's amendment, subject to this amendment. I make the amendment.

The Bailiff:

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

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Can I raise the défaut on Deputy Catherine Curtis, please?

The Bailiff:

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

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

I thank the Minister for reiterating his support for the panel's amendment. I want to explain why we do not support this particular amendment as a panel, and why we wanted to bring the debate to the Assembly. I would welcome others talking to this, talking to assisted purchase schemes in general, because what I want to be clear is the panel is not opposed to assisted purchasing schemes. Nothing in our amendment stops the Minister bringing one or more schemes forward. The Council's report says the Minister wants to retain the ability to pursue these schemes. He said it himself. He still keeps that ability, even if his amendment is lost. A commitment to support aspirations for suitable home ownership covers assisted purchase as much as any other policy tool. The question is really narrow. Should one specific mechanism, one specific policy tool, be written into the Island's 4-year Strategic Policy before the Minister himself has re-analysed the evidence, consulted with stakeholders and Islanders, and decided whether or in what form to use it? At our panel hearing yesterday at the sitting and on Tuesday, we heard that the Minister had not sought any funding for assisted purchase schemes in the Budget for 2027. A business case will not come forward until well into next year, especially if he still needs to review the evidence, speak to stakeholders, and really assess how these schemes sit within Jersey's housing market. As raised in the last few days, we are heading potentially into a 3-year Budget cycle. The work to develop that is starting now, and any Minister wanting a budget for a specific scheme should probably be moving fast to gather the arguments for their case. Though he was not as candid on Tuesday, he did tell the panel in our

hearing that opinion is divided on how much value for money these schemes give and how many people they actually do help. He said that looking purely on value for money, it does not always make sense. He gave the example of the last First Step scheme, which was over £10 million and helping about 36 families. We have yet to see any analysis about this scheme, as the evidence has yet to be published. He also told us he is exploring options other than shared equity. He is looking at how well Andium's Homebuy scheme is working. He is asking whether a 40 per cent equity share is too much or not enough, and he said it remains to be seen whether other Ministers, including the Minister for Treasury and Resources, will agree these are the better ways to get people on the housing ladder. That is a Minister still doing the work. That is a Council of Ministers yet undecided. The panel respects that but it means that the Council is asking this Assembly to commit in the Common Strategic Policy to a specific policy tool its own Ministers are still assessing and yet to decide if that is the right way to go. The Minister said his own first priority is housing mobility. He is consulting on property transactions. He has spoken about stamp duty and about future-proofed homes so older Islanders can right-size. None of those are named in the C.S.P. (Common Strategic Policy) action as a specific policy tool. So why name this one policy tool and not the others that he has mentioned that he wants to prioritise? He does so without presenting us with any evidence that it is the most effective way to help Islanders into home ownership. The Council and the Minister has given us 3 reasons for keeping the words "assisted purchase schemes" in the C.S.P. It says assisted purchase is an established policy tool. The panel agrees but being established is not a reason to name it in the strategy and, as explained, this tool is under review by the Minister himself and he is also looking at others. We could also say this about many other actions in the C.S.P. Why are not other policy tools or established policy tools not mentioned in the C.S.P.? It says the Minister wishes to retain the ability to pursue these schemes. As I have said, our wording to our amendment leaves that ability untouched. It is still possible for the Minister to provide and pursue that policy tool even with the wording that we have put in. It says: "Naming these schemes give Islanders confidence that owning a home remains achievable." The panel shares this goal, but confidence comes from schemes that are funded and that work, not from words in a strategy. Today there is no funding in the Budget and no business case. Naming the schemes risks raising hopes that the Government has not yet decided it will meet this, because we still do not know whether assisted purchase schemes in the future will actually become a reality. The Council's report also says any future scheme would have regard to housing need, affordability, market conditions and value for money. The panel welcomes that. It is exactly why the decision should be taken once those tests have been applied, not before. The C.S.P. sets the objective. Specific schemes come to this Assembly through the Budget, with a business case and clear evidence of who they help and at what cost. That is where Members can and should decide on assisted purchase schemes, and the different type of assisted purchase schemes we have seen over many years, and we discussed some of them in the debate the other day. The demand is real. The Minister told us the last scheme was massively oversubscribed. That is exactly why any new scheme must be designed on the evidence not written into strategy ahead of it. For those reasons, the panel does not support the Council of Ministers' amendment, and I urge Members to reject it.

2.2.3 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

We hear quite a lot in this debate about why the Assembly cannot understand why we would not accept an amendment because it is so innocent and so easy to accept. I am going to reverse that argument and say I cannot understand why the Scrutiny Panel is not prepared to accept this amendment. The Minister has a perfect right to set priorities in the Common Strategic Policy. It is, the panel tells us, still possible to pursue assisted purchase under the panel's amendment. Yes, but if the Minister wishes to highlight a particular policy aspiration in the Common Strategic Policy, surely that is the place to do it. It risks raising hopes, they are told. I have to say, come on, the whole C.S.P. is an aspirational document. It sets out a programme of things that I hope does raise hopes. That is the point. This amendment simply adds on bills on a good amendment from the Scrutiny Panel and allows the Minister to say something about a particular policy that he would like to ensure

spikes into the public consciousness. I cannot see what the offence is. Of course we do not have all the detail yet. If we were to apply that test to everything in the Common Strategic Policy, we might as well throw the document away. I think the opposition to this is misguided, and I hope the Assembly accepts the Council of Ministers' amendment and we can move on quickly.

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

I am glad to follow the Deputy from St. Brelade, because his hope is absolutely the reason why we should not have this in this amendment. Unfortunately everything I have to say now is going to be speculative because, as we have heard, the Minister for Housing has actually not had the results of the First Step scheme to know whether it has been successful, what impact it has had over market conditions and whether or not it has influenced people's purchasing ideas.

[10:00]

On the doorstep I did knock on one door for one person who was very disgruntled at the former Minister for Housing because they believed that his policies had prevented them being able to sell their own home because people are waiting for another assisted purchasing scheme, they are waiting for something that might happen that enables somebody either to come along to purchase their older to the market home rather than the new builds provided by Andium or S.o.J.D.C. (States of Jersey Development Company) on the assisted purchase pathways. They are waiting to see what happens so that they can decide their next move on how they purchase their next home or even purchase their first home. So providing hope that the Minister himself has said in our hearings that he does not believe that the Government should be paying for the assisted purchase schemes, that he believes that it should be done either through Andium or S.o.J.D.C. But we do not know the financial impact on Andium or S.o.J.D.C. and their ability to deliver assisted purchase schemes. We just do not know. Why is something that we have no evidence for, that we have no real way to say that it has been successful, whether it has held the market back in the private sector market of selling homes, that this is all part of that same organism that we do not have the information for. This is why we changed as a panel to support the aspiration for suitable home ownership, because that still allows the Minister to bring back an assisted purchasing scheme once he has the data to support it. That data will go to form the business case. That business case will then appear in the Budget. Then we have concrete evidence that the public will have assurances that an assisted scheme is coming or not. If there is no assurance and they think, well, there is no guarantee that an assisted purchase scheme is coming, then maybe they will re-evaluate their finances, look for how they can purchase that. Maybe it will encourage people to reduce what they need to sell their property for before they buy the next one. It opens the idea that people can start having alternative conversations rather than sitting, waiting and hoping for something that may never appear.

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

I rise really to reply to Deputy Renouf and his comments, and he said: "I cannot understand why the Scrutiny Panel will not accept this" and then he went on to say the Minister has the right to put in a policy in the C.S.P. He is right, the Minister, through the Council of Ministers, has the right to put a proposed policy in the C.S.P. and the Assembly, and especially Scrutiny, have the right to test whether that policy is appropriate. I am glad to see the Minister for Planning and Regulation has left the room so we do not debate the choice of that word. The Scrutiny Panel have reviewed this, I would say, more than most Members, as is its function within this Assembly. It has come to the conclusion that to include a specific policy over one other, in this case, is premature. That is a legitimate place to come to on the evidence of hearings, of reviews, and it proposes this not to block a policy option but to ensure we do not have a C.S.P. that puts the cart before the horse. I use that terminology because I believe the Council of Ministers agree with me on this principle, that it has a right to put in specific policies, and the Assembly has a right to push back. We are not debating in this C.S.P. an amendment to remove references to a St. Helier campus for Highlands College.

Ministers, and the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning within that, in the C.S.P. originally we would have a higher education facility or further education facility in "the heart of St. Helier". It did not provide Members any justification as to why that is the right way to deliver a high-level policy objective, which is reinvestment in higher and further education facilities. As a private Member, I brought an amendment to say, well, let us remove the reference to a policy that is clearly immature or premature to what it is trying to achieve. The Council of Ministers and the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning agreed. They came back to the fact that what was important to agree in the C.S.P. was the ambition to invest in higher and further education. We came to a compromise and it said to have a new campus by 2032, but it did not specify where it would be or the use of the St. Saviour site. That to me is the mantra behind how we should use the C.S.P. when it comes to policy levers; it is which direction are we going. So the Scrutiny Panel has worded its amendment to provide the direction. Suitable home ownership, the aspirational aim to own one's own home, but it does not predetermine a policy lever where the evidence for that does not exist. Now I would suggest that when you go through the C.S.P. one will find places where evidence for a policy does exist, and there are therefore policies that are more specific. The evidence does not come before us today to say that affordable purchase schemes are the correct model for the next 4 years of housing delivery and affordable housing access, and so it is right to remove that specific policy intent. I agree with the comments that we should not be raising hope that certain levers and schemes will be available without funding, without even the knowledge that the Minister thinks it is the correct policy to pursue in the next 3 years. It remains on the table, and I rise to dispute Deputy Renouf's position that we should accept it on face value because a Minister chose to insert it. It is the Assembly and Scrutiny's job to make sure this document is in the right shape and, in particular, we have provided, as a Scrutiny Panel, the requirement that evidence comes forward. Indeed that was accepted yesterday with the amendment: "Revise the Island Plan where evidenced and necessary." I ask the Assembly to agree we should not again put the cart before the horse. We should agree a principle and not predetermine the policies that achieve that goal.

2.2.6 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

I think the unintended consequences have been raised in this debate as in previous debates, and I think this is an area I want to focus on. I will start off by saying that I do not have a big problem with the wording of the Council of Ministers. I think it was originally in there, as I understand the Scrutiny Panel took it out and they are wanting to put it back in. It is the Council of Ministers' C.S.P., so part of me thinks we should just let them put in what they were going to put in anyway. But I am sensitive also to the arguments that have been put forward because I think this is ... I am concerned about the direction of travel potentially for what assisted buying schemes - I have got to make sure I get that phrase right "assisted buying". It can be controversial, can it not, it seems - because I think there are different types of scheme. Now, assisted buying is not a new thing. I have said in the Assembly before, and I have said it in Question Time to Deputy Ferey, the Minister for Housing, is that he will know that people of my parents' generation and perhaps others, it might be their grandparents, were able to buy their own homes because of the States loan scheme. It was quite interventionist and quite forward-thinking that Government at the time said: "Look, we know that it is tough for some young families in Jersey to afford their own homes. But you are not poor, and you are not feckless", if I can use that word, Sir. "You are working. You have got a good ethic, and you are going to be working for the next 40 years. So rather than having to rent, why do we not all come up with a scheme?" We know it, do we not? We know that a plot was given, for example, that you would find a builder, and that you would build your home, and then you would pay that back in. I think in my parents' case over ... it pretty much took my dad literally to his pension date. He planned it that well down to the T, that he was mortgage free by the time he retired. But a lot of people, even in those days, were not lucky enough. So, I think there is a marginality, I would call it, that for a lot of people, home ownership is marginal. I was looking at the figures that you need in order to buy a home nowadays. If you had a £500,000 mortgage to pay off over 25 years, you are looking at something

like £2,700 a month payment for your mortgage fees. Of course that remains fixed over time, so you might find, as we all know, the first few years of paying a mortgage is the most difficult, and as cost of living goes up and hopefully your wages increase a little bit that becomes easier and easier as your interest goes down. But that is not the case for renters, of course. We know that rents just go up in line and sometimes and often, in fact, we know that they go up over and above earnings. So it is normal that any Government would want to seek to intervene in whatever way it can reasonably to try and help people with the aspiration of home ownership. I think we live in a really difficult world where I do not know if it is commonplace in Jersey, but certainly in the U.K. (United Kingdom) young people and even non-young people need to take loans out not to buy a home but to get a deposit for a rental property. It is the kind of very strange world that we live in, and I think if you had said that to people of my parents age when they were young they would probably think that we live in a very strange world, which has got its priorities wrong. The idea of an assisted buying scheme is, I think, laudable and something that should be pursued by Government. The problem is that there are unintended consequences and, if I look at my particular constituency, I can give 2 examples of things, one which is not strictly an assisted purchase scheme but I look at the 99-year leases that exist in Les Quennevais Park, and I think to a lesser extent in Clos de Sables, as well in Les Maisonettes. There was an aspiration there to say that, look, you do not own these homes but we are going to effectively give them to you. You buy the leasehold but you do not own them. We are now in a very hybrid situation still. 10 or 12 years ago I think it was Deputy Sean Power, who was my older Deputy, if you like, when I was a new Deputy, and we were taking a few years to get our head around this problem. We were being approached by people who lived in those maisonettes, some of them wanted to buy them, some of them did not necessarily have the money to do it, so we now have a hybrid situation where some of them are owner occupied, some of them are owned but rented out privately, some of them still have leaseholders in them. Effectively that means that Jersey Property Holdings are the ones who attend the meetings and make decisions on behalf of the of the residents' forum and the group that manages that. What it means is that we have very divided communities there, some of whom have direct control over the decisions that are made for their areas. Why I introduce this here is because we are seeing exactly the same thing happening in the flats next to the Elephant Park, Le Douet Clement, is that there has been a decision made by Andium to sell some of those maisonettes off. Their argument is we have got too many 2-bedroom flats. I do not know if that is strictly true. My understanding is still that there is demand in every category of Andium, and every category of social housing has a waiting list that exceeds the availability. So, for my position, it has become clear that ... and I am not going to say I am going to speak more freely maybe than I would have in the past, but I have raised these issues indeed with the last Minister for Housing, is that ... we have to ask the question: is Andium the best placed entity to be providing an assisted purchase scheme for home ownership? I would very much fundamentally question that. I think Andium need to go back to basics. I think that they need to start and concentrate on social housing. They need to build. If they are going to build any new housing it needs to be kept for social housing until we have a point of saturation where they have got as much housing as they need and, at that point, in 10 years' time, if they find they have got too many homes by all means start to sell them off to people. What we are seeing again in this area is we are seeing exactly the same problems that are going to be generated as were generated in Les Quennevais Park and in Clos de Sables, because we are going to have, and we are already seeing it, the parking has been completely thrown up in the air. Tenants' parking has been changed so those who are going to be buying their flats will be allocated spaces, and we are finding that the tenants who have been there, long-standing tenants for 20 years in some cases or more, are being told that they have to now park at the other end of the car park. In fact some of the parking spaces you cannot get a car into because it has not been planned properly, and some of them have mobility issues. It is now for the local Deputies ... we have got one less by the way. We had a very good Deputy who has been elevated to higher office, and we have got one Minister who I know has got more calls on his time, and we have got a new Member in St. Brelade. These issues remain perennial, and this is exactly what I mean by the unintended consequences. It would be much better

actually, and of course the argument will come back from the Minister is that Andium needs to start selling off homes in part to fund their funding model. But why have we put Andium in such a precarious position in the first place? They are delivering affordable homes for us, for the people of Jersey, as an arm's-length organisation but it is entirely States-owned. We should not be doing that from a position of impoverishment for them in the first place. We need to look fundamentally at their funding model, and not making them sell off properties when they should not be doing that. I would argue that actually there are synergies to be made with States of Jersey Development Company or Jersey Development Company and Property Holdings. I think both of them need to get their acts together, probably work more closely, and decide that if there are any schemes to be made then they are probably the right bodies to be doing it, the S.o.J.D.C., in particular. After that long speech, and I think it is the right place to make that because some of these small frustrations that we might have as local Deputies are very big frustrations that these people are living within that area. The last point is, it did come out in Question Time, no more new housing is being built in St. Brelade for social housing. So that means that every flat or every house that is being sold off by Andium, it is one unit less. We call them units, they are homes for people, and it means that actually next time somebody in St. Brelade wants to move out of home, if they are renting privately, something happens they apply to Andium who say: "Well you can have a home but I am afraid there is nothing in St. Brelade. There is nothing in the west of the Island. You are going to have to look at somewhere else." Nothing wrong with living in town, by the way.

[10:15]

Nothing wrong with living at Maufant, Longueville or wherever it is, but they are being told you have to take one of the first 3 that we offer you and all of the 3 that we are offering you happen to be in St. Clement, St. Helier and St. Saviour, where the person has no familial infrastructure. They might be working at Waitrose or at the airport, for example. They might have a child who is at Les Quennevais School or wanting to go to La Moye or Mont Nicolle, and all of these issues are highly relevant. That is what I mean when we are talking about ... it is an unfortunate term maybe, but this social cleansing or the uprooting of long-established people in one area simply because they do not have the wherewithal to rent within the open private sector or to aspire to buy their own home, so by all means let us look at assisted purchase schemes but let us look at also the unintended consequences and who is best to deliver that. Because I, for one, do not want to see Andium selling that. I would ask the Minister to look seriously at this matter. It will not just be affecting the people in St. Brelade, in St. Peter, wherever, it is also going to be affecting people in his constituency where there is a great concentration of mixed homes.

2.2.7 Deputy C.D. Leck of St. Saviour:

I am glad to hear that living in Maufant is OK. I will keep this brief. It seems to me the Government is dancing on the head of a pin and recognises it, which is presumably why 6 Members of it have left the room during this debate and are not interested in what we have to say. I agree with the E.H.I. (Environment, Housing and Infrastructure) Panel that it would be helpful to leave the wording vague, as much as the rest of the C.S.P. is. It is an aspirational document, as the Minister for the Environment has already told us. So I think assisted purchase schemes are only one example of suitable ownership. I declare an interest and hope that it includes suitable housing developments for pensioners. Stop wasting our time and accept the E.H.I. panel's amendment as it is.

2.2.8 Senator M.E. Millar:

If I could just be clear. C.O.M. (Council of Ministers) supports the broad intent of the panel's amendment. Ministers agree that housing policy should consider housing need, aspirations for suitable home ownership and the infrastructure required to support sustainable communities. It provides additional recognition of housing need and aspirations for suitable home ownership. Sorry, I have strayed. Ministers welcomed the reference to suitable housing development, recognising that

housing policy should focus on delivering homes that meet Islanders' needs rather than housing numbers in isolation. We have proposed a minor amendment to retain explicit reference to assisted purchase schemes as one of the practical tools available to support Islanders into home ownership. The chair of the panel suggests somewhat critically that the Minister is still undecided as to the way forward. It is important that we consider a wide variety of such schemes to ensure that they are targeted appropriately. We do homebuyers no service if we assist them into buying property that they cannot really afford or which is not really suitable for them. While Ministers support the broad approach taken by the panel, we consider it appropriate that assisted house purchase schemes continue to be recognised within the Common Strategic Policy. As Deputy Renouf alludes, removing them altogether will remove hope from some people that they will ever be able to buy their own home. While Deputy Coles suggests that people are waiting to see whether a further scheme will come along to help them move up the ladder, we are in a very different market from what we were 4 years ago. Things have changed significantly due to a number of interventions in a number of other areas, and we need to think very carefully about what interventions might work. Assisted purchase schemes remain one of the established tools available to Government to help Islanders to overcome affordability barriers and access home ownership, but it is important that they are well-considered and well-designed, and that we do so having looked at the outcomes of previous schemes. Deputy Tadier, who has also left the Assembly now, comments on unintended consequences, and it is important that we consider these carefully. Demand for assisted home ownership remains strong, with more than 3,000 Islanders currently registered on Andium Homes Assisted Purchase Pathway, while schemes such as Andium Homebuy and First Step have demonstrated significant demand from Islanders seeking support from home ownership. Andium's recent Maisons Les Arches development was sold in its entirety very quickly. It has been very successful. They are delivering affordable homes. If this Assembly wants them to stop building homes for sale, it needs to say so, but we need to consider very carefully what that will mean for the delivery of affordable homes when nobody else is building. We can only do so if we think that other developers will come forward to fill the gap. Retaining reference to assisted purchase schemes does not commit the Government to any particular scheme or level of future funding. It simply ensures that an important policy mechanism continues to be recognised and seen for the public within the Government's housing priorities.

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

I just want to make the point that demand is not necessarily the same as success. Like Deputy Coles, I have spoken to plenty of parishioners who have moved into these schemes and who have then felt themselves very trapped. They cannot sell because they are limited to who they can sell to, they cannot buy because there is no stock, and of course they have not got that deposit that they have built up to then be able to move on into the private sector, so they are stuck and they are limited as to whether there are any more affordable houses to buy or not. The other thing that I am hearing a lot from people who have bought into those schemes is that they still feel like they are a renter because they are really limited to what they can do with a property that they feel that they have bought. With the greatest respect, demand is not the same as success because people, once they are in that scheme, may not feel it is working and I wonder how much work we have done to evaluate how those schemes are working once people are in them. I am also, and Members may be surprised, I find myself agreeing with Deputy Tadier, and it is a shame he is not in the Assembly room to hear it. But I have a constituent who has been sofa-surfing for the last 5 months with her 2 children. I have been in communication with the Minister about it. I have had a meeting on Monday where I was assured that this would be sorted and yet, next week, she has run out of options of where she can move to and faces real homelessness. I am told there is nothing we can do, and yet we have properties that are sitting empty waiting to be sold, and it is frustrating for her, it is frustrating for me, that we cannot help this constituent. I am worried that by putting in the assisted purchasing schemes within the wording it limits our imagination to what we currently have. I think the proposition, as has been worded by the Scrutiny Panel, allows for assisted buying schemes, if that is the right way to go once

we have the evidence, but by putting in the wording of what we have already, I feel it limits us in our scope of our imagination of how we tackle the problem. So, I will not be supporting this amendment.

2.2.10 Connétable R.A.K. Honeycombe of St. Ouen:

I think what we need to look on with this is to go back to the grassroots of this, and we need to be looking to reduce the cost of housing here. We have just been told that there is a large number of people registered on the Assisted Gateway. I find this quite surprising that they might be registered. Andium have just pulled out of a development in St. Ouen because they have not got the money to purchase the land because they do not know whether or not there is sufficient interest. Another development in St. Peter has been transferred ... 42 units have now been transferred to 100 per cent social housing. There is a development in St. John which has been 100 per cent social housing. So I find it quite surprising that there are all these people registered, but obviously Andium cannot sell the properties on to them, and they are looking just to go to social rental. A number of years ago in the last term we had the option to look at a windfall tax on land that is being rezoned. In St. Ouen there is a field that we are looking to purchase, which is agricultural land, it is probably worth £45,000 and we are paying £720,000 for it. It was put forward, as I say - I think it was by Deputy Kovacs - about bringing a windfall tax in, so where the Government could have charged tax on these windfall sites and then fed that money back into the system to actually lower the cost of the housing. The development in St. Ouen that we are looking to do, which is 12 units of over-55, which is 8 2-bedroom flats, 2 2-bedroom bungalows, and 2 one-bedroom flats, worked out equally over the site. It works out at £352,000 per unit. Now that is not viable because they are worth less than what we are actually having to build them for. We need to look at lowering the cost of these properties, and there just does not seem to be any way forward with it. The units in St. Ouen are going to cost £100,000; by the time we put a spade in the ground; that is the cost, £100,000 per unit. I know we need to look at assisted purchase, we need to look at a way of reducing the cost of these properties for people to afford. Because I think it has been proven now, Andium cannot sell them. Then they pulled out of St. Ouen, they actually said: "We cannot afford to do it because we have got too many houses for sale." They have got 128 units at St. Peter, they have got 37 at St. John, 38 at St. Saviour, all of which have got a 45-55 split, and there is talk that there is a possibility that they might increase that to 70 per cent for social housing, 30 per cent for first-time buyers. I think what we need to do is to look at how we are going to force the price down because people cannot afford ... whatever we produce, they cannot afford to live in them.

The Bailiff:

Does anyone else wish to speak on the amendment to the amendment? No one else wishes to speak, I call upon the Minister to reply.

2.2.11 Deputy M.R. Ferey:

I thank all Members who have contributed to this debate. If I start first with the chair of my panel. I was encouraged to hear that she is not opposed to assisted purchase schemes, and she inquired what analysis has been done. Well, there are 3,000 people on the register for the Andium Homebuy scheme. 3,000 people who are desperately waiting for a right property to come up that they can purchase, that they can call home. Hope was the word that came up on a number of occasions during this debate, and what we need to do is in the C.S.P., which is an aspirational document, we need to make sure that Islanders, particularly young Islanders, can see that that hope is there for them, that there is a pathway for them to have a permanent home in Jersey that they can afford, that they can aspire to live in and raise a family. We need to maintain that and by keeping those words "assisted purchase schemes" in the amendment shows that that hope is a beacon which is writ large on our thinking, and is something that we want to make sure that every Islander can aspire to. Deputy Renouf's comments for me said it all, and hope was one of the words that he used. Deputy Coles spoke about the First Step scheme. We know that has been a successful scheme. We know that for

the sum of money involved - £11.6 million - is a lot of money for helping, at the end of day, over 130 people because, yes, it was 64 purchases but obviously that is made up of families. So those people that have benefited from that scheme are delighted with the way that it is operating. It gave them obviously a 40 per cent equity stake as a maximum as opposed to the Homebuy scheme which is always a 25 per cent equity stake. So it allowed people greater scope if they needed that assistance to get on to the housing ladder. Deputy Curtis, when he mentioned about using one policy over another. This is one of a range of options and one of the things that we just wanted to keep in the Common Strategic Policy to show that we were caring about Islanders' futures. I agree with many of the comments made by Deputy Tadier, and we have spoken over the last couple of days about the States loan scheme and the way that that helped. I think it was of its time, it was a good scheme, but perhaps there was not enough thought went into it about how those properties would then filter back through the market, and there were no restrictions certainly on the earlier schemes to maintain first-time buyers as the next purchaser. So, in effect, people were doing very well if they sold those properties sometimes within 5 years, and they were sold initially artificially cheap. But what they did do again is allow people on lower incomes to aspire to that dream of home ownership. Senator Millar, I am grateful for her considered comments in support, and Deputy Gleave spoke about housing mobility broadly or people who are stuck in first-time buyer properties. I recognise that. I get emails regularly from people who have bought a property in good faith and now find that the difficulty is taking that next step. Part of that are circumstances beyond our control, of course, because the global situation has caused interest rates to rise. We know that the housing market peaked in 2022. We are in a different place to where lots of people initially made those purchases. But actually having an assisted purchase scheme may not just be helping first-time buyers, it may be helping second-time buyers as well. Allowing people to release that first property and move up the housing ladder. I am really grateful for Deputy Gleave's considered comments on that. The Connétable of St. Ouen, I thank him for his detailed speech about the numbers involved. We all would like to reduce the cost of housing, and land values is part of that equation. I know we had a conversation in the canteen earlier in the week about that situation. But to sum up, it is really important that we maintain those words in this amendment. I think it gives Islanders hope for the future. I think it helps set the direction for housing, and while not disregarding people who want to rent, we need to make sure that we continue to offer Islanders, particularly young Islanders, hope. With that, I maintain the amendment and I call for the appel.

The Bailiff:

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

POUR: 32		**CONTRE: 11**		**ABSTAINED: 0**
Senator L.J. Farnham		Connétable of St. Mary		
Senator A. Maclean		Connétable of St. Ouen		
Senator M.R. Le Hegarat		Connétable of St. Saviour		
Senator H.M. Miles		Deputy M.B. Andrews		
Senator M.E. Millar		Deputy T.A. Coles		
Senator Sir M.J. Boleat		Deputy A.F. Curtis		
Senator S. Kersten		Deputy H.L. Jeune		
Connétable of St. Martin		Deputy S. Gleave		
Connétable of St. Brelade		Deputy C. Leck		

Connétable of St. Helier		Deputy V. Li		
Connétable of St. John		Deputy C. Rebindaine		
Connétable of Trinity				
Connétable of Grouville				
Connétable of St. Lawrence				
Deputy M. Tadier				
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet				
Deputy C.S. Alves				
Deputy K.F. Morel				
Deputy G. Voisin				
Deputy R.E. Binet				
Deputy C.D. Curtis				
Deputy L.V. Feltham				
Deputy M.R. Ferey				
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée				
Deputy J. Renouf				
Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson				
Deputy B. Ward				
Deputy K.M. Wilson				
Deputy L. Carpenter				
Deputy R. Parker				
Deputy G. Raimondo				
Deputy P. J. Romeril				

2.3. Common Strategic Policy 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): eighteenth amendment (P.75/2026 Amd.(18)) - Suitable housing development - as amended

The Bailiff:

We now move back to the amendment as amended. Does anyone wish to speak on the amendment as amended? No one wishes to speak. Is the appel called for?

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Can I sum up?

The Bailiff:

Sorry? No one has spoken, so you do not sum up. The appel has been called for, and I invite the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce the amendment has been adopted unanimously:

POUR: 44		**CONTRE: 0**		**ABSTAINED: 0**
Senator L.J. Farnham				

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

Deputy C. Leck				
Deputy V. Li				
Deputy R. Parker				
Deputy G. Raimondo				
Deputy C. Rebindaine				
Deputy P. J. Romeril				

Male Speaker:

Can I raise the défaut on Deputy Catherine Curtis, please?

The Bailiff:

I think it has been raised already. **[Laughter]** Thank you very much.

2.4 Common Strategic Policy 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): seventh amendment (P.75/2026 Amd.(7)) - as amended (P.75/2026 Amd.(7).Amd.) - Home Ownership

The Bailiff:

We now move on to the seventh amendment lodged by Deputy Andrews. Deputy Andrews, there is an amendment to your amendment lodged by Deputy Porée. Do you accept the amendment?

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

Yes, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Do you wish your amendment to be read as amended?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Unless any Member objects, the amendment will be read as amended by the Greffier.

The Greffier of the States:

After the words "report accompanying this Proposition" insert the words – ", except that, on page 13 of the report – (a) there should be inserted a new action 6.2 as follows, with the subsequent actions redesignated accordingly – "6.2 Support home ownership in Jersey to improve the economic well-being and social mobility of Islanders"; and (b) after the words "quality of life", there should be inserted the following paragraph – "In order to improve the economic wellbeing and social mobility of Islanders, we must ensure that the rate of home ownership in Jersey is improved over the long-term. We must commit to inclusive education and the creation of high-value and high-income roles to support Islanders wishing to become homeowners.".

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

I am very pleased to be bringing forward this amendment because this amendment contains a longer-term vision for the Island. What I see here, in this amendment is joined-up thinking across the board. Number one, it starts with an inclusive education system. It is making sure that all children are given equal opportunities. As it currently stands, I think the education system is inequitable. I think it has to be reformed and I think we should be doing more to be supporting disadvantaged children to give them a better start in life. That really starts with preschool education, and having read a number of

O.E.C.D. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) reports in July and in August, the evidence really suggests this. If universal preschool education is not concomitant to Government policy, then of course what we will see is childhood outcomes potentially could be impacted. Evidence suggests that about 90 per cent of childhood brain development takes place before the age of 5, so both formal and informal education are just as important as one another. This is why, in my view, I think the Council of Ministers must do more to ensure that investment is seen during the course of this political term to improve investment in preschool education, to improve early childhood development outcomes, because that also relates to later outcomes in adulthood as well. We also need to ensure that when we are looking at the school system, the school system should see reforms. It is, I think, in some ways there is too much emphasis based on academia. I think what we need to also be doing is encapsulating more about building children's understanding about their social skills and also human capital. That is really central or must be central to Government policy because what it does show is higher levels of human capital also lead to better outcomes in adulthood, and that includes improvement in terms of homeownership rates as well. Why we need a joined-up approach is because at the moment, when I am looking at this Common Strategic Policy, to be fair I think there has been an absence of policies in a number of different areas hence why we have seen so many C.S.P. amendments being lodged because the Back Bench has to enforce the Executive. I think there have been a considerable number of concerns because I think the C.S.P., as it currently stands, is incredibly narrow. We ought to be broadening the scope of the C.S.P. but we also cannot confine the C.S.P. just for this term. We also need to be looking beyond into future States Assemblies as well so politicians in future Assemblies can carry on the foundation of our work in this States Assembly. Coming on to the second part. This is to do with structural mobility. Anthony Giddens, who is a sociologist, who inspired New Labour, he once said upward social mobility that is structural and it is more collectivised is much better compared to individual mobility where the Government does not really have an interventionist role. It is not willing to bring forward legislation to try and enable businesses to see collective upward social mobility be achieved. During, say, the late 1940s all the way through to the 1970s, what we saw is an uplift in fortunes of the middle classes in the global north, especially in the U.S. (United States), France and the U.K. Why was that? It is because the Government took a more proactive approach, and also what it meant is more people were able to buy their homes as well. What we see here currently in the Island is Jersey has a home ownership rate of 54 per cent. If you look at European states, most of whom have a higher percentage of home ownership rates, I think the highest is about 94 per cent, I know the U.K. is about 65 per cent. The rate in home ownership in Jersey unfortunately has remained stagnant. What we saw during the period of 2011 to 2021 was a period of low interest rates and extensive investment in private rental dwellings. What did that do? It made it difficult for people who are renting who had the ambition to enter home ownership. Why? Well there are a number of reasons. Number one, incomes remained disproportionate compared to property prices. So many individuals felt like they were just ending up in a position of being perpetual renters. As much as we can say, look, we can have a home ownership assisted purchase scheme in place to try and support people, that is only going to be rather diminutive, and it is not really going to have a systemic change or an overall impact to the dynamics within the housing market. That is why you have got to have a strong and robust education system where you are giving every single child the opportunity to have an improved education, and then you have got to look at the structural changes within Jersey's labour market. At the moment we just focus so much on financial services, and there is not really the impetus among the Council of Ministers to really go: "Well, look, what is it that we want to achieve? What is the legislation that we want to bring forward and where will we look to diversify to enable businesses?" Because if we are in a position where we can enable the diversification of Jersey's economy, we will see more broader opportunities where people can go into different industries and where they can provide high-value roles to our economy, and that will be of benefit. Why? Because we will be generating a higher level of output, it will increase productivity and overall revenues as well. Of course that is something that we must achieve in the next couple of decades. When we look at home ownership there are many people out there in

the Island who are stuck. They do not really know what to do. Some of whom in fact are probably considering emigrating, just like what we have seen in the figures provided to us by Deputy Doublet's written question. So, as politicians, we have really got to be thinking more strategically about this. We know that the housing market is fundamentally broke. We know it is incredibly expensive. And, yes, we can say, well, we will do something to try and address that. But assisted purchase schemes alone is not sufficient, in my view. I think what we need to be doing is we need to be creating a fairer, a more inclusive society, and we also need to prioritise those who are maybe more disadvantaged to give them equal opportunity compared to others, who maybe have a better opportunity in life where they have got access to more resources and more opportunities available to them. When we are looking at Jersey's housing market, for instance, at the moment you can see it is going through this cyclical change. We have recently seen the bank rate go up to 4 per cent, and so demand is going to drop off. But one of the problems is because Jersey's home ownership rate is so low we will have a crisis in the future. And why? When you have got an ageing population you need to look at how the long-term care system works. You are going to have people who are renting, there are no assets, so there is no coverage to then basically allow the Government to cover their finances when it comes down to providing care. So where is the money going to come from? But in my position, I am a homeowner, if I had to go into care in the future at least you have got something there to cover the liability. When, for instance, I was maybe in care for 5 years, you could then sell off a property to then generate revenue for the Government. But because we have got such a low homeownership rate and then we have got a high dependency ratio, that is only going to increase. There are going to be severe problems in the future. I have mentioned in my report about the importance of having a long-term homeownership plan.

[10:45]

We have got to do all we can to increase the home ownership rate. I know the Council of Ministers mentioned in their comments paper that I did not really elaborate to what that home ownership plan would look like, but I also look at the 6 bullet points, part of section 6 of the Common Strategic Policy, and again they remain implicitly worded. They are not explicit in detail at all. We have just heard from the Minister for Housing who has mentioned a couple of policy ideas, but again nothing has been brought forward as part of the C.S.P. We have also got to appreciate, as well, the current fiscal position for the Council of Ministers, largely what they have inherited. They can say: "Look we will do all we can to provide assisted home ownership opportunities to support and enable Islanders", the problem is when you have got a fiscal deficit and you are having to draw down on the reserves and then you are wanting to expend more money, there seems to be no joined-up thinking when it comes to that narrative that we are hearing. I do remain concerned that it is all very well the Council of Ministers saying: "We will commit to this" but they are not then articulating how they will address this fiscal imbalance that we have currently got. So it just seems to me that you have got all of these Ministers. They have got their own ideas but they need to communicate with one another, especially when we are looking at fiscal decisions that potentially could exacerbate the situation that we are currently having to get to grips with and to deal with. So from my perspective what do I want to see as part of this amendment? I want to see an inclusive education system. I want to see human capital be prioritised by the Council of Ministers. What do I want to see? I want to see structural upward social mobility to improve outcomes and to give an uplift in fortune so we can have higher-value jobs to generate greater output within the economy, to create more higher-paid roles, so more Islanders can afford homeownership. Because most banks have quite strict criteria where they will say you can only borrow 5 to 6 times your household income. That is where many Islanders are often requiring assistance from their grandparents or their parents or they have to maybe turn to other relatives so they can get that deposit. We need to really be more strategic instead of just being so short term in the way how we approach things. Because if we just remain as we are, I think the homeownership rate is pretty much going to remain stagnant; it is not going to increase. We should be more ambitious and, in fact, I would go as far to say that we should set a homeownership rate

target, something like maybe 60 per cent to 65 per cent of a homeownership rate by the year 2050. Because then it is setting out the foundations of this States Assembly and for future States Assemblies to commit to. We can say to Islanders: "We are here, we are on your side, and we want to make sure that we can inspire you and make sure that you can become a homeowner." I will leave it there.

The Bailiff:

Is the amendment seconded? **[Seconded]** Deputy Porée, do you wish to speak?

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

I would just like to take this opportunity to thank Deputy Andrews for accepting my amendment to his amendment 7. I would like to say as well that my amendment to his amendment strikes a balance between homeownership and rental without removing the positive intent of the original amendment. It makes no change to the additional paragraph proposed by amendment 7.

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

Can I start by thanking the mover of this amendment for engaging with me as he lodged the amendment? Can I congratulate him on becoming a homeowner? I hope he has many happy years in that property with him and his lovely partner. **[Approbation]** Homeownership is an aspiration shared by many Islanders and initially that rightly attracts significant public interest. Throughout our consideration of the Common Strategic Policy, Members have raised important questions about increasing opportunities for homeownership, the long-term stability of homeownership and the place that homeownership should have within our wider housing priorities. Ministers recognise the importance of homeownership and the aspirations of many Islanders to own their own home. For many people it is an important part of being able to stay in Jersey, raise a family and participate fully in Island life. However, the question before Members is not whether homeownership is important, the question is whether the amendment adds something new or necessary to the Common Strategic Policy. Ministers do not believe that it does. The Common Strategic Policy already commits Government to improving affordability, supporting Islanders into homeownership and increasing supply of homes that meet the needs of Islanders. Access to homeownership is shaped by a range of factors, including housing supply, affordability, economic conditions and household incomes. These issues are closely connected and must be addressed together. Creating a separate strategic priority of homeownership would not materially add to the commitments already contained within the Common Strategic Policy. The amendment also refers to education, social mobility and the creation of high-value and high-income roles. These are important issues but they extend well beyond housing policy and are already reflected elsewhere within the Common Strategic Policy. It is also worth recognising that Members have approached housing from different perspectives throughout the debate. Some have argued for greater emphasis on homeownership, others have sought greater emphasis on affordability, housing security, homelessness or other aspects of Jersey's housing system. Ministers believe the Common Strategic Policy achieves a responsible balance between these different priorities. It is recognised the importance of supporting Islanders into homeownership, while also addressing the wider housing challenges faced by Islanders. Ultimately, the issue is not whether homeownership matters, the issue is how we create more opportunities for Islanders to become homeowners. That requires practical action, improving affordability, increasing access to suitable homes, supporting housing mobility and helping Islanders into homeownership through practical measures, such as assisted purchase schemes. The Government is already pursuing this agenda through housing delivery, affordable homeownership products and wider work to improve pathways into homeownership. Demand for this support remains strong. Thousands of Islanders are currently registered on the Assisted Purchase Pathway, while schemes such as Andium Homebuy and First Step have demonstrated significant demand from Islanders who aspire to own their own home. Those are the things that will be determined whether more Islanders can realistically afford to buy a home. The Council of Ministers considers that these commitments are already

reflected in the Common Strategic Policy and that they will do more to increase homeownership than the creation of a separate strategic priority. I, therefore, ask Members to reject this amendment.

2.4.4 Senator Sir M.J. Boleat:

I wish to speak on this not primarily as a Minister but because social mobility is my passion. It is an area that I have worked on for several years, and I am very keen to speak in this debate for that reason. A couple of years ago with others I produced a report for the Policy Centre on social mobility in Jersey, and that was based on discussions with many other people. There is a separate report on housing and social mobility. I know of no evidence that supports a high rate of homeownership with social mobility. Education is very important, and I endorse what the Member has said about inclusive education, and that is something the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning is absolutely committed to. But housing is completely different. As I have said, there is no evidence - and I have read all of the evidence - that suggests that homeownership is important for social mobility. The Member mentioned the highest rate of homeownership in Europe, 94 per cent; it is Romania. I am not certain I want Romania's housing conditions in this country. What is important to social mobility is good quality housing, and that does not necessarily mean a home of your own. It may do but it can also mean renting. Let me look at the people who bought their own homes in the third quarter of 2022, perhaps on an assisted purchase scheme. Since then the nominal price of that home on average has fallen by about 13 per cent and, in real terms, by 27 per cent; those are averages. Talking with people who understand the market, there are reductions that are very much greater than that. Some of these people would have taken out mortgages at a couple of per cent and are now paying 5 per cent or more. Do those people encouraged into homeownership at that time feel this is helping social mobility? What they are facing is a reduction in the equity in their homes. I will of course not be voting for the amendment. I do support entirely what the Member has said about inclusive education and, as I have said, that is not the issue. But on housing I am really keen that we do more on social mobility. The paper I referred to was written nearly 3 years ago. I wish it could be updated with others. I am involved in the Social Mobility Fund run by the Jersey Community Foundation. We are very keen to explore all of the aspects limiting social mobility in this Island. The people who do not have a bank of mum and dad in this Island can be facing very difficult circumstances. We talked about education yesterday. If you do not have a bank of mum and dad then paying for education in the U.K. is difficult. Hence, in my view, the need to have more higher education opportunities on Island. If you do not have a bank of mum and dad, buying a house is going to be difficult. How many of us around this room are part of the bank of mum and dad? On several occasions in my case. Of course we do that for our children but let us recognise that many families are not in that position. I am really keen to promote social mobility. I am happy to talk with the Member and anybody else about it. But promoting homeownership is desirable for other reasons but it is not relevant to the issue of social mobility.

2.4.5 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

There is one school of economic and sociological thought which says that Government might want to encourage homeownership in the same way that it might want to encourage its citizens to give up smoking. The problem is the Minister for Treasury and Resources in most communities does not want to see everybody giving up smoking at once. Because I think in Jersey - you will correct me if I am wrong - but it is roughly about £17 million to £19 million in duty alone from tobacco that the Treasury raises every year, which I think pays for many things. Of course we are not here to talk about tobacco, but the argument for that will go that some of that money is needed for the hospital to pay for the treatment of those who have smoking-related illnesses. But it goes into the general pot. In the same way, I suspect that the Government would not want to see everybody become homeowners overnight, not so much because maybe a large number of States Members are landlords themselves is what the public might say but because the Treasury, similarly, would not want to see the 20 per cent income tax that it gets from rental income ceasing to go into the coffers. There is a

conflict of interest here at the heart of Jersey Government in terms of the fact that they are complicit with the landlord class, you could argue, is what this school of economic thought might say because they like to get their percentage from the poor renters. Remember these are the renters who might be paying £2,000 a month for their flats, which is more than what their tax allowance would be. They are paying their marginal rate income tax, possibly their 20 per cent rate income tax, and then of course the rents get charged anyway from the landlord's income, of course. I think that perspective is important. It is perhaps not surprising for many reasons that Government would not want to support homeownership. I do like the comments from Senator Boleat because I think he has clearly studied this, and there are different comparators in Europe. In Europe there is not the same Anglo-Saxon obsession that they have with homeownership, but that is because the economics I think are different and the stability that they have in the legislation and the culture I think even around renting is that they accept that you can rent for life, whether that is from a private landlord or a social landlord. In fact the lines often are blurred because there are very high social legislative protections for renters, and it seems to work in everyone's favour. But I would say the Jersey context is very different because renters do face very high rents. But the other key thing I would say, which is a consideration when it comes to social mobility, and if we do not want to call it social mobility let us at least call it working class aspiration; lots of working class families aspire to own their own homes.

[11:00]

The security of tenure surely has to have an implication when it comes to social mobility. If you are going to want to, for example, I do not know, go part-time in your job to retrain for something else so that you can get more money down the line or pursue a career that you want to or if you want to even go to university as a young person and know that you have got a home to come back to, security of tenure and having a stable home is really important but you are less likely to have a stable home environment if you are a renter. Because the nature in Jersey is that you can get kicked out any minute. Your landlord can say to you: "I want to sell your home because my kids are coming back from university and I want them to move in" or: "I want to sell the home so I can release some money because I am the bank of mum and dad." As he quite rightly says, that is not everyone. I am very much in favour of seeing an Island where we have a very high level of homeownership because I think it puts people in charge of their own destiny, if you like. It does not mean that all their problems are going to be solved, because there are pros and cons to it. As the Senator said, if you find that interest rates have gone up all of a sudden and that you are on the wrong end of the cycle, you could find yourself in a position where you may not be able to continue to pay your mortgage. You may be divorced, you may be going through a divorce or separation and you find you can no longer afford to keep that home. But I think it is a good aspiration, and I do not think it is an aspiration which is owned by any particular traditional wing of politics, on the left or on the right. I think it is something that we should aspire to, but I think there are those tensions which we acknowledge. I suspect that there are very good reasons, as I said at the beginning, that any Government, including this Government, does not want to see homeownership in Jersey. I think it would be much better if they said that. We are here to be a Government, a Council of Ministers that wants to protect the landlord class, the rentier class, that is what they have always been. I think that is again what we are seeing here. That is, I suspect, the reason that we are seeing opposition to this very reasonable proposition from Deputy Andrews. Can I commend him as well for working so closely not just with the Minister for Housing but with our Reform colleague, Deputy Porée, for what I think is an entirely sensible proposition? I hope that most Members in the Assembly who are not bound by any collective whip will seek to support this sensible proposition.

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

If the proposition stopped at (a) I think the Deputy might have generally universal agreement. But part (b), however, seems to be the Deputy imposing his value system on everyone else. I am not sure either quite how he expects the Government to commit to the creation of high-value and high-income

roles. I remind everyone of my speech 2 days ago about what type of Government we seek. For my part, apart from essential services, I think the Government should restrict its role to providing the mood music. Today's analogy is a football pitch. The Government owns the pitch, this needs rolling and the grass cut, white lines need to be painted on it, goalposts erected and netting added to that. The Government then supplies a referee. However, what game is played, what colour strip the players wear and how much effort is expended in playing the game is down to the players themselves. I believe this amendment is well meant but misdirected.

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

I must say I am slightly disappointed in the Government for not supporting this amendment. I think the Deputy has done a really good job with it, specifically in the latter part when it comes to education surrounding homeownership. When I look at homeownership myself at 18 I realise I have not really been educated enough on it. I really come from a place where I do not understand it much unless I go and do it myself. That puts me in a weird position because although we often talk about in here that it is important, homeownership, everyone should own their own home, I also think there is a place for renting. I do not believe an 18 year-old should be buying a house. I think they should take some time in the rental market. The reason I support the Deputy's amendment to this is because knowing when to buy a home is part of that education, not just within our education system before university but also coming back afterwards. I think that is probably a good place to leave it, but I would support it because I do believe very much in the education part.

The Bailiff:

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

2.4.8 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

I just want to thank all Members who contributed to this debate. I think it has been a very respectful sitting. I know it was quite a toxic election but it is so nice just to see everyone contributing to this debate and respecting one another's views, despite the fact that there might be considerable differences between us. I just want to thank as well the Minister for taking the time to meet me so we could discuss the amendment. I understand it is a difficult position I think for him to be in. I do not think he naturally was campaigning during the election to be the Minister for Housing. But I think he has really embraced the opportunity to take on the role. Of course there comes a degree of pressure I think because there is such a high level of expectation probably with some areas of the populace. I just wish him all the best for the remainder of his term in office in his position. I just want to thank the Deputy once again as well for congratulating me on becoming a homeowner as well. I have much respect for Senator Boleat. He is somebody who I have looked up to when I first met him. I was really impressed with what he had to say. Again, he is a very well-established figure, he has done very well for himself and his career in London. I think we are very grateful to have somebody of his calibre in the Assembly because I think he brings so much to the table in terms of his advice to his colleagues to support them and to make improvements for Islanders as well. I think it was quite interesting in terms of what he had to say about social mobility and homeownership. Really, when we are looking at the empirical evidence between, say, the 1940s and that is the latter part of 1940s and the 1970s, that is when we started to see an uplift in fortunes for the middle classes. Whereas beforehand what we did see is inequality was growing and remaining the same. Unfortunately, what we then saw was a neoliberal approach that was taken, that was probably a bit too extreme. Maybe there was a need to make some modifications in some respects, but I think that has also impacted people. Again, when we are looking at social mobility, I think that has been impacted somewhat because more people are struggling and they are not really able, collectively anyway, to see an uplift in fortunes. I also want to thank Deputy Raimondo for his comments about the education system. I think the education system is so often overlooked and really it is the

foundation of success for any given individual in our society. If you have an enabling education system, then you are most likely going to improve lifelong outcomes and you are also going to improve outcomes for individuals, regardless of their background. I think that is a critical area and that really feeds into improving levels of human capital and social mobility, especially in the advent of A.I. (artificial intelligence). I think we need individuals to have the skillset where they can adapt if there is maybe that structural displacement in the labour market; they still have the ability to then move elsewhere, maybe into a new industry as well. The evidence shows from the O.E.C.D. paper that I was reading that a high level of human capital is going to be of benefit to those individuals because they can then migrate into a new area and also enables them the opportunity to sustain themselves financially so then they can, potentially, enter homeownership. I think it is important that we have a more joined-up approach and, in fact, we are not just focusing on amendments that are looking at one particular area. I think we have got to really be addressing the origin of the problem. Of course I know the Minister proclaimed that one of the areas is housing affordability and the one way how you can try and address that is not through shared equity schemes, for instance; it is addressing the education system and making sure that our young people are being nurtured in the right way, so then they can enter the labour market and then they can strive to be more successful with the ambition of entering homeownership that way. I think you have got to be more strategic, while also recognising as well the Government can do more to provide safe shared-equity schemes to support Islanders on a continued basis. I know previous States Assemblies have maybe brought forward housing schemes. Then there has been an election and the policies have not been continued, and then there has been an absence of homeownership support for Islanders. I think it is quite important if the Council of Ministers can perhaps in 2028, 2029, if there could be some funding made available. Of course we have got to be cognisant of the fact that we have got a susceptible fiscal position as it currently stands, so we have got to make sure we sustain our public finances prudently. But we have also got to try and help enable people to enter homeownership because it is really important. On that note I will be taking my amendment in 2 parts, so Members can have the choice to vote in favour of part (a) and part (b) without feeling the need that they maybe support one section but not the other. I call for the appel.

The Bailiff:

The appel has been called for. We are voting on part (a), then part (b). Members are invited to return to their seats and I ask the Greffier to open the voting on part (a) of the amendment. If all Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce that part (a) has been rejected:

POUR: 16		**CONTRE: 25**		**ABSTAINED: 0**
Connétable of St. Ouen		Senator L.J. Farnham		
Connétable of Grouville		Senator I.J. Gorst		
Connétable of St. Saviour		Senator A. Maclean		
Connétable of St. Lawrence		Senator M.R. Le Hegarat		
Deputy M. Tadier		Senator T.J.A. Binet		
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet		Senator H.M. Miles		
Deputy C.S. Alves		Senator M.E. Millar		
Deputy M.B. Andrews		Senator Sir M.J. Boleat		
Deputy T.A. Coles		Senator S. Kersten		
Deputy L.V. Feltham		Connétable of St. Mary		

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée		Connétable of St. Brelade		
Deputy L. Carpenter		Connétable of St. John		
Deputy C. Leck		Deputy K.F. Morel		
Deputy V. Li		Deputy G. Voisin		
Deputy G. Raimondo		Deputy R.E. Binet		
Deputy C. Rebindaine		Deputy A.F. Curtis		
		Deputy C.D. Curtis		
		Deputy M.R. Ferey		
		Deputy H.L. Jeune		
		Deputy J. Renouf		
		Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson		
		Deputy B. Ward		
		Deputy S. Gleave		
		Deputy R. Parker		
		Deputy P. J. Romeril		

The Bailiff:

I will move on to part (b) and I invite 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 part (b) has been rejected:

POUR: 13		**CONTRE: 28**		**ABSTAINED: 0**
Connétable of St. Brelade		Senator L.J. Farnham		
Connétable of St. Ouen		Senator I.J. Gorst		
Deputy M. Tadier		Senator A. Maclean		
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet		Senator M.R. Le Hegarat		
Deputy C.S. Alves		Senator T.J.A. Binet		
Deputy M.B. Andrews		Senator H.M. Miles		
Deputy T.A. Coles		Senator M.E. Millar		
Deputy L.V. Feltham		Senator Sir M.J. Boleat		
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée		Senator S. Kersten		
Deputy L. Carpenter		Connétable of St. Mary		
Deputy C. Leck		Connétable of St. John		
Deputy V. Li		Connétable of Grouville		
Deputy G. Raimondo		Connétable of St. Saviour		
		Connétable of St. Lawrence		
		Deputy K.F. Morel		
		Deputy G. Voisin		

		Deputy R.E. Binet		
		Deputy A.F. Curtis		
		Deputy C.D. Curtis		
		Deputy M.R. Ferey		
		Deputy H.L. Jeune		
		Deputy J. Renouf		
		Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson		
		Deputy B. Ward		
		Deputy S. Gleave		
		Deputy R. Parker		
		Deputy C. Rebindaine		
		Deputy P. J. Romeril		

2.5 Common Strategic Policy 2026 - 2030 (P.75/2026): sixteenth amendment (P.75/2026 Amd.(16)) - Bring the Investing in Jersey Plan to the Assembly for Debate

The Bailiff:

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

The Greffier of the States:

After the words "report accompanying this proposition" insert the words - ", except that on page 13 of the report Action 6.2 should be substituted with the following - "6.2 Bring the Investing in Jersey plan, as published or as revised by the Council of Ministers, to the Assembly for debate by June 2027 and deliver on this plan using the new Capital Investment Fund subject to its approval"".

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

I am speaking to a slightly smaller audience than I have in other debates but I will, hopefully, make the case as strongly. I am glad to see a contingent of Senators waiting to support me once more.

[11:15]

Members will be glad this is my final amendment , but no less important. What I will do is recap the intention of it, explain why I think it is a positive addition to the C.S.P., address the Government's brief position and conclude. The amendment seeks Assembly debate on the Investing in Jersey 2026 to 2050 plan in the first half of 2027. Then should it or a revised version be approved, this would form the basis of the delivery of the priority to: "Begin implementing the Investing in Jersey plan or programme." I do not like to bring this Chamber into disrepute but I would like a little bit of interactivity from Members who are voting on the C.S.P. I am going to look around and see which Members have read *Investing in Jersey 2026 to 2050*, all 27 pages. Are Members nodding they have read it? New Members, how are they feeling? I cannot address them directly. The Chief Minister is happy to pass around his pride and joy very shortly for those who wish to familiarise themselves with it. I ask this in all seriousness. Members are being asked today and tomorrow through the C.S.P. to approve a C.S.P. that says we will begin implementing the Investing in Jersey plan. It is a 24-year plan and so I would hope Members would have read it. As I will make the case, I would hope the Assembly should have democratic oversight as to its contents. We should step back then and ask perhaps what is the obvious question and one since August 2025 has sent me in loops. What

is the Investing in Jersey plan? I ask this, having read it. It is not clear to me what it is and, therefore, if it is not clear to me what it is, it is not clear how one "delivers it". We can turn to Investing in Jersey for help in understanding this, and I will quote for Members who are less familiar sections of the executive summary; that may give some hints. It includes the following statement: "Investing in Jersey sets out a long-term co-ordinated plan for renewing and maintaining the Island's infrastructure and public assets. It provides a clear framework for investment in key areas, such as housing, education, roads, utilities, coastal resilience, public buildings and shared community spaces. The document has 3 main purposes." Again quoting: "(1) To present a long-term plan for capital investment. It defines the scale and focus of the proposed investment, sets out the case for change and shows how the programme supports Jersey's wider social, economic and environmental goals. (2) To explain how capital investment will be funded and delivered. It introduces the Jersey Capital Investment Fund (let us call it J.C.I.F.) outlining how it will be financed and governed and setting out the processes for prioritising, approving and monitoring projects over time. (3) To support public understanding and democratic engagement. It provides a clear basis for informed discussion and accountability, helping Islanders and States Members assess the benefits, risks and trade-offs of delivering long-term public investment. At the centre of this strategy is the J.C.I.F." In reading this executive summary Members would expect to open a document that creates a capital investment framework. It will enable policy debate on prioritising one form of capital investment over another. It might look at delivery models, delegation of responsibilities. It should establish our current infrastructure position, a gap analysis as to what needs to be delivered and perhaps quantify how capital investment creates an economic return, something that the F.P.P. (Fiscal Policy Panel) has said should be part of capital investment cases in its 2026 report. It would explain, as it says it will, how the J.C.I.F. will operate, be funded to meet the step change in funding needed for our capital programme and how to, importantly, measure and monitor delivery. I do not think I am being unreasonable in saying that I am paraphrasing the 3 purposes of the document itself and what it should deliver. Instead - and unless I am still missing the full-length version - the document does not deliver this. It instead sets out a set of initial investment priorities that range from core infrastructure we should always invest in, like roads and pavements, to political aspirational investment like new homes. To quote: "Deliver family-sized homes that reflect the requirements of the Island's population, rather than focusing solely on smaller units." It talks about where to locate new schools: "Modernise and replace existing primary and secondary school buildings, including Rouge Bouillon School and a new primary school at Gas Place." Programmes that mix capital and revenue, such as: "Expand and improve youth services through new facilities and outreach programmes." It has other priorities not in the initial ones like building a new public car park. Investing in Jersey does provide broad timescales for these building projects: "Essential worker accommodation 2026 to 2032. Expanded family housing (Andium/JDC/private) 2026 to 2035. Upgrades to F.B. Fields and Le Rocquier 2026 to 2029." No doubt my parishioners will be interested in that ambitious timetable. It did provide the case that if we want to invest in our infrastructure and our estate, a Capital Investment Fund with greater diligence to prevent shifting capital expenditure to revenue would be the starting block. For the avoidance of doubt, I agreed the J.C.I.F. is established, it forms a new budget. In many ways the Investing in Jersey is saying we have an investment job to do and we need a fund to separate capital from revenue; it has done the job and we can put it behind us. But beyond that, Investing in Jersey does not act as a framework for decision-making; it says it does. It provides no tools to balance risk, to prioritise investment. It does not provide a case for: "Basis for informed discussion and accountability." It is a political document stating what the former Council of Ministers wanted to invest in and when. It does this beyond capital projects alone, with non-investment policies such as: "Expanding eligibility for registered workers to rent qualified property", page 7, and extending shared equity support to 40 per cent. When the Investing in Jersey programme was published by the Council of Ministers in 2025 it was simply published. It was not lodged for debate as a substantial strategic document like documents of the Marine Spatial Plan was, which had the chance for Assembly input and agreement for consensus decision-making. Let us turn back; what

does begin delivering the Investing in Jersey programme mean? If it simply means deliver a capital programme funded by the J.C.I.F., then we do not need a reference to this kind of broad-speaking plan, the Investing in Jersey programme. We have the Capital Investment Fund and we have a budgetary process. What if instead it means deliver the priorities in Investing in Jersey? Then this is a political list of deliverables hidden in a single action point in the C.S.P. If that is the case I believe the States Assembly should debate these priorities and how they can be delivered. What does the Government say in response to this? It is a brief comments paper and, to summarise, they consider the democratic oversight of all projects remain with the Assembly through the Budget process and that this would duplicate work. In this case, why are we including "begin delivering a programme" which may not be the delivery programme this Assembly chooses budget to budget? We may choose very different capital projects. We may not pursue what is in Investing in Jersey. But we will deliver capital through a Capital Investment Fund. Investing in Jersey is a political statement. They also state: "Investing in Jersey programme is not a single project or proposition capable of being approved or rejected through a one-off debate, rather it is a long-term strategic framework intended to guide investment decisions over many years. Individual projects arising will continue to be subject to the established approval processes." I will open this debate asking Ministers who endorse Investing in Jersey, how is that document a strategic framework? It is a wish list combined with political policies and no attached evidence base, no annex, no funding attaching to the projects. It is an uncosted programme with no measurement and no way to provide its key objective, to prioritise, to provide better decision-making. If this was for a business I cannot see it getting past the first draft. Members should not be agreeing to deliver something so broad and vague as a 2026 to 2050 programme without even knowing whether their vote counts to endorsement of everything on this wish list or whether it is simply agreeing that we should invest in capital and, in essence, things like schools. Before we do that we should know exactly what voting on "begin delivering Investing in Jersey" means. The Council of Ministers have failed to say that in their comments papers and, as such, I maintain that this proposition is the best way to deliver democratic accountability in this Assembly. Large-scale programmes should be debated by this Assembly brought forward by the Council of Ministers. This amendment delivers that, and I urge Members to support it.

The Bailiff:

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

2.5.2 Senator L.J. Farnham:

I am jolly pleased this is the Deputy's last amendment. **[Laughter]** I sometimes cannot help but think that we cannot win because when we brought our C.S.P. in 2024 we were criticised for it being too short term. When we brought this one we have been criticised for it being too short term but there are medium and long-term elements to it. One of the reasons we have done that is because in relation to capital planning, which is what Investing in Jersey intends to bring back on to the Assembly agenda, it has been missing for far too long. In all of my time in the Assembly, and I remind Members this is my fourth decade - I know I do not look old enough but that is correct - we have never seen significant or pretty much any long-term planning in relation to our infrastructure, our schools, our sports facilities and our public realm. We tend to wait for things to break before we fix them, and that is the thrust behind this programme; that is the rationale and it is a strategy. Nevertheless, I would like to thank Deputy Curtis for bringing this amendment because it does raise an important question about how we scrutinise longer-term investment decisions. Of course the Government does not support this amendment. Members will see that priority 6 of the Common Strategic Policy is about investing in Jersey's future on page 13, action 6.2: "Implementation of the Investing in Jersey programme through the new Capital Investment Fund." The Capital Investment Fund came to the Assembly earlier this year on a proposition brought by the Minister for Treasury and Resources, Deputy Millar, as she was then, which was strongly supported, which I think sets the precedent, and the Investing in Jersey programme really could not continue without the Jersey Capital

Investment Fund. I just remind new Members we have seen in the past capital budgets being utilised for revenue expenditure where departments have overspent in the past. They had been able to borrow or take money from their capital investment programmes to cover that, leading to underinvestment in certain areas. I am sure there is not one Member in this Assembly that thinks our infrastructure and our public realm, good though it may be in some instances, is up to scratch. We have allowed our infrastructure and some of our public realm, including Fort Regent, to fall into serious neglect. The former Minister for Infrastructure grappled with this. While we do apologise for the amount of roadworks, we also make no apologies because we started the journey then to catch up on the drainage and the water and everything else we need, which has held up the development of the Island's new homes in some instances, public realm infrastructure that we need to ensure we can deliver better prosperity and economic growth and social inclusion to the Island. That is why that is what is behind the Investing in Jersey programme. It is not a single project that can simply be approved or rejected in an Assembly sitting. It is a long-term framework - strategy if you like - that guides investment decisions over many years. Within it sits many individual projects, each will have their own business case, each will have their own affordability study. Each will receive scrutiny and each will come to the Assembly, either as an individual project or part of the capital aspect of future budgets. If I can turn to the document, and the document was circulated widely. Perhaps we have not circulated it to new Members.

[11:30]

It is readily available on the Government of Jersey website, and I will of course forward it to all Members. We did have a presentation to Members of it in the last Government, and I can happily do that again. I am referring to the document now: "Jersey's infrastructure has served the Island well for decades. However, like many jurisdictions with long-established public assets, we are now facing a combination of new pressures and overdue maintenance that require a clear and co-ordinated response. Much of our core infrastructure is ageing and in some areas is no longer fit for purpose. This includes roads, public buildings, education facilities, water and drainage systems, flood defences, sports and recreation centres." The lists go on: "Our plan is a key step in addressing the demographic challenges we are facing. Our growing population, changing demographic profile, climate risks and shifts into how services are delivered all place additional demands on those systems. At the same time, despite increasing day-to-day public expenditure in recent years, long-term capital investment has not kept pace with the need." Not by even a close calculation. "The Investing in Jersey document outlines a proposed medium and long-term investment strategy designed to address these challenges in a co-ordinated, sustainable and transparent manner. The strategy will be supported by a new Capital Investment Fund", which was approved by the States earlier this year: "which will provide structured financial support for infrastructure renewal and development over the period 2026 to 2050." I should add for those Members that were not here for the debate, the new Jersey Capital Investment Fund ring-fences capital expenditure. Once the capital expenditure is placed in the fund it cannot be drawn upon for anything other than capital expenditure without the consent of the Assembly. "This is not a one-off programme but a long-term shift in how we look after our public assets that we all rely on. It will require careful planning, ongoing oversight and collaboration across sectors but it offers a clear and practical route to improving our public services, supporting our economy and maintaining Jersey's quality of life." That is what Investing in Jersey is about. It is not something that we can agree in a single decision. Every project, I reiterate this, will require a business case, an affordability study. It will go through the scrutiny process. In probably all instances, with the exception of the routine maintenance on roads and drainage, which is an ongoing business, and we have significantly started to increase the investment in those areas, will come back to the States as individual projects as part of the Budget. I do not see any point in agreeing this as a whole project because by its very nature it will evolve and change. But it gives us a target and sets us on the right course for once, and something this Assembly has not done for many

decades, put in place a proper long-term strategy for maintaining our Island in the way we should have done recently.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Sir, a point of clarification if the Chief Minister …

The Bailiff:

A point of clarification. Yes, Deputy Curtis.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

It is very kind of him. He mentioned each project having a business case, scrutiny and a budget. Could he clarify? I did not understand, was it whether he considers that endorsement of the C.S.P. gives an implicit acceptance that the projects within this should be brought forward as business cases, should be scrutinised, on the assumption that they are what this Assembly wanted or whether the endorsement of the C.S.P. provides no stronger basis that anything in Investing in Jersey should be taken forward separate to those individual debates? It was not clear to me.

Senator L.J. Farnham:

It is still a high level; the initial investment priorities include housing, infrastructure, utilities, education, skills, youth facilities, public realm, community spaces and sports facilities. Our rules dictate that all key major capital projects have the appropriate consideration, business cases, affordability studies, scrutiny; that is no different to the way we have always done it. Some of the work that we do in the Investing in Jersey programme will not come to the Assembly because it is the business as usual of maintaining our roads and our drainage and our water systems. But key projects such as Fort Regent, for example, or new sports facilities or the new youth centre that the Constable of St. Peter and Deputy Ferey have been leading on in the Assembly, those sort of projects will be an important part of future Budgets. In some instances could be brought to the Assembly for approval as a separate project. But we have a robust procedure for dealing with this, and that procedure always relies, ultimately, on an Assembly approval as part of the capital programme, which is delivered in the annual Budget, which is well presented and explained to Members as part of that process.

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

Sir, point of clarification if that is possible.

The Bailiff:

Clarification, yes, Deputy Jeune.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I will just give an example because the Deputy's point is that if we agree this 6.2 we will be agreeing the document of Investing in Jersey. One of the elements in Investing in Jersey - and it is very detailed - is of course under the education area it says deliver a new town primary school at Gas Place, for example. Would that mean that when we are agreeing to 6.2 and Investing in Jersey, which is very explicit that, for example, others are more wide but this is very specific, would that then include that we would be agreeing to a new primary school at Gas Place because it is written in here in the Investing in Jersey?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

No, absolutely not. I have tried to make it clear that the document, as it stands, the introductory document to Investing in Jersey with a starting point and all parts of that document, are open to a change to evolution as the Assembly. As we know, the point I was trying to make, that is a good example of a project that would have to be approved by the Assembly, as we have had individual

debates on that particular item. I know the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning is considering that. We have to be mindful that, as things change as we move forward, then we … sorry, I was distracted by the interaction between the Constable of St. Ouen and the Deputy; threw me off my stride for a little bit there. But what I am trying to say is this document does not hold the Assembly to anything other than we agree that we need a long-term capital strategy to address the shortcomings of our recent underinvestment in the Island's infrastructure. Everything else in here are set out as examples, and I think some of them are pretty good and accurate examples of where we have underinvested. The answer to that is, no, the ultimate say on any of these projects will be decided by this Assembly.

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

I welcome the Chief Minister's clarification but I think this is a case where wording really matters. You have not written that that flexibility into the …

The Bailiff:

The Chief Minister, not you.

Deputy S.J. Gleave:

Chief Minister, yes, I am sorry. You have not written that clarification. **[Laughter]** Yes, the Chief Minister, sorry.

The Bailiff:

Refer to him in the third person.

Deputy S.J. Gleave:

The Chief Minister has not written the clarification in the way the C.S.P. is written. You have referred specifically to this plan and, Chief Minister, this plan is both broad brush and specific at the same time. It is broad brush in certain areas and very specific in other areas. Deputy Jeune is quite right to bring up the school at Gas Place. I picked up another one where earlier on in this debate we had specifically all recognised that the existing affordability schemes for housing needed assessment and we needed further evidence about and yet the document itself specifically says that we will expand the Homebuy scheme and the First Step initiative. But we are waiting for more evidence. You are asking us to …

The Bailiff:

The Chief Minister is asking us.

Deputy S.J. Gleave:

The Chief Minister, sorry.

The Bailiff:

Through the Chair.

Deputy S.J. Gleave:

The Chief Minister is asking us to sign off a document that is being very specific about what it includes. I am very uncomfortable about that. I feel that that needs to come to the Assembly for greater scrutiny, including also the move of Highlands College to town. I am not saying that that is not the right move but I would like to have that debate.

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

As the Chief Minister knows, I think moving Highlands to town is not the right move. But I stand to speak and possibly put dread into Deputy Curtis's mind because as much as he loves Senator Gorst

speaking, because he is on to a winner, he probably does not like me standing up and saying I have enormous sympathy for Deputy Curtis's amendment but do not think it is necessary at this stage. I was listening intently to the Chief Minister's speech because I wanted to hear the assurances that these items would be brought to the Assembly because I fear always a lack of scrutiny in the Assembly on particular capital matters but, to be fair, on virtually any matters. It is absolutely vital that all these items are brought to this Assembly. I totally accept maintenance, business as usual; I understand that not coming in. Having received those assurances, I feel that I am able to vote against Deputy Curtis's amendment because, in my mind, the Investing in Jersey document is exactly that, a high-level document. Deputy Gleave is correct in saying that it is both high level and specific. But the document itself talks about the fact that it will change. The specifics are the changeable part, they are the bit that different Ministers, different Chief Ministers will vary, depending on the needs at the time. What matters about the plan is that we have the Capital Investment Fund, that that money is ring-fenced and that we, as an Assembly, do recognise the need for the capital investment in our infrastructure in Jersey. I completely agree that previous Governments, interestingly, many of which were staffed by Senators who were in previous Governments that did not invest in capital in this Island and did not invest in infrastructure in this Island, so I am pleased those same people are now converted to the need to invest in capital in this Island and to make the Island's infrastructure the infrastructure we need for the 21st century. We are over a quarter way through this century and very little in terms of infrastructure investment has been made, and that is not appropriate and that will not help future generations compete in what is an incredibly competitive world. But I do ask the Assembly to reject the amendment from Deputy Curtis precisely because we have those reassurances from the Chief Minister that every significant item outside of business as usual will be brought to this Assembly. It is right that we do vote on them. I can also understand, while I think it is a weakness - and I learnt this through the Future Economy Programme when I launched that - it is difficult to know whether you want to bring something to the Assembly or not when it is high level. The reason for that is, as much as anything, because of the amendment that can be made. An Investing in Jersey plan could be laid for the Assembly, as Deputy Curtis asks, and we, as Members, could naturally amend it all over the place and so it comes out looking a very different document. We would be putting in our own pet projects, our own things perhaps, and our Parishes that we want to see in there. That is not really how this document should operate. I understand it is always a fine line, having been in that position, do you bring a document to the Assembly or do you lay it out there and say this is the Government strategy? But know that when particular items come up, they individually will be brought to this Assembly. For me it is the individual items that matter more than the high-level intent because I think most of us can get behind the high-level intent. What matters is whether it is a Gas Place school, changes to Highlands, Fort Regent. What matters is that us 49 Deputies, Senators and Connétables get to think about those, get to debate those individual items and get to change them or reject them if we feel that that is the right way forward. It is because of those commitments that we will see those items come to this Assembly that I am more than happy to reject Deputy Curtis's amendment. I thank the Chief Minister for making those commitments here.

2.5.5 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

Deputy Curtis, as we know, always makes his arguments coherently and with care and he always makes me think. But I fear that in this case he has built a castle on sand.

[11:45]

He says he wants the Investing in Jersey programme to be separately debated before the Budget. Well, in a way, fine; but this is the Common Strategic Policy that we are debating. The C.S.P. which sets out the Government's priorities for the 4 years. It is not a mechanism, I submit, for proposing a debate on one part of the Government's programme. May I respectfully suggest that this amendment suggests what properly belongs in a proposition? It makes no sense at all to have a high-level 4-year strategic programme with a specific priority to bring a debate on one part of that programme by June

2027. That is a piece of procedure, not a strategic ambition for the Government. But there is a deeper reason why this is profoundly the wrong thing to do in my view, as we have heard Investing in Jersey is a statement of intent. It sets out broad ambitions and priorities but it is operationalised through the Budget. We already have a capital investment programme that is part of the Budget. We already have a list of capital projects that are part of the Budget. We already have funds committed to the Infrastructure Rolling Vote, maintenance and so on, as part of the Budget and to the public realm. Every aspect of the Investing in Jersey programme that is going to be made real will come before the Assembly as part of the Budget debate; of course with the added advantage that it will be clearly identified and ring-fenced in the Capital Investment Fund. Members will get to see it months beforehand. The capital programme will be subject to amendment. I say that through gritted teeth but it is true. Neither is there any lack of scrutiny. The Deputy says in his report that: "This is to ensure that implicit approval is not given to the whole scope of works included in the current Investing in Jersey programme without debate." But, as we have heard, we are not going to be giving implicit approval to any of the details in there because that can only ever be done through the Budget debate. Approval that matters is explicit approval and that will come through the Budget debate and we are not avoiding debate on either. All the items in the capital investment programme will be there, as it always has. The Deputy in fact acknowledges this because he says: "We may not approve everything in the Investing in Jersey programme." Exactly because there will be full explicit oversight through the Budget process. The Deputy gave some time in his speech to his own view on how the Investing in Jersey programme should be presented. He clearly wants a different document. He is, I think, disappointed in the way it has been laid out, and of course he is entitled to his view but alternative views are available. There is one more reason it is not a good idea, and I think Deputy Morel touched on this very well. Deputy Morel mentioned that if you have a separate debate on Investing in Jersey it will be subject to amendment of course. The problem with that is not the principle *per se* but debating the Investing in Jersey programme floating free from any financial constraints is a recipe for chaos. Because it will be amendable we have to be honest with ourselves. As Deputy Morel pointed out, the temptation to amend in favour of particular favoured projects will be substantial, and it will be possible without having to see what the financial implications will be; in fact impossible to see what the financial implications will be because we will not know our income, we will not have the latest Fiscal Policy Panel reports, we will not have the information we know to decide what should or should not be in that going forward. I do understand that might seem attractive, and perhaps I would even be the beneficiary and that Members might add lots of juicy capital projects that would be lovely to deliver. But it is profoundly the wrong way to go about things. It is like filling the shopping trolley before you have worked out how much money you have got to spend. It is also the opposite of what the Jersey Capital Investment Fund is trying to achieve. We are trying to deliver a serious thought-through costed long-term investment programme that is protected from day-to-day financial pressures. We want maximum buy-in to that investment programme. I will be trying as hard as I can to work with Members, to work with Scrutiny, as we move forward bringing that programme to fruition. But it has to be rooted in the financial reality and the debate on it has to be rooted in the financial reality. If it is not we will have fallen at the first hurdle in terms of operationalising the Capital Investment Fund and the Investing in Jersey programme. But I will finish by just saying, if the Assembly really feels that it wants to go down the road of a separate debate and address some of the issues raised by Deputy Alex Curtis, then fine. The proper route to achieve it is *via* a proposition brought by the Deputy, not inserting a procedural manoeuvre into the Government's programme of strategic priorities. By the way, for the avoidance of doubt, if there is a proposition to that effect, in case I have not been clear in this speech, I will still be against it.

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

I am pleased to follow the current Minister for Infrastructure. I fully support the Investing in Jersey document 2026 to 2050. We have heard throughout this week that we want a vision, that we want aspirations. However, I do not think that we should debate the document, a strategy document, as a

single proposition. There is much in this document that many Members will support; investment in sea defences, drainage, school buildings, roads, water, affordable housing, are all important matters. We heard from the proposer that detail is required for each project, and I fully agree with him. What we need is a lot more detail for each individual project and judge them on their merits. Departments, as we have just heard, have got rolling votes for capital works, and these are basically for maintenance and upgrades. For example, if a significant increase in investment was identified for road resurfacing, then I would fully expect the individual monies to come to the Assembly separately. They deserve serious consideration, detailed scrutiny and, where justified, the support of the Assembly. However, that is precisely why the strategy should not be approved as one package. This proposal brings together dozens of separate projects, each with different costs, risks, priorities and consequences. As Deputy Renouf has just highlighted, Members may reasonably support some projects while opposing others. For example, a Member might strongly support investment in flood protection and water infrastructure but have serious concerns, like Deputy Morel, about relocating Highlands College. Another may support a new primary school but not a public car park or *vice versa*. A third may believe that school maintenance should take priority over sports facilities. For example, this Connétable will continue to press for continued improvement in mains drains. When I was a member of the Council of Ministers I lost count of the times I told colleagues that if we keep kicking the can down the road, we would end up kicking something else down the road. We have large areas of the Island without mains drains, and not all of these are in remote areas. Members would be surprised at the amount of main roads that do not carry mains drains. In Trinity 28 per cent of homes are not connected to mains drains, 26 per cent of homes in St. Mary, 24 per cent of homes in St. John are not connected to mains drains. The figure in St. Helier is a much more reasonable 2 per cent. By supporting this amendment we are being asked to present all of the projects together. Members are, effectively, being asked to make one decision on many different proposals; that is not good scrutiny. The States Assembly exists to examine individual projects on their individual merits. Each major investment should and must be supported by a detailed business case, realistic cost estimates, risk assessments, procurement plans and evidence of public benefit. The Investing in Jersey document explains that detailed business cases will follow later and be presented to this Assembly. I do not believe that all of the work required for an informed debate can be completed by 2027. This programme looks as far forward as 2050. It is right that we look forward and not at our boots all the time. None of us can know with certainty what the Island priorities will be in 5, 10 or 20 years' time and future Assemblies will undoubtedly face different challenges. It is, therefore, important that future Assemblies retain the freedom to assess these projects as they arise, rather than feeling bound by commitments made decades earlier. I am not arguing against long-term planning. I support the principle of better capital planning, and I can see merit in establishing a mechanism to ensure that vital infrastructure is properly funded and maintained, something we are not very good at. But supporting long-term planning is not the same as giving a broad approval to every project listed within the 25-year programme. Good governance requires transparency, accountability and proper scrutiny. The best way to achieve that is to bring major projects to this Assembly individually with detailed evidence, full financial information and clear explanations of the benefits and risks. Let us approve projects on an individual basis because they have earned support on their merits, not because they happen to be included in a larger package. For those reasons, I believe the Capital Investment Fund and the individual projects should be considered separately and that each major project should return to the Assembly for its own debate and decision.

The Bailiff:

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

2.5.7 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

In some ways I feel I have achieved what I wanted from this debate, which is the absolute certainty that the package of works in Investing in Jersey have no approval from this States Assembly when they approved a C.S.P. To go to the point made by Deputy Renouf on that, he said there is no implicit agreement. But until we have had this debate where Ministers have put their cards on the table and said what they mean by action 6.2, Members were not assured of that when they were voting for the C.S.P. Nonetheless, I still think that there is merit in supporting this amendment, and I will explain why. The Chief Minister - and I must congratulate him - he is wearing the same suit and tie as he does in the photo of Investing in Jersey; it is remarkable branding.

Senator L.J. Farnham:

Completely accidental. **[Laughter]**

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I do not know if it was intentional.

Senator L.J. Farnham:

A different shirt though I may add.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

He and I are in fact on the same page. But what he said I think conflates 2 things. He said: "We have not had any long-term planning for our infrastructure. We are not spending enough. We tend to wait for things to break. We need, in essence, to invest more" and I paraphrase. I completely agree. We have been lacking in adequate capital expenditure for our infrastructure and our estates. The difference is Investing in Jersey is not a document that achieves anything beyond listing the projects we know need investment. I will get on to the key difference that I think Members, including Deputy Morel and Deputy Renouf, danced around without addressing as to why Investing in Jersey does not help. In his response to a point of clarification from Deputy Jeune, I made some interesting notes as to what Investing in Jersey means to the Chief Minister. He said: "All parts of the document are open to change and evolution and it does not hold the Assembly to anything, other than we need a long-term capital strategy." I agree we need a long-term capital strategy. But if the document presented in 2025 does nothing beyond set the ambition to invest, it is a wrong document to attach to the C.S.P. Perhaps a better action 6.2 for the Council of Ministers, should they choose a last-minute amendment, which it seems is possible, deliver a step change in capital investment in our infrastructure and our estates through the J.C.I.F. to catch up to where we have fallen behind and to invest in the future. That does not tie us to a document frozen in time with no Assembly approval, a document that is not relevant to this because we have heard its contents are and what is being debated or what will be followed. In fact, each individual project should be judged in its own merits. I will touch on an example of a good document that I think would set a leading light. I will turn to Deputy Morel and Deputy Renouf now and their comments, and I think there is something missing in their assessment as to what is being agreed on and what should the Assembly debate? I see 3 tiers that we are debating.

[12:00]

Deputy Morel said Investing in Jersey sets a high-level intent; I believe that is what he said and that projects are individual. But there are 3 phases and Investing in Jersey promises to be one that it is not. You set a high-level intent, we need to invest more. We need infrastructure to meet the needs of the Island now into the future. Below that you need a strategic framework to make things happen differently. The problem that has been highlighted time and time again by Members in this debate is that our usual budgetary processes, whether it was the fact we did not have a dedicated Capital Investment Fund, nor the tools and frameworks to assess and prioritise what to invest in when to deliver best impact to the Island, were missing. Investing in Jersey certainly is a high-level intent with a sprinkling of specific projects that mean nothing to anybody now beyond just options. It fails

to deliver what it says it delivers. It presents a case for change but it does not say how it will be governed. It does not set out the processes for prioritising, approving and monitoring projects over time. The reason I brought this is in some ways I have more faith and more belief that we need an Investing in Jersey but not one that is a high-level intent, one that sets out its own objectives, a strategic framework. That is perhaps where I differ with Deputy Morel and Deputy Renouf. I think a strategic framework is worthy of debating in this Assembly. An agreement as to how we fund capital beyond Budget to Budget, beyond in fact Assembly to Assembly, needs to be debated by this Assembly, but Investing in Jersey is not it. So I consider what I have worded a very kind way of handing back a chance to the Council of Ministers to bring forward an Investing in Jersey document, as I say, a revised document, should they wish it. Certainly I would really recommend revising the one they have got to achieve what it aims to be, a strategic framework, because it is not. So I do push back on Deputy Renouf, who said if a debate was brought as a standalone, for the avoidance of a doubt, he would be against it. Well, what is he against? Is he against this Assembly agreeing how we strategically plan for our capital investment over 25 years and deciding on a path? I hope he is not. I hope he wants to see Members agree a way we can be forward-thinking beyond the next 4 years, and that does not sit just within the Council of Ministers. Perhaps if Members do not support me today on the wording I have brought, I will do exactly what he suggested, bring a proposition requesting this Council of Ministers develop and lodge a strategic framework for capital investment over the next 25 years. We will call it something different. It will not be Investing in Jersey, it will simply be the long-term capital planning framework or something with a less sexy name, but it will be important, because we are missing that. The Government's ambition through this C.S.P. is currently lacking the tools it needs to be successful, so I ask Members to support, to give the Council of Ministers the tools to bring that strategic framework forward, and if they do not bring it, I think this term should have a strategic framework, because Investing in Jersey is not it. Thank you. I call for the appel.

The Bailiff:

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

POUR: 9		**CONTRE: 34**		**ABSTAINED: 0**
Connétable of St. Martin		Senator L.J. Farnham		
Deputy A.F. Curtis		Senator A. Maclean		
Deputy H.L. Jeune		Senator M.R. Le Hegarat		
Deputy B. Ward		Senator T.J.A. Binet		
Deputy K.M. Wilson		Senator H.M. Miles		
Deputy S. Gleave		Senator M.E. Millar		
Deputy V. Li		Senator Sir M.J. Boleat		
Deputy G. Raimondo		Senator S. Kersten		
Deputy C. Rebindaine		Connétable of St. Mary		
		Connétable of St. Brelade		
		Connétable of St. Helier		
		Connétable of St. John		
		Connétable of St. Ouen		

		Connétable of Grouville		
		Connétable of St. Saviour		
		Connétable of St. Lawrence		
		Deputy M. Tadier		
		Deputy L.M.C. Doublet		
		Deputy C.S. Alves		
		Deputy K.F. Morel		
		Deputy G. Voisin		
		Deputy M.B. Andrews		
		Deputy R.E. Binet		
		Deputy T.A. Coles		
		Deputy C.D. Curtis		
		Deputy L.V. Feltham		
		Deputy M.R. Ferey		
		Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée		
		Deputy J. Renouf		
		Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson		
		Deputy L. Carpenter		
		Deputy C. Leck		
		Deputy R. Parker		
		Deputy P. J. Romeril		

2.6 Common Strategic Policy 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): fifth amendment (P.75/2026 Amd.(5)) - Affordable and secure housing

The Bailiff:

We now move on to the fifth amendment, lodged by Deputy Feltham. Deputy Feltham, an amendment to your amendment has been lodged by the Council of Ministers. Do you accept the amendment or not?

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

No, I do not.

The Bailiff:

The Greffier will read the amendment.

The Greffier of the States:

After the words "report accompanying this Proposition" insert the words – ", except that, on page 13 of the report, after action 6.4 there should be inserted the following action – "6.5 Improve housing affordability and security for Islanders, through measures including the reduction of rental stress, an increase in availability of affordable rented homes, the prevention of homelessness and the return of long-term empty homes to use"".

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

I have brought this amendment, which seeks to strengthen the Common Strategic Policy by including clear actions to improve housing affordability and security for Islanders who rent their homes. It addresses 4 key areas: first, reducing rental stress; secondly, increasing the availability of affordable rented homes; thirdly, preventing homelessness; and fourthly, bringing long-term empty homes back into use. I would hope that every Member of this Assembly, including every Minister, agrees that these are objectives we should be working towards, but I have brought this amendment because I do not believe they are sufficiently reflected in the Government's proposed actions, and I think that is an important omission. The Government's housing priorities place considerable emphasis on increasing housing supply and helping Islanders into home ownership, but housing policy cannot just be judged solely on the number of homes we build or the number of people we help on to the property ladder. We must also be judged by whether Islanders can afford somewhere suitable and secure to live, and that includes people for whom home ownership may never be a realistic prospect. My first proposed action concerns reducing rental stress. We know that housing costs are one of the largest pressures on household budgets. For many Islanders who rent, particularly in the private sector, accommodation costs absorb a substantial proportion of their income and build no asset for them. These are people who are working, raising families and contributing to our economy, but who may still struggle to meet other essential living costs. I think that we need to ask ourselves a fairly basic question: if somebody is working full-time but cannot comfortably afford their rent and essential bills, can we really say that our housing policy is delivering for them? Of course we must not forget that pensioners on fixed incomes may also be renting and struggling. The Government have referred to the difficulties in measuring rental stress, particularly where income support contributes towards housing costs. I understand those difficulties, but that is a question about measurement. It does not remove the need to address the underlying problem. There are households receiving income support and others who receive no assistance at all. There are private renters whose housing costs place them under considerable pressure and there are people who may be technically able to be able to pay their rent, but who do so at the expense of other aspects of their lives. I would ask the Minister for Housing, what is the Government's intended measure of success in improving rental affordability? How will we know whether renters are better off in 4 years' time? If rental stress is not considered the right measure, what alternatives will demonstrate whether the financial pressure on those households has reduced? Because surely that is what we should be trying to achieve. My second proposed action concerns increasing the availability of affordable rented homes. In a recent written answer, the Minister for Housing confirmed that there were 758 active households awaiting social rented accommodation through the Affordable Housing Gateway at the end of September. I recognise that this includes existing tenants seeking transfers as well as applicants seeking accommodation, but it demonstrates the importance of ensuring that we have suitable affordable homes available for people who need them. Having suitable homes available is absolutely essential. We need to consider what type of accommodation is being delivered, and we have already covered that in some debates this week. We need to consider who can access it and whether it is genuinely affordable. The Government's emphasis on assisted purchase is understandable, but what is the offer to the Islander whose income will never allow them to obtain a mortgage? What is the offer to the household whose circumstances mean that renting is the most appropriate option, and how are we ensuring that the social and affordable rented homes being provided meet actual housing need? These are strategic questions. They affect the sustainability of our communities, our workforce and our public services. A clear commitment to increasing affordable rented housing would help ensure that these questions remain central to Government's work over the next 4 years. The third action concerns preventing homelessness. I welcome the Government's indication that it supports this objective. However, I was disappointed to hear on Tuesday that the Ministerial group that would support this objective has been disbanded. I think it is important that prevention is at the heart of our approach and this needs to be a collaborative approach. It is important to remember that homelessness is not confined to

people sleeping rough, and we did a lot of work in the last Government to make sure that very few people are in that position. I encourage the Minister to continue that work and continue working with the organisations that myself and the previous Minister for Housing were working with. Homelessness also includes people whose housing arrangements are unstable, those who are at risk of losing their accommodation and those who may be sofa surfing and do not have a secure place to call home. The consequences of housing insecurity extend far beyond housing itself. They can affect employment, health, education and family relationships. Effective prevention requires departments and agencies to work together and to identify problems before they become crises. Surely it is better to help someone maintain secure accommodation than to respond only after they have lost it. That is why I believe homelessness prevention should be an explicit action within the Common Strategic Policy. My final proposed action concerns bringing long-term empty homes back into use. At a time when Islanders are struggling to find suitable accommodation, we must make best use possible of the housing stock we already have. I recognise that some empty properties present complicated legal or ownership issues. Some may require significant work before they can be occupied, but those are challenges that need to be addressed rather than reasons to avoid setting an objective. The question I would ask Ministers is: what do we want to achieve through our work on empty homes? Is it simply to investigate cases and resolve administration difficulties or is it to return as many suitable long-term empty properties as reasonably possible to residential use? I would suggest that Islanders are much more interested in the latter. Of course not every empty property can be brought back to use, and my amendment does not pretend otherwise, but we should be ambitious about removing barriers and increasing the number of homes available to people who need them, particularly when some of those homes may be in the ownership of States-owned entities. This reminds me of when my mother was a States Member and I was far younger, probably the same age as my daughter is now, and I remember her - this would have been over 30 years ago now, I think - driving around looking at what was the Housing Department stock at the time and counting the number of empty homes that there were and raising the question at the time. When I was recently delivering some constituency leaflets about a drop-in, I was in some properties which I think are currently being managed by the Health Department, Hue Court, which of course used to be Andium and States-owned, and I was really surprised at how many appeared to be empty, which is why I subsequently put in questions to the Minister for Health and Social Services about those. Again, I encourage Ministers to work together to ensure that all of the suitable housing stock that we have across our whole estate are used where they are most needed. I think that the 4 actions that I have proposed are closely connected: rental affordability, the supply of suitable rented homes, homelessness prevention and the use of existing properties. They all contribute to housing security. They all reflect whether Jersey remains an attractive place for people to live and work. Reform Jersey's manifesto made commitments to improving housing affordability, addressing social housing rents, preventing homelessness and tackling empty homes.

[12:15]

Those commitments reflect the concerns that we had heard from Islanders, and I believe they deserve a place in the Government's strategic priorities. I recognise that housing policy involves difficult decisions about funding, land, infrastructure and competing demands. I am not asking the Assembly to settle those questions today, nor am I seeking approval for a particular spending programme. What I am asking is the Assembly to agree what Government should be trying to achieve, and I think these are reasonable, practical objectives for the next 4 years. We have heard throughout the debate this week about work already underway in different departments and I welcome that work, but if the Government agrees that these are important outcomes, why should they not be reflected in the actions against which their performance will be assessed? Why should reducing housing cost pressures be any less important than increasing housing supply and why should preventing homelessness and bringing empty homes back into use not be explicit Government priorities? The ultimate measure of housing policy should be whether Islanders are better housed, whether more people have access to

affordable accommodation, whether fewer families are struggling under the burden of their rent, whether fewer people are at risk of losing their homes and whether we are making better use of the accommodation available to us. Those are the outcomes my amendment seeks to establish and I ask Members to support. I make the amendment.

The Bailiff:

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

2.7 Common Strategic Policy 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): fifth amendment (P.75/2026 Amd.(5)) - amendment (P.75/2026 Amd.(5)Amd.) - Affordable and secure housing

The Bailiff:

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

The Greffier of the States:

For the words, "including the reduction of rental stress", substitute the words, "to continue to protect islanders from the high cost of housing". For the words, "and the return of long-term empty homes to use" substitute the words, "supporting the resolution of long-term empty homes".

2.7.1 Deputy M.R. Ferey of St. Saviour (The Minister for Housing):

I would like to thank Deputy Feltham for bringing this amendment. Housing affordability, having a secure and stable home and preventing people from experiencing homelessness are major concerns for many Islanders. They are concerns that I share and which sit at the heart of my work as Minister for Housing. This is why Ministers support the intent of this amendment and welcome the additional emphasis it places on these issues with the Common Strategic Policy. Increasing the supply of suitable homes remains an important priority. We need more homes to support affordability and enable Islanders to access housing that is right for them at different stages of their lives. Alongside increased housing supply, Government are already working to improve affordability, support people to access and maintain a secure and stable home and prevent homelessness. This amendment reinforces the importance of those objectives within the Common Strategic Policy. The Council of Ministers has proposed 2 relatively modest amendments to the wording to ensure that it more clearly expresses the challenges we are trying to address and the outcomes we want to deliver. The first relates to the reference of reduction in rental stress. The Review of Social Housing Rents, published early this year, highlighted that affordability is influenced by a range of factors, including household income, housing costs, wider living costs and income support arrangements. While rental stress can be a useful indicator, it does not always provide a complete picture of affordability. For example, some social housing tenants may appear to spend more than 30 per cent of their income on rent. However, income support adjusts to reflect actual rental costs, meaning that the higher rent to income ratio does not necessarily translate into greater financial pressure. Indeed, for many, the housing component of income support will fully cover their rent, meaning no rent cost pressure lands upon the tenant, while I accept wider living costs may do. Our objective is broader than improving a particular measure. It is to improve affordability by reducing the financial pressures that housing costs and wider living costs place on Islanders. The second part of the amendment relates to long-term empty homes. Ministers support efforts to bring empty homes back into use. However, many long-term empty properties are linked to more complex circumstances, such as probate matters, ownership disputes and other legal difficulties. In many cases, those circumstances must first be resolved before a property can return to use. The challenge is often not identifying an empty home, the challenge is resolving the barriers that prevent it from returning to occupation. Supporting the resolution of the barriers that keep homes empty more accurately reflects the nature of the work that Government can undertake. Deputy Feltham is right to draw attention to these matters, and I welcome the contribution this amendment makes to the Common Strategic Policy. With the proposed

amendments, I am pleased to support the original amendment and will encourage Members to do likewise. I make the amendment.

The Bailiff:

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

2.7.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

One thing I want to pick up on first of all, while I remember it, is that the Minister has talked about tenants in social housing - so Andium tenants particularly - being insulated because if their rents are higher than the component that Social Security income support allows them for renting a home, they simply add more to it. Now, as a policy, that is something that should raise alarm bells for us, especially for those Deputies and Constables who represent areas with high rentals and high tenants, especially in social or in fact in the private sector. What that means is that we have got an inequality inbuilt at the heart of our rental sector, where somebody can be renting a like-for-like property, one just happens to have Andium as their landlord, one happens to have a private landlord - otherwise identical flats, shall we say - and one will be met fully for their rent while the other, because they are renting off a private landlord, may not get the full amount for that, so they have to make up the shortfall themselves. I do not see how that is equitable at all and it is something which needs to be resolved. That is just a small point. I want to take Members back, and I want to talk specifically about the position that the Assembly took in March - yes, I think it was in March/April 2022 - and there was a proposition that was brought. It was numbered P.24/2022, and this is the wording of the proposition. It says that: "The States are asked to decide if they are of the opinion that an effective mechanism should be introduced to discourage domestic properties from being left vacant for long periods and to request the Minister for Housing and Communities to initiate the necessary arrangements for the preparation of an options paper identifying potential mechanisms, with a view to publication before the end of September 2022." So the first wording is really crucial, I say. There were only 10 Members in this current Assembly who were present and who voted for that, but the proposition was won by 41 votes to one. There was only one vote against. It was a certain Constable from a certain country Parish that is in between St. Ouen and St. John - and I will not mention who it was - and he did not get re-elected. Who brought the proposition? It was Deputy Tadier, if I can talk about myself in the third person through the Chair. **[Laughter]** So it was a widely supported proposition, and there are still 10 Members of that Assembly. If you look back at the faces, I would speak first of all to those 10 Members, and I will look at a couple of them across the floor. I do not think anything has changed since then, and we have been through ... now we are on our fourth Minister for Housing, so we are 4, counting back from the one we had then, and the issue still remains. It is, if you like, the ... what is the metaphor? It is the conundrum that we are all trying to solve or the Ministers for Housing are trying to solve. It should not be that difficult. There should be a mechanism available to know where the empty properties are, how long they have been empty for. My suggestion was once they have been empty for a year, and it is quite clear that there is no intention to rent them out, that they are not being used as holidays lets, there is no maintenance going on in them, they are not in between tenants and the property is in a reasonably fit state and could and should be rented out, then they should be either sold to somebody who can make that their home or to another landlord who can rent it out or just put back into the rental market. There should be mechanisms out there and we should be speaking to the custodians of the rates rolls in different Parishes, because they are the ones who know where the empty properties are. It does not mean that all of those properties need to be put back into use, but as the 2015 Scrutiny Panel identified, even if a handful of those - a small percentage of those - properties were put back into use, 20 or 30 a year over a 4-year period, so the time of the term of this office, you would get 120 properties potentially being put back into use. Those are 120 properties that do not need to be built, that Andium do not need to build or sell, depending on their model, and that Parishes do not need to build or the States or private sector does not need to build, so it is good for everybody. It is not about blame, because I know we have had

different Ministers for Housing of different political persuasions who have tried to tackle that issue. I think that is something that is fundamental. So when I look at the amendment that is being put forward by the Council of Ministers to amend my party colleague's amendment, I look again - as you should always do with amendments to amendments - and it is which form of words do we prefer and which form of words gives the strongest protections to where the majority all want to go? So I think Deputy Feltham's wording is strong as it is: "Improve housing affordability and security for Islanders, through measures including the reduction of rental stress" so that is a key term which the Council of Ministers is seeking to remove. Is that because it is embarrassing and they do not want to have to talk about the fact that there are people in rental stress in Jersey? In other places we might talk about relative poverty as well. She goes on to say: "an increase in availability of affordable rented homes, the prevention of homelessness and the return of long-term empty homes to use." So that is the key part, and I think that part in particular speaks to the original proposition which was adopted by the 2022 outgoing Assembly, so to return long-term empty properties to use. We are not talking about properties that have simply fallen into disrepair or there is a transition period, this is about long-term properties. I have seen them. I really related to the words of Deputy Feltham when she was talking about walking around her constituency in that election, seeing the numbers of empty properties, and they are across the economic spectrum. You see flats, bedsits perhaps, that are not in use that could be, and there are all sorts of reasons, but you get them at the high end, you get flats which you go to put your leaflet through and you know that letterbox has not been checked for 3 months because it is full and you cannot get anything else in. It is probably just a home that will never be lived in, a lock up and leave, if you like, so it can be right across the spectrum. Now, let us compare it to the Council's words, so they talk about ... of course the first bit remains unchanged: "Improve housing affordability and security for Islanders, through measures" and this is the key bit: "to continue to protect Islanders from the high cost of housing." So they do not want to do anything about the high cost of housing, they do not want to make any more affordable housing, which is what Deputy Feltham is asking for, they simply want to somehow, through some magic mechanism, protect people, insulate them from the high cost of housing, but without doing anything about the high cost of housing itself. That is a vague and, if you like, alchemistic view of trying to solve the problem of housing in Jersey. So I much prefer Deputy Feltham's clear and targeted wording to the abstract, confusing and vague wording of the Council of Ministers. I think we should all prefer hers to that. I think the last part, again which talks about a resolution, so: "supporting the resolution of long-term empty homes" versus: "the return of long-term empty homes to use", which do we want? Do we want to see empty homes in Jersey returned to use, yes or no? Certainly the Assembly of 2022 did, the outgoing Assembly of 2022 did. I appreciate that most Members in here were not in that Assembly, so this is an opportunity now, if you like, to reaffirm that decision that was made by a spectrum of politicians saying: "Yes, we do want to return long-term empty properties, empty homes, to use where possible" or to go for the watered-down version of this Council of Ministers is to support a: "resolution of long-term empty homes." I mean, it is starting to sound like a U.N. (United Nations) thing, is it not: "We support a resolution which may do this, may do that"? In reality, it does not do anything and gives us a ... I cannot say "a hell of a lot of leeway", but I can say an enormous amount of leeway ...

[12:30]

The Bailiff:

Well, you should not have said that "hell of a lot" in the first place, so you need to withdraw that. **[Laughter]**

Deputy M. Tadier:

I withdraw that. I was just checking you were listening, Sir.

The Bailiff:

I am always listening to you, Deputy Tadier. **[Laughter]** I have got Standing Orders under my left hand.

Deputy M. Tadier:

I can presumably say that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. That is in context.

The Bailiff:

Yes, you can. **[Laughter]** You can say that, yes.

Deputy M. Tadier:

Look, what we have got here is a very clear form of wording, a very good form of wording, one that reflects, I think, what the majority of us would feel, that we want to tackle the issue of the high cost of living in Jersey, the high cost of housing, in particular. We want to do that through mechanisms that relate to affordable housing. That is consistent with everything we have been talking about in the last few days and we want to not support: "a resolution of long-term empty homes." That resolution could ultimately be: "Yes, it has been resolved and the resolution is that nothing has been done." We want that action to be taken. This needs to be a call to action to put those empty homes back into use so that they can be homes in perpetuity for all Islanders, whether it is as renters, possibly as landlords and also as tenants themselves. I do ask Members to reject this amendment from the Council.

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

I think I am going to take this in 2 separate parts because ultimately the amendment by the Council of Ministers amends 2 separate parts of the original amendment. First of all, rental stress. This original wording brings in areas other than the housing that I guess we are trying to look at in the first place. It brings in things such as the wages that people might be receiving and also the additional support that they may be getting for everyday outgoings. We need to look further than just what is in front of us when we look at rental stress. I think the amendment from the Council of Ministers and the reason I support it is because looking at purely the high cost of housing is focusing only on one area, and that would be a much easier way to look at things when it comes to C.S.P. Now on the other side of that, there is the second part that the Council of Ministers is amending, and it comes to long-term empty houses. I think the problem with the original wording is it lends to the fact that they must go back into use. The problem with going back into use means that we risk taking away people's freedom of holding that property. They might be holding that property for a few different reasons. They may be waiting for outward factors, maybe interest rates going down so they could develop; they could borrow money on it. There might be other things such as their current accessibility to funding and so they may want to wait longer to be able to develop that property into something that is more suitable for possibly renting or selling onwards. The idea that it has to go straight back into use might not necessarily fit the purpose that it is originally meant for. Yes, I think that is my main point, just the difference between supporting it going into something different versus having to go straight into use. I think Deputy Tadier's comments on this might be trying to unintentionally lead us into more socialist policies, which I feel may not be exactly what the Council of Ministers is intending.

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

I just had a slight concern over what is the definition of a long-term empty house. I absolutely support the intent. I think it is really frustrating when you drive around the Island and you do see those empty properties, like Deputy Feltham said. However, I would just like to tell a little story about a friend of mine who has moved back to the Island, has a house in London, and rents it. It is in one of those boroughs where they now charge a very high premium for having a second property. She rents that property out and has done for a few years. There was a leak in the kitchen, the tenants moved out and she was unable to rent the property. Then ensued a fight with the insurers to pay for the leak that

is under the floor in the kitchen. Also with just trying to get a builder to do the work in the first place, it was empty for longer than 6 months. Then started the bureaucracy and the red tape and the amount of money she has had to spend to try and prove that this property is for rental, it is intended to be rented out. She has ended up having to pay that surcharge even though her intention is always to rent the property out. I would be very wary of a year is not a long time. There are all sorts of reasons why properties are empty for a year. That is why I prefer the wording of the amendment from the Council of Ministers that allows us to have the intention of resolving the issue without being so specific with that very open-ended term.

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

Very quickly, as Deputy Raimondo has highlighted, this amendment to the amendment is in 2 parts, very simply numbered 1 and 2. I would appreciate the Minister who has brought this taking it in 2 parts. It deals with 2 separate policy areas and Members may wish to have a chance to shape the amendment as they best see fit.

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

I thought I should stand to explain why I did not accept the Council of Ministers' amendment. I did consider the Council of Ministers' amendment carefully and the reasons that are given for changing what I had proposed. I do welcome the fact that the Council of Ministers say that they share the objectives that I am seeking to achieve, but I could not support the proposed changes, as they would effectively replace 2 very clear commitments to improving housing outcomes with wording that is less specific about what Government intends to deliver, and I think that that distinction matters. They are different changes, as Deputy Curtis said, and Members may feel differently about each of them. The first one concerns rental stress. The reason why I wanted to bring the amendment is I wanted to acknowledge within the Common Strategic Policy the stress that high rents do cause people, and I think that wording is important. I think replacing that with just a commitment to continuing to protect Islanders from high housing cost, it really does not deal with the impact on individuals in their everyday life within that wording. I have read the explanation about the difficulties measuring rental stress, particularly where income support contributes towards the rent, but those are really technical challenges. I do not think that the difficulty of measuring the problem is a sufficient reason to weaken the ambition to address it. As I have said before in these debates, I really do think this is the Assembly and the Government's opportunity to be ambitious about what we want to achieve over the next 4 years. I do want to ask the Minister for Housing that, if the Government does not wish to commit to reducing rental stress, what specific improvement in rental affordability is it prepared to commit to? How will we know and how will we be able to measure at the end of this term whether its approach has reduced the financial pressure on renters? Because continuing to protect Islanders from high housing costs is not necessarily the same as making housing more affordable. Indeed, certain measures could make housing less affordable. Existing measures may well provide support but it does not mean that we should be content to maintain that present position, one that we know fails many people. We should be seeking to improve the present position. I am mindful that, while the Council of Ministers refer to income support, many people on our Island simply do not qualify for it. That might be because they have not lived on the Island for the qualifying period. It might be because they are just over the income support limit and threshold, and we need to think carefully about those people as well. Of course, the second area relates to long-term empty homes and, as it has been said, I focused on bringing long-term empty homes back into use. I said when I made my amendment that one of the reasons for that is I am conscious that some of those long-term empty homes also do belong to the States and to States-owned entities. If we can do nothing within the private sector, I think we should at least be able to do it within States-owned entities and within the properties that we own, and that should be an ambition. The wording around resolution of long-term empty homes and referring to legal and ownership complications, I recognise those complications. Some of those were referred to by Deputy Gleave. Some of the red tape and complications that she referred to may well

be things that Government could look at in terms of trying to bring empty properties back into use. Because it should be easy for somebody who wants to be a landlord, if their property is safe and habitable and meets housing needs, to be able to do that. I would hope that Deputy Gleave would perhaps reconsider her position on this amendment. I stand by the wording of my original amendment. I think it is really important that we acknowledge that rental stress exists. I think that if we do not have the words "rental stress" within the Common Strategic Policy, there will be vast numbers of people living on this Island that will feel like we are leaving them behind. So with that, I would encourage Members to think very carefully about this and to reject the amendment by the Council of Ministers which, in my view, weakens the amendment considerably.

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

I am going to echo quite a lot of what Deputy Feltham has said but I would specifically like to focus on the initial part of the amendment. The Council of Ministers' amendment to me seems inappropriate and unnecessary. Deputy Feltham's amendment specifically refers to the reduction of rental stress. The Council of Ministers wishes to remove this and instead states: "to continue to protect Islanders from the high cost of housing". To continue to protect Islanders suggests that the Council of Ministers thinks they already are. I would very much argue otherwise, but also to protect Islanders from the high cost of housing is far too broad a statement, in my view. Is the Government going to take active measures to reduce the price of homes? I suspect not. It is important that we include a specific reference to rental stress because the problem is acute. Firstly, what is the definition of rental stress? Rental stress in Jersey is defined as when individuals or families spend more than 30 per cent of their gross income, including benefits, on housing costs, leading to financial hardship and instability. The proportion of those on lower incomes in social rentals in rental stress increased from 60 per cent in 2010 to 71 per cent in 2022. The situation in private rentals is much worse: 43 per cent in 2010 has almost doubled to 82 per cent in 2022. I would like to question why the Government wishes to remove focus from rental stress. Does the Council of Ministers not consider the continuing growth of this issue to be alarming? Watering down this focus sends out a message to tenants that their struggles with high rents are not something this Government considers worthwhile of their focus. Statistics Jersey found that for social rental households, housing costs more than doubled the proportion living in relative low income from 24 per cent to 61 per cent over the period. In other words, rent is what pushes most social tenants below the low income line. The lowest earning tenth of households spend on average 56 per cent of their income on housing. When such a large proportion of someone's income goes on rent, it inevitably affects everything else. It affects their ability to pay for food, heating, transport and the other essentials for everyday life. It leaves people with very little room to deal with unexpected costs and very little opportunity to get ahead financially, let alone save for a deposit and get on the housing ladder. They remain trapped renting for their entire lives and yet the Government is proposing to remove the specific reference to rental stress and replace it with a much broader statement about protecting Islanders from the high cost of housing. I would ask where is the recognition of these households in that wording? Where is the acknowledgment people are spending more than half their income on housing? Where is the commitment attacking the particular pressures they face? It seems to me that Government would like to pretend this issue does not exist.

The Bailiff:

I note the time. There are at least 2 Members who wish to speak.

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT PROPOSED

The Bailiff:

Are Members content to adjourn? Adjourned until 2.15 p.m.

[12:44]

LUNCHEON ADJOURNMENT

[14:17]

The Bailiff:

We resume the debate on the amendment to the fifth amendment. The next speaker is Deputy Voisin.

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

I just wanted to respond to a couple of the previous speakers that were suggesting the Council of Ministers were not doing enough to deal with the cost of housing. I think it was one of the Deputies of St. Brelade that said the Council of Ministers were not doing anything to reduce the high cost of housing. Of course, I wonder with a comment like that, whether he has read the Common Strategic Policy. I would just talk through the 2 amendments that we are making to this amendment. The first one of course is to remove the reference to rental stress. As Deputy Raimondo eloquently said earlier on, that rental stress can be caused by all sorts of matters not related to the cost of housing. Interest rates relating to someone's borrowing outside of their home, inflation will cause rent increases, and the supply of rental accommodation will also push prices up. Salary increases, especially if someone loses their job, or salary decreases, should I say, and also employment prospects. These all have an impact on rental stress, which is why the Council of Ministers have taken the sensible approach to remove that wording and replace it with: "to continue to protect Islanders from the high cost of housing" and this of course is what we are trying to do. That is adequately set out in item 6.1 and also of course we have just approved the amendment, amendment 18, which refers to: "enable sustainable housing development to provide more homes for Islanders where needed and support aspirations for suitable home ownership." The Council of Ministers has plenty of actions and strategic objectives in our policy here, and I would urge Members to support the Council of Ministers' position and vote in favour of this amendment to the amendment. The other issue of course is that the Council of Ministers is wanting to amend the wording relating to long-term empty houses so that we support the resolution of this area. Again, there are a number of factors that cause housing to be empty for a number of reasons. Some of those reasons we, as a Government, cannot impact upon; some of them we can influence. It is a question really of supporting the resolution of that area rather than taking action to influence the market. I would urge Members to support the Council of Ministers' position on this so that we can have something in the Common Strategic Policy which is achievable and deliverable.

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

I have been listening to this debate and I am going to invite Members to return to the actual wording of what is being discussed. It is about words, and I do not think we should shy away from calling something what it is. I think the term "rental stress" reflects the reality of what the population are experiencing, and I therefore see no problem in using that term. I see this problem in other areas, for example, in the same way that poverty is poverty and we should name it as such and not call it an affordability problem. Rental stress is rental stress, and I think it is reasonable to use that term. I am going to not be supporting the Government's amendment to this amendment because using a term that is a plain-speaking term tells us exactly what the problem is, and I think gives us the best chance of tackling it. Likewise, in terms of the precision of the other part of the amendment, returning empty homes to their use. This is action-focused; it is less vague than the alternative being presented by the Government. I would urge Members to get back to the wording of the amendment. It is of course interesting to hear about all the things that the Government are doing in this area, and the things that we want the Government to do in this area, but for the actual purpose of what we are debating now, it is that wording. I think if we use this direct approach, Islanders who are experiencing rental stress might feel a bit more confident in this Assembly if we acknowledge their experiences more directly in this way. I would really like to avoid the kind of more fluffy, vague language and go for something that is focused on action and that is clear and direct.

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

I will be brief. I have some sympathy with the Council of Ministers' explanation for its amendment to Deputy Feltham's amendment and obviously understand that there may be some technical difficulties with using rental stress as an indicator. I think we need to be careful that in trying to improve the wording we are not inadvertently weakening the outcomes we are seeking to achieve. The Council of Ministers' amendment changes the language the way that arguably weakens the precision of their commitment. If rental stress is not the right measure, then what is it in terms of the point that Deputy Doublet has just mentioned? I think it would be welcomed to see Ministers identifying an alternative measure that allows us to understand whether housing is becoming more affordable for Islanders. I think simply committing to protect Islanders from the high cost of housing is a worthy aspiration, but how will we know whether we are succeeding? What will we measure and how will we hold ourselves accountable? I think these are really important considerations when we are starting to agree what needs to go in the policy framework. I have also got a similar concern about the proposed change from returning long-term empty homes to use to supporting the resolution of long-term empty homes. They are not necessarily the same thing. Resolving an ownership dispute or a probate issue may be an important step, but it does not automatically mean that a property becomes available to rent or occupy. Surely the objective should be to increase the supply of homes available to Islanders. We should be measuring that outcome and not simply the activity that we are undertaking along the way. I think there is a wider point here about the purpose of what is being proposed through the Council of Ministers in the C.S.P. It should not really be about what Government intends to do, it should tell Islanders what Government intends to achieve, and that gives us a very strong focus on outcomes. I am not suggesting that every outcome can be expressed as a simple numerical target, or that Ministers should be held responsible for circumstances entirely outside of their control. We should be able to distinguish between what an action is, what an output is and what an outcome is. I am not so sure the way in which the Council of Ministers are proposing to describe that is going to capture that. If we are serious about improving housing affordability and availability, then we need commitments that are sufficiently clear that we can measure, evaluate and scrutinise. If you cannot measure it, you cannot manage it; I think we have all heard that mantra before. I would therefore encourage Ministers to reconsider whether their amendment provides the clarity that we need, and whether they retain the ambition of Deputy Feltham's original proposal. In my view, I do not think it needs to be an argument between the Government and the proposer. I think there is an opportunity to improve the wording and strengthen the policy. My concern is simply that we should not make any strategic commitments less meaningful in the process of making them more comfortable to deliver. I will leave it at that and intend not to support the Government's position on that.

2.7.11 Senator M.E. Millar:

Everybody will remember that there was a very detailed report produced in the last sitting by the former Minister for Housing in response to a proposition by Deputy Kovacs. That was a very detailed report and had, I think, 4 or 5 underlying reports backing it up, and I think that should be our first port of call. Reducing rental stress is a difficult thing to achieve. It is not something that is necessarily deliverable apart from what it means, as Deputy Wilson has just commented on. How do we do that? Do we just give more people money towards their rent and do we think that will bring rents down? No, it will not, it would just make it easier for those people to pay the rent. Reducing rents is a very different kettle of fish. If we were going to reduce rents, we would need to increase potentially the range of properties available to let. To do that, we would possibly have to think about unwinding some of the steps that we took in the last Assembly: removing the surcharge to let more people buy buy-to-let properties, reducing the regulatory burden, generally making it easier to be a landlord because some people are deterred from being a landlord. If people drop out of that market, rents will go up. We need to think very carefully, and the whole concept of rental stress I think is a hostage to fortune, and reducing it is not something the Government can necessarily deliver. Just on empty

homes, like everybody else, how do I identify what an empty home is? A home may look empty; it may be that the person is on a protracted holiday. It may be that they are on a protracted stay in hospital or a nursing home. There may be any number of reasons why a property is empty. Deputy Warr, you will remember, did try to do some work to identify empty homes and was roundly mocked for his efforts. We always have to think about what is an empty home and how do we define that. Lastly, most of you will know that I do not really like the human rights card being played unnecessarily, but this is absolutely a place for the human rights card. One of the most fundamental real human right is Article 1, right to property. **[Approbation]** We have to be very careful in interfering with people's rights to enjoy their property. Now I am sure somebody is going to magic up other human rights in response to that, but Article 1 is there, it exists, and we have to take it in mind if we are going to take properties out of the market.

2.7.12 Senator L.J. Farnham:

I was really responding to the questions Deputy Wilson asked, and Senator Millar has gone some way to doing that. Reducing rental stress and improving housing costs are 2 phrases which are closely related, but they sort of do describe slightly different housing policy objectives. Reducing rental stress is primarily about helping people who rent privately or socially to manage their housing costs. It focuses on the proportion of household income spent on rent and the financial pressure that creates. We know that is significant for a number of households in Jersey. Measures might include increasing the supply of rental accommodation, which is part of our policy on housing.

[14:30]

Improving access to social and community housing. I think we are all aware of the work that is going on there. Supporting households struggling with rental costs. As Deputy Feltham knows, that assistance was stepped up during her reign as Minister for Social Security. Excessive rental increases and improving security and stability for tenants. We have gone some way to achieving that with the introduction of the Residential Tenancy Law. We have made some very good progress in addressing rental stress, but I think the essential question in this debate is how do we make renting more affordable and financially sustainable for Islanders? Protecting Islanders from high housing costs is a much broader objective. It recognises that housing affordability affects people whether they rent, own or are trying to get on to the property ladder or are approaching retirement. That is particularly important when we look at our demographics because many more of us will be living a long way past our retirement, so housing provision for that sector is becoming increasingly important. Protecting Islanders from high housing costs encompasses making home ownership more accessible, particularly for first-time buyers. That is work we are doing and building upon. Expanding assisted purchase and affordable housing schemes. Again, that is part of the pipeline of work we are delivering. Increasing the supply of homes across different price ranges. Addressing the cost of renting. Helping people avoid becoming financially overstretched by mortgage or housing costs. I think that is more closely aligned with the reducing rental stress and there are lots of ways we are doing that. Perhaps there are ways we could improve that or make that more focused. Ensuring that older Islanders can access suitable, affordable accommodation, that is going to be a big part of how we address housing in the future. I think we are all trying to do the same thing here, which is ensuring that the cost of having a home does not undermine Islanders' financial security or quality of life. We are all heading for the same objective, I just would urge Members to support the Council of Ministers' proposition because I think it is a much broader and encompassing objective.

The Bailiff:

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

2.7.13 Deputy M.R. Ferey:

I thank all Members who have contributed to this debate. There have been some really interesting matters that have arisen from it, and obviously some people have got some really good insights into the wording and what the amendment means. If I just take the subject of rental stress first and foremost. While rental stress does inform us about what is happening in people's budgets, as Deputy Raimondo very astutely put, it does not tell us the whole picture. The whole picture is far broader. It is about other household costs, it is about pay rises, and it is about costs that are increasing. Rental stress in itself, while I am not dismissing it and it feels very real for a lot of people, the bigger, wider prize is to improve the cost of housing in Jersey because it is not just about rents. While we do have some good data on rents and people who are spending more than 30 per cent of their household income on their rent, it does not tell us the wider picture. We need to get together to understand what the wider picture is and why people are feeling that pinch. To that end, there is lots of good work going on at the moment, not least, we are undertaking a piece of work on minimum income standards which will give us a better understanding of household budgets and what people need to realistically survive in Jersey. Allied to that of course, we have the Affordability Ministerial Group, which takes a broad prospective about why people are feeling the pinch with the cost of living. Of course, housing is very much a part of that picture, but it is just a slice of that picture. There are much wider issues that we are looking at and there are some really enthusiastic people and Ministers who are involved in that piece of work. I look forward to seeing that progress. If I turn to the definition of empty homes. Yes, Deputy Warr, when he was Minister for Housing, undertook that piece of work. We found out that, by and large, it is a very complex issue. There are some properties that, if you were living next door to a property like that, it is in your view on the way to work, it must be really frustrating to think: "Why is that big property just sat there for years and years doing nothing?" The reality is, they are almost always really complex issues. It can be down to probate, it can be down to people living out of the Island, but where we do have a clear pathway is through His Majesty's Receiver General. He has already got some success stories of properties that he has got involved with, contacted people from outside of the Island, and got those properties back on to the rental market. By us changing that wording on the second part of the amendment, that clearly shows our ambition to bringing about more resolutions for properties that have become out of use. Of course, Deputy Gleave asks: what is the definition of empty homes? That is a difficult one to answer, but we have done that piece of work to at least establish where those empty homes are. Members of the public willingly got involved and told us at the time exactly where they were and how long in their eyes they had been laid empty. Those 2 amendments set a clear ambition. I do not think they detract from the original amendment that Deputy Feltham brought, I think they improve upon the outcomes that we are seeking to find. Deputy Curtis asked, will I take this amendment in 2 parts. If people would sooner vote on it in 2 parts, I will happily take it in 2 parts; I think that would work. One does not necessarily detract from the other. If you would like to check that, Sir, before we take the vote on that basis. I thank Deputy Voisin for his insightful and well-considered comments, really going into the detail of the wording and why it is important. Of course, I thank the Chief Minister and my Assistant Minister, Senator Millar, for their well-considered comments. With that, I would ask that Members vote for both parts of this amendment and I call for the appel.

The Bailiff:

We are dealing with this in 2 parts. Part 1, the vote on the rental stress issue, and part 2 is a vote on the aspect dealing with empty homes. In relation to the first part, I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce the first part of the amendment has been adopted:

POUR: 32		**CONTRE: 11**		**ABSTAINED: 0**
Senator L.J. Farnham		Connétable of St. Helier		
Senator A. Maclean		Deputy M. Tadier		

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

The Bailiff:

I move on to the second part of the amendment. I invite 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 second part has been adopted:

POUR: 32		**CONTRE: 11**		**ABSTAINED: 0**

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

2.8 Common Strategic Policy 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): fifth amendment. (P.75/2026 Amd.(5)) - Affordable and secure housing - as amended

The Bailiff:

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

2.8.1 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

I think we need to give some consideration to the new wording which is in front of us: "protect Islanders from the high cost of housing", so I wish the Council of Ministers good luck with that one, and: "supporting the resolution of long-term empty homes." I do not know what the resolution is going to be but the debate we have just heard sounded a lot different to the debate we had in March 2022 when there was a lot more enthusiasm, when there was a lot more "can do" attitude, and a lot more cohesion from Members across the Assembly who wanted to find a solution, not just a resolution. It might have been the fact that there was an election just a few months away but it focused their mind. It is amazing how a vote early on in the term can be completely different to votes that are taken towards the end of a term when Government, and maybe Members, are scrabbling around to bring something back to the electorate after 4 years of inactivity. It will be interesting to see what this Government, if any of them stand for re-election, are proposing and what progress that they …

Deputy G.A. Raimondo of St. Brelade:

Can I ask a point of clarification?

Deputy M. Tadier:

No, not at this point; I thought it might be a point of order. The Member can speak, of course, at the end of my speech. It would be interesting to see whether or not this Government has achieved anything meaningful in those 2 areas or whether in fact this has just been a wrecking amendment being put forward. It is interesting that we are hearing human rights quoted - I am not sure if we often hear them quoted from the Council of Ministers - being quoted very selectively and being quoted when it comes to property rights. The first thing is you have to have property to have the right to enjoyment of property. While that can mean a very broad thing, as you all well know, it can mean literally the pen I am holding, it can be abstract property, I suppose, and in a certain way, intellectual property. If you are talking about the physical homes that people own, then you need to be a home owner. Often we are talking about landlords but sometimes it could be inherited properties. This idea that the Minister is relying on the Receiver General is a very tiny sub-section of the uninhabited homes in Jersey where they do not know who the owner is and he has got to get involved. I would add that there are obviously other fundamental human rights. The right to life is of course the most fundamental of all human rights because without being alive, then none of the other rights that we have are meaningful. The Senator will also know that when it comes to human rights, certainly in the U.K. - I am not sure and it would be interesting to find out in Jersey - that parliamentary sovereignty of course trumps human rights in the Human Rights Act 1998. Parliamentary sovereignty does override the E.C.H.R. (European Convention on Human Rights). Of course, we know that, more than that, the right to property is a qualified right. Government can, and the legislature can, enact legislation where it is deemed to be proportional. I think the term is a proportional way of achieving a legitimate aim, and that is exactly what we have here. The legitimate aim is that when you have an Island with a lack of housing, where space is at a premium, we have that perennial debate about whether you have to build on greenfields or brownfields. The debates will be, I suspect in the next year, about whether we allow building on glasshouse sites or whether we keep them in some form of agricultural or some form of production. I have no doubt about how that debate will go because we have got a Government that is stacked in favour of allowing development on former agricultural land. I do not see those as brownfields, I see those as very much agricultural land which will be developed for private developers. It is a shame, and I hope I am wrong. These are the kind of things and debates we are going to be having when we have a whole litany of properties in Jersey. The whole idea of a mechanism that was originally envisaged to put

these empty properties back into use as homes is to obviate some of that need to debate about whether we expand into the countryside, whether we crowd more people into St. Brelade, into Les Quennevais, into Red Houses. I am sure all the Deputies for St. Brelade and the Constable knows that when you look at the map, apart from certain parts of St. Helier, it is Les Quennevais which is the most concentrated outside of the St. Helier area in terms of its housing.

[14:45]

Members will also know by having walked it, the concentration in the Les Quennevais area alone. Are we going to be making decisions about going up or going out? This is exactly where we need to get to grips. If you have a family dispute, if you have inherited a property, and you have 3 brothers who are left who are not talking for whatever reason. They cannot decide what to do with the property and it is staying empty, getting a letter through the door from the Parish Hall maybe after 2 years in - it might focus the minds of those brothers - to say: "We know that your property is not being occupied." This is what worries me, is that a previous Minister, and the Minister said it again today, relying on members of the public to tell them when a property is empty. We do not want to be that kind of Island where you have to inform on the person who lives next to you and say: "This property is not being used" because then we are getting into a whole other domain of an abuse of the right to privacy. Privacy is a fundamental human right, the right to a private and family life. We should not be encouraging members of our community in some kind of 1940 to 1945 style to dob people in to the Government. We should use the mechanisms that we already have through the rates system. We know which properties are empty because they are not getting both returns back from it. It could be a mechanism where you simply say: "You know what? After 2 years, this property is not being used, your rates are going to go up twofold in the first year, threefold in the second year and fivefold in the third year." That would very quickly focus the minds. If we were to say to our good Connétable: "You know what? You can get to keep any of the rates that you get from that and you can put it in your Parish coffers. All we can do is split between the Island-wide rates and what you keep and put it in a ring-fenced fund for investment in affordable property." That is what I would call a joined-up scheme. It would be interesting in 4 years' time - and I will be back to make sure that I will be asking the questions before the end of this term - about how the Council of Ministers have got on. I think the States has voted today, it is a democratic process, to water down these proposals. I live in hope to see whether or not it makes a difference.

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

You will be aware that my light was on before the Deputy mentioned the Connétables and the Rates Law. I just wanted to stand and rise to say that the Comité des Connétables will be discussing what, if anything, we can do at our December meeting because while there may be restrictions for us under the law, there may be opportunities for us to ask in a different way. It may not be mandatory but we may be able to find that information. I am sure that my colleagues on the Comité will be as keen as I am to try and find a workable solution. Regardless of whether or not we gain extra revenue, which obviously would mean a change in the Rates Law in the future, that is something we can also consider.

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

Our chair of the Comité has answered one question I might have voiced, but there is a further point which is worth clarifying. The Deputy has referred to the apparent disparity between the enthusiasm of Members today and some years ago when there was a motion to eke out empty properties. I think it is fair to point out that at that time, that proposition was put in the aftermath of I think a proposition raised by the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel, which in turn was prompted by a then recent census. That census I think had a very high figure of approximately 8 per cent of the properties now were deemed to be empty. Whatever the number was, it was held, and has

subsequently been held, to be not really plausible. I think we need to bear in mind that if there are empty properties, it is nowhere near the figure it was at the time of the previous debate.

2.8.4 Senator M.E. Millar:

I just want to clarify, I think Deputy Tadier is quite right in saying that parliamentary sovereignty overrides human rights. It can do but that is a matter for this Assembly to pass a law. My basic understanding of human rights is that they are about what Government cannot do to you. Government cannot breach Article 1. If the States wants to pass legislation that does something and it has the support of the Law Officers, then it can of course do so. As for Article 2, I hope we do not see anything like the shameful abuse of Article 2 that has happened in the U.K. Courts this week.

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

I was not going to speak on this but the Connétable raised the issue of an amendment that the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel brought to the last Budget, discussions where we requested the Minister for Housing to do research on empty homes. It took me writing Written Question 168 to find out what was happening with the work that had happened since our amendment. I would direct Members to that because the Minister said clearly in this that there is no standalone publication that will happen to try to bring and draw all the evidence and work that the Minister has done in this area to, I suppose, come to this conclusion that there is only this focus on the long-term empty homes rather than a wider policy. This is the only information that we have of the evidence he says has been done. We do not see that evidence, we do not see the background to that and how they did that desk-based analysis, but it is there. I wanted to raise that so those Members who want to take this further can look at that basis as a starter, so that is Written Question 168. I do welcome the Connétable of St. John, the chair of the committee, that he is, with his team and the Connétables, taking further action on this because it was something that we continue as a Scrutiny Panel to raise as a concern. It is really good to see that there is some action in this area.

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

I do rise to do a speech in support of Deputy Feltham's amendment. I am not so sure if it is still valid or not at this point now that the Council of Ministers' amendment has been passed.

The Bailiff:

Well certainly you can address the amendment as amended. Yes, of course you can address the amendment.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

My address to the amendment as amended is that it is a shame the amendment from the Council of Ministers has been passed. As the bearer of the initial amendment said earlier in her speech, that the change in the words would very much dilute or change the purpose of her own amendment. We are where we are, so I am going to carry on with the speech in support of Deputy Feltham's amendment. I just would like to say that the purpose of the Deputy's amendment has been always to strengthen the Common Strategic Policy by making it clear that housing is not just about building more homes but about ensuring Islanders that they can access homes that are affordable, secure and suitable for their own needs. Increasing housing supply is important but supply alone does not solve the challenges faced by many Islanders. I do know that because I work closely with Islanders who feel trapped in housing properties they have been put and that have been extremely detrimental to their wellbeing. For those who rent, the reality of the housing crisis is much more immediate. It is whether they can afford next month's rent, it is whether they can feel secure in their home, or if they can find somewhere suitable for themselves and their families to live. What Deputy Feltham is asking in her initial amendment was one of Reform Jersey's key priorities, that the Assembly recognises the pressure faced by renters and the importance of preventing homelessness and the need to bring empty homes back into use. I am pleased that the Deputy's amendment to the C.S.P. document highlights

homelessness prevention. It is far better to help people before they reach crisis point than to step in after they have lost their homes. In my view, Deputy Feltham's amendment does not tie the Government's hands or dictate specific policies and that was never her intention. What it does, it strengthens a direction we are setting and ensures that housing affordability and housing security are clearly recognised as a priority. This is a practical, reasonable and compassionate amendment that reflects the reality faced by many Islanders who deserve the support of this Assembly. For that reason, I urge Members to support Deputy Feltham's amendment.

The Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to speak on the amendment as amended? I call upon Deputy Feltham to reply.

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

I would like to thank the Members that engaged on the debate on the amendment to the amendment. I know that there may well have been some Members that rolled their eyes when I said that I was not going to accept the Council of Ministers' amendment because that would have avoided a debate. Debates like this are essential to our parliamentary democracy. It is really important that we all recognise we are here in this debating Chamber to talk about matters of such importance. The matter of housing affordability is a matter of great importance to many of our population. I am pleased that we were able to have that debate, although obviously I am not so pleased that, in my view, the amendment has been watered down, but I accept that that is the decision of the Assembly. In relation to the debate on the main proposition, I thank my co-leader colleague, Deputy Tadier, for his input into that. He, as I do, recognised that the Council of Ministers' amendment was somewhat of a wrecking amendment, but we accept where we are. It was interesting that he seemed to stimulate more debate, and I was pleased that the Constable of St. John talked about his Comité des Connétables being a committee of action. Having worked with the Constable over the last term of office, I know that he is a man of action, and I take him at his word on that. I was disappointed that Ministers did not rise to talk about their support of the amendment. I hope that they still support their amended amendment. I was disappointed that the Minister for Social Security did not do more in her speech than answer back and debate points in Deputy Tadier's speech. I think that a debate on housing warrants more than that. I would make the point that I felt it was incredibly important to bring an amendment in this respect. Without this amendment, the Common Strategic Policy would have lacked adequate concern for people who are renting their homes. It also would have lacked any form of reference to homelessness on the Island and that would be a great shame. I ask Members to support the amendment as now amended and I call for the appel.

The Bailiff:

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

POUR: 37		**CONTRE: 7**		**ABSTAINED: 0**
Senator M.E. Millar		Senator L.J. Farnham		
Senator S. Kersten		Senator I.J. Gorst		
Connétable of St. Mary		Senator A. Maclean		
Connétable of St. Martin		Senator M.R. Le Hegarat		
Connétable of St. Brelade		Senator T.J.A. Binet		
Connétable of St. Helier		Senator H.M. Miles		
Connétable of St. John		Connétable of Grouville		

Connétable of St. Ouen				
Connétable of Trinity				
Connétable of St. Saviour				
Connétable of St. Lawrence				
Deputy M. Tadier				
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet				
Deputy C.S. Alves				
Deputy K.F. Morel				
Deputy G. Voisin				
Deputy M.B. Andrews				
Deputy R.E. Binet				
Deputy T.A. Coles				
Deputy A.F. Curtis				
Deputy C.D. Curtis				
Deputy L.V. Feltham				
Deputy M.R. Ferey				
Deputy H.L. Jeune				
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée				
Deputy J. Renouf				
Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson				
Deputy B. Ward				
Deputy K.M. Wilson				
Deputy L. Carpenter				
Deputy S. Gleave				
Deputy C. Leck				
Deputy V. Li				
Deputy R. Parker				
Deputy G. Raimondo				
Deputy C. Rebindaine				
Deputy P. J. Romeril				

Senator L.J. Farnham:

I think Deputy Feltham might have … yes, no excuse. **[Laughter]**

2.9 Common Strategic Policy 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): twenty-fifth amendment (P.75/2026 Amd.(25)) - Water quality and environmental contamination

The Bailiff:

I now move to what was the eleventh amendment, is now the twenty-fifth amendment, lodged by Deputy Tadier, and I ask the Greffier to read the amendment.

[15:00]

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

After the words "report accompanying this proposition" insert the words ", except that (a) on page 16 of the report, after action 9.3 there should be inserted the following action: '9.4 Improve water quality and address environmental contamination, including taking forward the recommendations of the Independent P.F.A.S. Scientific Advisory Panel' and (b) on page 16 of the report, after the words 'Les Quennevais in St. Brelade.' there should be inserted the following paragraph: 'We will invest in improving water quality, including ensuring that the recommendations of the P.F.A.S. Scientific Advisory Panel are given full and transparent consideration in developing Jersey's approach to environmental contamination'."

2.9.1 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Just before I start, first of all I want to just wish Deputy Maltman the best from this Assembly on behalf of all of us. **[Approbation]** I wish her a speedy recovery. In a moment, I will be delivering the speech that she has given me, so it will be slightly unusual. Earlier today I referred to myself in the third person but in a moment I will be speaking about Deputy Maltman in the first person. It is not something that happens every day. I will just confirm with the Council of Ministers that we spoke earlier and because the Deputy has effectively amended her own amendment in conjunction with discussions with the Council of Ministers, I understand that the Council will also be accepting this amendment. I will just allow the Minister to perhaps confirm that.

The Bailiff:

Well you need to make your proposition, really.

Deputy M. Tadier:

That is fine. I am working on the basis that that is the case but it will become apparent if that is not the case. By the way, I cannot really do much about it, I have got a pre-written speech **[Laughter]** which is quite unusual.

Senator L.J. Farnham:

Do a deal, perhaps, yes. **[Laughter]**

Deputy M. Tadier:

What I will do now is I am just going to proceed to read Deputy Maltman's speech, so just imagine I am Deputy Maltman. **[Laughter]** It might take a bit of imagination. Because it will be her maiden speech as well, we will give her a round of foot stomping at the end. **[Laughter]** I may even join in. I bring this amendment as amended to the Government's Common Strategic Policy because I believe protecting the quality of our water and tackling environmental contamination must be recognised as fundamental and the responsibility of Government. We live on a beautiful Island. Our countryside, coastline beaches and agricultural land help define who we are. They contribute to our wellbeing and to our quality of life. We are custodians of these natural assets with a responsibility to protect them for future generations, but human beings have not always been good stewards and there are numerous examples of how we have destroyed parts of our planet. I recently watched the BBC documentary "Buried with Michael Sheen". I recommend it to Members. Although it is far from easy viewing, it investigates decades of alleged toxic waste and chemical dumping by Monsanto in south Wales and parts of England. It tells of warnings that were unheeded, persistent P.C.B. (polychlorinated biphenyl) chemicals entering the environment and families seeking answers about their land and the possible effects on their health. The documentary concerns P.C.B.s rather than

P.F.A.S. (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) but the parallels with Jersey are evident: long-lasting contamination, questions about the corporate responsibility, the communities left seeking answers. It reminds us that environmental damage does not simply disappear with time. The programme also helped prompt political inquiries, Welsh Affairs Committee hearings and calls for wider testing and clean-up funding. P.F.A.S. or P.F.A.A.s (perfluoroalkyl acids) are a group of thousands of manmade chemicals, often called forever chemicals because they persist in the environment for decades. Some have been linked to serious health risks and they can contaminate our soil and water. Jersey knows this legacy through the historic use of firefighting foam at our airport. The accompanying report to P.176/2004 lodged by the Harbours and Airport Committee, ahead of a settlement approved in 2005, makes revealing reading. On confidentiality it says the main problem with bringing this report and proposition to the attention of the States is the need for confidentiality. Under the draft deed of settlement, the parties agreed to keep even the existence of the terms of the agreement confidential, along with the manufacturer's name. The settlement was debated in-camera away from public scrutiny. The committee itself acknowledged that it did not seek an in-camera with any enthusiasm and States Members could still inspect confidential documents before voting but those documents were not intended to be made public. I raise this not to judge decisions taken more than 20 years ago but to learn from them. There is a difference between providing information to elected representatives and being transparent with affected Islanders. We live in different times. Government have committed to openness and our understanding of the environmental and potential health consequences of P.F.A.S. has advanced considerably. We cannot ignore what we know today because it will affect tomorrow. P.F.A.S. has not only found its way into our soil and water, it has entered our collective psyche. Future decisions must be guided by the best available science with transparency and accountability to the people we serve. A recent example of why transparency matters is the spreading of biosolids, treated sewage sludge used as fertiliser on agricultural land. Biosolids have been found to contain low levels of P.F.A.S., prompting understandable questions about their use on land where our food is grown, yet it took an 18 months' freedom of information dispute pursued by Water Awareness Jersey and intervention by the Information Commissioner before the Government disclosed the location of 111 fields across 9 Parishes where biosolids had been spread. I acknowledge the Government's assurance that testing has not identified elevated P.F.A.S. contamination in the fields tested but my point is about openness. Islanders should not have had to fight for this information about what is being put on our land and where. Transparency should be central to environmental decision-making, not something secured only after a dispute. There is also a question about the rules themselves. Jersey regulates the spreading of biosolids but the framework has historically focused on pathogens, heavy metals and nutrients rather than emerging contaminants such as P.F.A.S. Testing has now been introduced, yet I have not identified a specific statutory P.F.A.S. limit for biosolids. A framework designed around traditional contaminants can lead to monitoring, testing and control of P.F.A.S. Jersey's Independent P.F.A.S. Scientific Advisory Panel has warned of the potential for P.F.A.S. to accumulate in the soil through repeated applications and has recommended safeguards. Are our regulations keeping pace with the science? That is why my amendment as amended calls for ensuring that the recommendations of the P.F.A.S. Scientific Advisory Panel are given full and transparent consideration in developing Jersey's approach to environmental contamination. The health evidence makes this responsibility even more important. In its second report published in November 2024, the Independent P.F.A.S. Scientific Advisory Panel reviewed international research, linking exposure to certain P.F.A.S. with kidney and testicular cancers, increased cholesterol, reduced vaccine responses in children and changes in liver function. It also examined possible links with thyroid disorders, including evidence from animal studies concerning thyroid cancer. Further research is needed. Not every suspected health case effects have been established but the findings justify taking the evidence seriously and adopting a precautionary approach. I grew up around Val de la Mare, near the area now associated with the now rezoned green area. It is a beautiful part of the Island and I treasured that as a child. Growing up around Val de la Mare, I remember playing on Côtils and the sand dunes, exploring around the potato fields near the

ponds. It was an area I cherished as a child. Little could I have imagined that this area would one day become associated with one of Jersey's most troubling environmental legacies. I could not have imagined the concern this would go on to cause parishioners living nearby, people I knew, people that I went to school with, nor could I have imagined that one day I would be questioning the possible impact of forever chemicals on my own health or standing in this Chamber asking Members to support this amendment. I know I am not alone, and the quality of our water and the health of our environment matters deeply to Islanders. We have seen the public response to petitions devoted to scientific investigation, the questions raised in this Assembly and in March this year, the overwhelming support for the principles of former Deputy Steve Luce's proposals to establish statutory P.F.A.S. limits in drinking water. We must not lose that momentum through a change of Government. His proposals addressed one important part of the panel's work, P.F.A.S. limits in drinking water. The World Health Organisation is also working towards new health-based guidance values, with expert evaluations planned for 2027 and final guidance, potentially, following in 2028. The Jersey panel made 31 recommendations, going well beyond the water coming out of our taps. They include investigating sources of elevated P.F.A.S. in ground water and surface water, considering ways to reduce contamination and assessing contaminated land and appropriate management for remediation. My amendment asks that this work be considered in its entirety. I acknowledge the comments made by Senator Mary Le Hegarat or, as I would call her, Senator Le Hegarat, the Minister for the Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries, in the Scrutiny Panel hearing on 2nd November. She said that P.F.A.S. levels in the water need to continue to fall but how to achieve this requires further investigation and careful and efficient management. I do not disagree. Indeed, I see my amendment as consistent with the Government's stated intention to examine the evidence before deciding how best to proceed. I hope the Minister will see it as supporting and reinforcing that work. I thank the Council of Ministers for its comments and welcome its recognition of this important matter of improving water quality and addressing environmental contamination. I accept that the panel's 31 recommendations require detailed scientific, technical and financial assessment. That is precisely why I amended my original proposition. I am not asking the Government to implement every recommendation without proper consideration. I am asking for clear strategic commitment to improving water quality, addressing contamination and giving the panel's recommendations full and transparent consideration. The Council argues that this is premature but a strategic priority does not become premature simply because the detailed work needed to deliver it is still underway. Surely the purpose of the Common Strategic Policy is to set out what matters to Government and what they intend to prioritise over the next 4 years. Ministers point to substantial work already underway, and I welcome that, but if the next Government are committed to these objectives, why should they not be explicitly recognised in the strategic policy? I am not asking Members to approve a particular treatment plan, imposing new statutory limits or committing millions of pounds before the evidence has been assessed. I am asking Government to recognise clean water and environmental protection as fundamental responsibilities that Islanders deserve to see reflected in their priorities. When the panel's final report was published in July, the Government indicated that they would respond later this year. We are now told that their response will not be published until the first quarter of 2027. That change in timetable reinforces the need for a clear strategic commitment, transparent consideration and accountability for the decisions that follow. My amendment is not about pre-empting the science. It is about ensuring that the science informs the Government's priorities and that Islanders can see how the advice is being considered. Successive Common Strategic Policies have recognised the importance of our environment. The 2018-2022 policy made protecting and valuing it one of the 5 principal priorities, while the 2023-2026 policy specifically committed to improving water, air and soil quality. With what we know about the environmental contamination, we should be strengthening those commitments not allowing them to slip backwards. We cannot change the environmental legacy we have inherited but we can decide what legacy we leave behind. Let this Assembly and this Government show their commitment to future generations so that they inherit an Island where clean water, healthy land and a thriving

natural environment are more than just aspirations. They are priorities, reflected in the decisions we make today, and I ask Members to support my amendment as amended**. [Approbation]**

[15:15]

The Bailiff:

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

2.9.2 Senator M.R. Le Hegarat (Minister for Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries):

Members, I rise to respond to the amended amendment 11 lodged by Deputy Maltman, and subsequently amendment 25 lodged by Deputy Tadier this morning, and I too wish Deputy Maltman a speedy recovery. The Council of Ministers recognises the importance of protecting Jersey's water quality and addressing environmental contamination. These are important issues for Islanders and remain priorities for this Government. That commitment is reflected in work already under way across Government, including environmental monitoring and investigation, regulatory activity and Jersey Water's ongoing treatment trials. I want to make it clear at the outset that Ministers support the objectives behind the amendment. We all want to see continued progress in improving water quality, understanding the extent of contamination and protecting both current and future generations. Having considered this amendment in more detail, I am now able to support it. The revised wording removes the explicit commitment to implementation from paragraph (b) and makes clear the panel's recommendations are to be given full and transparent consideration. I consider that an important distinction. Turning first to paragraph (a), the amendment would commit Government to taking forward the recommendations of the Independent P.F.A.S. Scientific Advisory Panel. I want to make it clear what I understand "taking forward" to mean in this context. The Independent P.F.A.S. Scientific Panel made 31 recommendations covering a broad range of issues, including mains and private water supplies, food and land, environmental remediation, monitoring, waste treatment and P.F.A.S. destruction. These recommendations vary significantly in their practical, technical, financial and regulatory implications. A number of recommendations remain under active consideration and require further assessment. Some recommendations, particularly those relating to drinking water standards and treatment, are closely linked to Jersey Water's ongoing treatment trials. You will have seen that in the media earlier in the week and I would like to make it quite clear that myself and Deputy Morel have seen these trials in action. Those trials are important because they will provide further evidence on the effectiveness, practicality and cost of different treatment options. Until that evidence is available, Ministers cannot properly assess the implications of these recommendations. For me, taking forward the recommendations means progressing them through that detailed assessment and that formal Government response. It does not mean a commitment today to implement all 31 recommendations. This is not a question of whether the recommendations are important. It is a question of ensuring that decisions are evidence-led, proportionate and appropriate to Jersey's circumstances. Ministers have already begun detailed consideration of the panel's findings and a formal Government response to report 4 is being developed for publication in the first quarter of 2027. That response will consider the available evidence, practical deliverable considerations, financial and regulatory implications and Jersey's specific circumstances before setting out the Government's position. On that basis, I am able to support paragraph (a). Turning to paragraph (b), I am now able to support the revised wording. The amendment would commit Government to ensuring that the recommendations of the P.F.A.S. Scientific Advisory Panel are given full and transparent consideration in developing Jersey's approach to environmental contamination. That consideration is already underway. The panel's recommendations are informing Government's work and the formal response to report 4 will set out my position publicly. That would apply irrespective of where environmental contamination occurs and is not limited to any particular area of the Island. The amended wording reflects the approach Government are already taking. The panel's findings and recommendations are being considered as a part of the ongoing response to P.F.A.S. contamination. It reinforces that this consideration should be full and transparent without

predetermining the outcome. Consideration of relevant expert advice is a fundamental part of good government and the amended wording is consistent with that approach. I do not regard paragraph (b) as creating a commitment to implement the panel's recommendations. It commits Government to consider them properly and transparently, which is work underway. Put simply, the panel's recommendations will give full consideration. The formal response will then set out where Government intend to take action where further work is needed and where a different approach may be more appropriate. I would also at this point like to remind Members that it was the current Minister for Infrastructure who agreed that the F.O.I. (Freedom of Information) request should be released. Both myself and Deputy Morel have already attended 2 Action for Cleaner Water Groups, which encompasses both the Ministers but also, more importantly, officers from both the Infrastructure Department and the Environment Department working closely together to ensure clean water, because it goes far broader than just P.F.A.S. It obviously talks about us having resilience in our water supply, ensuring our streams and our ponds are all clean and uncontaminated, so this is a broad piece of work. In conclusion, Members supporting this amendment should not be interpreted as a commitment to implement all 31 recommendations of the Independent P.F.A.S. Scientific Advisory Panel, nor does it pre-empt the formal Government response to report 4. The work continues, environmental monitoring continues, investigation continues, regulatory activity continues, Jersey Water treatment trials continue. The findings of the panel remain an important part of the evidence being considered by the Government. The issue before Members today is whether the amended wording leaves Government able to assess the recommendations properly before deciding what should be adopted. In my view, it does. The amended wording is sufficiently flexible and is consistent with the evidence-led process already under way. For those reasons, I ask Members to support the amended amendment.

Connétable D.G. Curtis of St. Saviour:

I would like to take this opportunity to register a conflict. I was involved in a company that was working with Infrastructure dealing with biosolids and compost. So for that reason I will abstain from the voting.

The Bailiff:

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

2.9.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

Thank you to the Minister in particular, because she was the one who spoke, for her response. Clearly there has been a lot of work going on behind the scenes, both leading up to this point but also there have been conversations between Deputy Maltman and Government. I will reiterate the words that Deputy Maltman said. She said she was not asking for Government to implement every recommendation without proper consideration but she was asking for a clear strategic commitment to improving water quality, addressing contamination and giving the panel's recommendations full transparency and consideration. Within that, though, I think there is an underlying desire to see action here. While the expectation of the Deputy, myself and all of us, is not that we expect Government to do everything, we do expect Government to take some action to improve the quality of water, whether it is in the area of P.F.A.S., P.C.B.s or generally. If I just may be allowed a couple of personal comments. I probably need to declare an interest that where I live we are on a borehole that has an element of treating on it, and we get it tested fairly often. It is quite clear that when my mother-in-law comes to Jersey, she prefers her water and she also notices that when the dog goes to visit her, the dog prefers her water. Depending on the time of year, the dog sometimes goes off our water, so we also have a biological tester with a waggy tail in the house, and sometimes it requires us filtering more often than we might do. This is an important issue for a lot of people, not just in St. Peter, St. Ouen and St. Mary in Deputy Maltman's constituency. We have constituents in St. Brelade

who have been in contact with all of us and with all the candidates previously on this. We know it is an issue that is shared, and water moves around in the water table in Jersey, so it is important. I am going to leave the comments there. I take the lack of interventions from other Members to signify that there is a great deal of support for this proposition. I will simply say then that if at the end of the year when P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures Committee) issues its usual report and it is found that I am the most talkative Member this year, then at least part of the blame on this occasion can go to Deputy Maltman. **[Laughter]** I ask for the appel.

The Bailiff:

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

POUR: 42		**CONTRE: 0**		**ABSTAINED: 1**
Senator L.J. Farnham				Connétable of St. Saviour
Senator A. Maclean				
Senator M.R. Le Hegarat				
Senator T.J.A. Binet				
Senator H.M. Miles				
Senator M.E. Millar				
Senator S. Kersten				
Connétable of St. Mary				
Connétable of St. Martin				
Connétable of St. Brelade				
Connétable of St. Helier				
Connétable of St. John				
Connétable of St. Ouen				
Connétable of Trinity				
Connétable of Grouville				
Connétable of St. Lawrence				
Deputy M. Tadier				
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet				
Deputy C.S. Alves				
Deputy K.F. Morel				
Deputy G. Voisin				
Deputy M.B. Andrews				
Deputy R.E. Binet				
Deputy T.A. Coles				
Deputy A.F. Curtis				
Deputy C.D. Curtis				
Deputy L.V. Feltham				

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

2.10 Common Strategic Policy 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): twenty-first amendment (P.75/2026 Amd.(21)) - Open space and play in St. Helier.

The Bailiff:

We now move on to the twenty-first amendment lodged by Deputy Li. Deputy Li, am I right in thinking that you only wish to propose the second part of your amendment? Is that correct?

Deputy V. Li of St. Helier North:

Yes, Sir.

The Bailiff:

I invite the Greffier to read the second part of the amendment.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

After the words "report accompanying this Proposition" insert the words – ", except that on page 16 of the Report, after 9.3 there should be inserted the following – "9.5. Ensure there is no net loss of publicly accessible open space in St. Helier over this electoral term"".

2.10.1 Deputy V. Li of St. Helier North:

During the election I asked young people across the Island what they would ask of this Assembly if they had a chance. They gave me 3 answers: make McDonald's cheaper **[Laughter],** run some of the buses later so they can meet their friends in town on a Sunday, and give them somewhere to meet their friends where they do not have to spend money because, as they told me, the beach is not really for winter. So after everything we have debated these couple of days, making McDonald's cheaper may sound like an unusual request to put before the Assembly. I did explain to them that this is not the job of the Assembly to decide what McDonald's charges for a Big Mac. We cannot simply just vote to make that cheaper. What struck me, however, was not the request itself but what sat behind it. All of the answers are about the same thing: somewhere to be with their friends. McDonald's is where they meet now because it is warm, it is safe and their friends are there. I notice where they

want to meet in town, so St. Helier is not just a home to the children who live there. It is where the Island's young people come together. Young people do not stop needing somewhere to go when they outgrow the playground. Children and young people thrive when they have a safe place with room for independence, somewhere to be with their friends without being organised by adults and without having to buy something to stay. Priority 9 of the C.S.P. promises greener areas and more places for people to meet, play and spend time. This is what they asked for almost word for word. We are doing things for them, and I support them. Fort Regent will be a wonderful place for young people but it will not be built overnight. A new youth centre is planned for the north of town and it will matter, but a youth centre is a youth centre. It has opening hours and adults in charge. The library is a great place to go, especially if it opens on a Sunday and if you want to be quiet, but meeting your friends we know is not quiet.

[15:30]

None of these replace a bench, a place to kick a ball, a space that is simply theirs. We already know that that gap is there. The 2018 St. Helier open space audit found that the provision for young people aged 10 to 19 was markedly low: 0.01 hectares per 1,000 young people. To put that into context, that is roughly half of a tennis court for every 1,000 young people. That was 8 years ago, and town has many more homes now. This amendment in the first format added 2 actions to the C.S.P. Action 9.4 asked the Minister to update that audit by the end of 2027 and to set measurable standards for accessible green space and for children and young people's play space. Action 9.5 asked for no net loss of publicly accessible open space in St. Helier over this electoral term. I am grateful that the Council of Ministers supports 9.5. On 9.4, the Minister for Planning and Regulation has written to me, and I thank him for it. I want to put what he has told me on the record. He has set out the evidence Ministers relied on: the 2018 audit, the protected open space identified in the Bridging Island Plan and the Jersey Play Plan 2025-2028, which aims to map play facilities and highlight the priority areas where provision could be improved. He has given me the assurance the Play Plan work, together with the St. Helier regeneration strategy the C.S.P. commits to, can be used to consider whether the existing evidence is adequate and where it needs to be updated. Where that work identifies a need, including a need to update parts of the audit, it can form a future Island Plan review. On the strength of that assurance, I withdraw 9.4. I would be grateful if the Minister could confirm it when he or his Assistant Minister speaks later. I do have expectations, and I will follow up each one: that review looks at teenagers, not just at the small children; that Members and residents can see the result and that the Minister confirms how no net loss will be measured. The 2018 audit remains the baseline until it is updated. It is the same thing that we have repeated so many times: you cannot keep a promise when you cannot check. That brings me to 9.5, which asks one thing. As we develop our town, we keep as much open space as we have today. Open space matters to everyone in town. I have focused on young people because they are the ones who told me and the ones that the 2018 audit found least well served. They are also growing up in the part of Jersey under most pressure. In urban areas, 39 per cent of Islanders say that they are finding it hard to cope, against 22 per cent in rural areas. Around 4 in 10 households in town own their home against 7 in 10 in the countryside, and about 18 per cent of St. Helier residences, over 6,000 people, have no outdoor space at all. Picture a teenager in town. It is more likely they are in a family that is stretched, in a home that is rented, perhaps with no garden. Open space is not a nice to have; it is where growing up happens. 9.5 does not block any development. When open space is taken, it cannot be replaced as well in town. Jersey is 9 miles by 5, land is well resourced. We cannot grow, borrow or input. At the beginning of this speech I talked about the young people who told me they wanted somewhere to meet their friends and did not want to spend money and it was not dependent on the weather. I believe that is not an extravagant ask. Whether it is a patch of grass, a small square, a kickabout space or simply somewhere to sit together, those places only exist if we choose to protect them. If we do not keep room in town for our young people, we should not be surprised if they grow up feeling that the town

was designed around everything except them. I thank the Ministers for supporting 9.5, and I ask the Members to do the same.

The Bailiff:

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

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

I will keep it very short. I am in full support of it. I think it is a brilliant idea to be encouraging more open space. I think Deputy Li is completely correct with everything she said about young people. It is exactly what they want. They want more space, they want to be able to meet their friends and they want to be able to do it in a way that is accessible, so possibly transport is something to look at in the future. I am in full support. Especially with the possible idea that we could end up with a mega-school in town, keeping open play space for younger people is a very good idea.

2.10.3 Connétable I. Gardiner of St. Helier:

First of all, I am grateful to Deputy Li for bringing this amendment, and let me start with the people that I represent. We need to remember that a third of the population on this Island live in St. Helier and it was *déjà vu* when we talked about the Bridging Island Plan, looking at the Chamber, the 10 days when we debated the Bridging Island Plan, and I remember how long it took to get the Island Plan. I remember this audit, so the 10 days we will never get back. It was more than 100-plus amendments. So this is just the training I think for the next Island Plan. I remember that audit because I was elected Deputy for St. Helier and we talked about each of the residents of St. Helier has only 7.7 square metres of open space that can be used. Think about 7.7 square metres of open space. It is less than a small cupboard room in some homes I assume and most of them ... I think at least 10,000 people do not have gardens compared to some of the country houses or the parks, gardens and green spaces for our gardens. It is really important that we will not lose any space. About the play strategy, it was one of the amendments and it was accepted in the Bridging Island Plan and in a couple of debates. We do have a play strategy. We do not have funding for the play strategy, and I am looking to my colleagues on the right. St. Martin and Grouville and the other Parishes are putting lots of funds to ensure that we do have play spaces. If you are thinking about St. Helier, I think every child probably on the Island or most of the children on the Island use the play area where St. Helier ratepayers put £750,000. I completely agree with the spaces that we need for teenagers and all the children. We have just finished consultation for St. Andrew's Park, and it was a really strong message about the type of activities that all the children and young people would like. It will happen in another year and it will be £150,000 to make it happen. Why I am standing here now to speak, apart from reminding about this, I know that Deputy Li decided not to debate her first point. It is about the audit and standards. Saying this, priority 9, and I am looking to the Council of Ministers, is committing, which I really welcome, to have a regeneration strategy for St. Helier. I hope the Deputies of St. Helier and the Connétable of St. Helier will be included in developing this strategy, and I am thinking to set measurable standards and go back on the audit. We are talking about it will be 9 years since the last audit. A lot has changed. Overdale does not exist, Fort Regent is closed and the Millennial Park was updated but we did not have any new extra areas developed. I believe do the audit of something that exists already. It is not creating more work. It is just where we have been in 2018, where are we in 2027 and where we would like to progress. Interestingly, Government, and I really support the play strategy that is being developed. They came to me and said: "We are creating a map of all play areas. Would St. Helier put play areas on the map?" We will put play areas on the map. We are very happy to do this. How about using this map for making the audit? The map already exists and we have an officer in post supporting this map. We just need to make sure ... and it is not just for St. Helier, but I am speaking for St. Helier because it is really clear. I believe it is good to see the audit in all the play areas and open spaces across the Island if the map already exists. I would encourage Ministers, when developing a regeneration strategy, to start with a refreshed open space

play areas audit together with the Parish. Town has grown a lot over the last 4 years. We have hundreds and hundreds of units. The Common Strategic Policy is encouraging more building and, as St. Helier grows, the square metreage of St. Helier remains the same. We need to breathe, so let us work on this together.

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

I thank Deputy Li's engagement and pragmatic approach to this amendment. I rise briefly just to support the Government's position on this amendment. From a children and families perspective, I recognise the importance of accessible open spaces for children, young people and families, particularly those living in St. Helier. However, supporting that principle does not mean that we should commit the Government to further work when there is already an established evidence base and policy framework in place. 9.4 would have required an updated audit by the end of 2027 but there is currently no identified resource to deliver that work. We need to be realistic about the commitments we make and ensure that public resources are directed where they can be of the greatest impact. I am happy that the Deputy removed 9.4, but that does not mean that we place less importance on the needs of children and families or the value of open space. It simply recognises that additional work must be necessary, achievable and properly resourced. The Play Plan forms part of that thinking, and I am glad that the Connétable mentioned the map in her speech, because that is a really good resource, which is being developed at pace, and as new play spaces are identified and what the amenities are and how accessible they are and where the parking is, it forms part of that really open source access for the public to see where the play spaces are. I am supportive of the principle in 9.5, which provides a proportion of commitment to protecting publicly accessible open space in St. Helier. For these reasons, I support 9.5 and would ask Members to do likewise.

2.10.5 Senator L.J. Farnham:

Thank you to Deputy Ferey. I just wanted to thank Deputy Li for her engagement with the Government on the lead-up to this, which led us to, I think, reach a good position. The Deputy asked a question in relation to 3 points, which she wanted to confirm. My understanding is the Minister for Planning and Regulation is agreeable. In his absence she will have to continue talks with him afterwards, but that is my understanding. Of course existing planning policies already provide strong protection for open space. Policy C17 creates a strong presumption against a loss of protected space. Policy C16 requires open space provision as part of largescale developments and policy C18 requires clarifying residential development to provide appropriate play space. Having said that, the planning framework is there for not only protecting open space but also increasing the provision. Accepting 9.5 of the Deputy's amendment therefore reinforces the importance of safeguarding open space. It builds upon what is already in place and the existing policy framework, which is why we are pleased to support it. I would also like to thank the Minister for Planning and Regulation, the Minister for the Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries and, of course, the Constable of St. Helier, all of whom have played a proactive part in this. I think Members are probably all aligned on the fact that as we go into the future we know that St. Helier is lacking open green space, so it is not about maintaining and ensuring we do not lose any open space. We need to create a lot more.

[15:45]

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

The Chief Minister has stolen quite a lot of my thunder as the Assistant Minister for Planning and Regulation, so I intend to talk in 2 parts as the Assistant Minister for the Economy as well, but to start off with I would like to thank Deputy Li for her work here. I know she is very passionate in this area, having worked with her in a number of areas pre our time in the Assembly. I am delighted that the Council of Ministers is prepared to, and invite everyone to, support 9.5. Just from the economy point of view, just picking up on the Connétable of St. Helier's point, we had a very nice lunch before the election when the then Deputy Gardiner informed me what she was hoping to achieve if elected

as Constable of St. Helier. This very much plays into that, but it plays in somewhat wider. We both had an agreement that St. Helier has lacked a bit of care over the last decade or so and is feeling some of the pressures for that and that this Government, when they came forward, would want to start revitalising and reinvigorating the Parish. There is open space. It is vital for the people who live in the Parish, as has been covered earlier, but also for Islanders widely. It is the heartbeat of our economy, so most Islanders spend some time in St. Helier and enjoy its facilities, and because of that it is also very vital to our economy. To that end I am pleased that the Connétable has already met with the Economy Department to talk about how we can go about putting some energy into revitalising the Parish and being part of it, and space is going to be really important in that. So there is obvious space around St. Helier. We need to thank the Minister for Treasury and Resources for a nice little park in the north of St. Helier, so well done. Also, not meaning to open a debate from yesterday but obviously we have plenty of beaches around the Parish so, with the exception of the Minister for the Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries and the Minister for Economic Development, please be careful when you are leaving the beach with any sand on your feet. With that, I think that is everything I wanted to say. I would encourage the Assembly to support the amendment 9.5.

2.10.7 Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier:

I am somewhat disappointed that the Deputy chose to make the amendment and remove 9.4 because I do think it would warrant some debate and discussion. I think it is really important to remember that St. Helier is our capital and, as the most densely populated place as well, our demographics are very different to other parts of the Island. We have an increased number of children not a reducing number of children. While I will be supporting this amendment, it is with some disappointment that it does lack that part. I welcomed the comments from the Constable of St. Helier, and maybe if the Government are not going to do some of the work around the open space audit in St. Helier, St. Helier Parish and Deputies could perhaps work together to do that piece of work, which I do think is important because the requirements of children and also adults living and growing up in St. Helier, as I said, are quite different to other areas of the Island. We have got lots of people living in very cramped accommodation - hopefully that accommodation does not get any smaller - without access to their own outside spaces. I know, having brought up a child in an apartment with just a balcony, how very important our green spaces are. I am kicking myself for not bringing an amendment to this amendment because 9.5 says that there is an assurance that there is no net loss, but of course our aspiration in the plans for the new town school was also always to increase the amount of green space in St. Helier through that development. I hope that that will remain the aspiration of Government to increase green space, and that is something that I would always support. So I will be supporting this amendment but, yes, I am disappointed that it does not go as far as I would like it to.

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

I rise in support of Deputy Li. As Constable of a country Parish who has listened to the Youth Parliament and responded to their right-to-play campaign and created play facilities, I am continuously updating play facilities and I am raising funds now in the hope that we have a zip wire. I cannot stress enough how important it is for children and the youth of our Island to have the space to play. I am hoping that St. Helier finds more space. It is so important for the future health of our Island, for good health, creativity, fun, *et cetera*. A few years ago we did have some quite bad problems with some of the youth in the Parish. Since we have put in all these things - I always mention our Viking swing and our logs and specialist play area and everything - and made a space that they can go and sit and nobody bothers them in the evening, we have had no problems whatsoever. I just cannot stress enough how important it is. I have been called a lot of things in my time since I got elected, some bad, some good, but one of the ones I am most proud of is that I have been called the play pioneer. I have seen some amazing play equipment that if I could raise the funds to put it on the waterfront or somewhere in St. Helier, I would happily do so. I would be very happy

to help my colleagues in St. Helier improve their play spaces. I am so pleased that Deputy Li has brought this and I wish that I had amended it as well.

2.10.9 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

I am very excited to hear about the potential for a zip wire in St. Martin. I note that it is high ground and St. Helier is low ground and I just wonder whether a zip wire that took us all the way would solve a really important commuting problem. **[Laughter]** I also would like to thank Deputy Li for bringing this proposition. I have talked to her about it, and I thank her for her pragmatism in withdrawing the first part. I would point out - just my only contribution really - that we create more open space, that the amendment references open space rather than green space. We created open space, for example, near the Arts Centre when we extinguished roads that become then large areas of open space. I must also point just down the road to Broad Street, which is also in many respects a new open space for town. Certainly, as Minister for Infrastructure, I have responsibilities and a desire to improve the public realm in St. Helier; a very strong desire. I have had conversations with the Connétable about that and I will no doubt be doing so also with the Deputies representing the Parish. It is my desire to increase the open space within the Parish, and I will certainly be doing what I can to do that. So although there may be a missing aspiration in the wording, it certainly finds a home with me.

The Bailiff:

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

2.10.10 Deputy V. Li:

First of all, I would like to extend my gratitude to all the States Members who participated in this amendment. Although understanding some of the disappointment there, I did not bring 9.4 in the hope of winning a vote. I brought it in the hope of securing an action. Having received the Minister's assurance, I believe that the objective has been achieved, and that is why I have withdrawn it. Of course I will follow up with the St. Helier regeneration strategy as a Deputy, together with other Deputies and the Connétable of St. Helier. I thank the Council of Ministers for supporting 9.5 and I ask the Members to do the same. I call for the appel.

The Bailiff:

The appel has been called for. Members are invited to return to their seats. I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes, I ask the Greffier to close the voting. The amendment has been adopted unanimously **[Approbation]**:

POUR: 44		**CONTRE: 0**		**ABSTAINED: 0**
Senator L.J. Farnham				
Senator I.J. Gorst				
Senator A. Maclean				
Senator M.R. Le Hegarat				
Senator T.J.A. Binet				
Senator H.M. Miles				
Senator M.E. Millar				
Senator S. Kersten				
Connétable of St. Mary				
Connétable of St. Martin				

Connétable of St. Brelade				
Connétable of St. Helier				
Connétable of St. John				
Connétable of St. Ouen				
Connétable of Trinity				
Connétable of Grouville				
Connétable of St. Saviour				
Connétable of St. Lawrence				
Deputy M. Tadier				
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet				
Deputy C.S. Alves				
Deputy K.F. Morel				
Deputy G. Voisin				
Deputy M.B. Andrews				
Deputy R.E. Binet				
Deputy T.A. Coles				
Deputy A.F. Curtis				
Deputy C.D. Curtis				
Deputy L.V. Feltham				
Deputy M.R. Ferey				
Deputy H.L. Jeune				
Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée				
Deputy J. Renouf				
Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson				
Deputy B. Ward				
Deputy K.M. Wilson				
Deputy L. Carpenter				
Deputy S. Gleave				
Deputy C. Leck				
Deputy V. Li				
Deputy R. Parker				
Deputy G. Raimondo				
Deputy C. Rebindaine				
Deputy P. J. Romeril				

2.11 Common Strategic Policy 2026 – 2030 (P.75/2026): twenty-third amendment. (P.75/2026 Amd.(23) - Strengthening protection of our rural and marine environment.

The Bailiff:

We now turn to the twenty-third amendment lodged by the Council of Ministers. I ask the Greffier to read the amendment.

The Deputy Greffier of the States:

After the words "report accompanying this Proposition" insert the words – ", except that on page 16 of the report, after the words "such as Les Quennevais in St Brelade.", there should be inserted the following new paragraph – "We will strengthen the protection of our countryside, coastline, marine environment and biodiversity through closer, mutually supportive working with the stewards of those areas, including through implementation of the Rural and Marine Support Schemes and the Marine Spatial Plan. The delivery of a fit-for-purpose Biodiversity Strategy, underpinned by a State of Nature Report, will help recognise the economic value of nature and reinforce that expenditure in this area is an investment rather than a cost. We will support the resilience of the rural and marine economies, champion the consumption of local produce, promote improved use of public land, encourage volunteering initiatives, and foster meaningful collaboration with our local community."".

2.11.1 Senator M.R. Le Hegarat (The Minister for Environment, Agriculture & Fisheries):

I am pleased to bring this amendment to the Assembly. Following constructive discussions with the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel, the Council of Ministers propose the addition of this narrative to action 9.3 of the Common Strategic Policy. The amendment does not alter the underlying policy objective that sits behind this commitment. Rather it provides greater context and clarity around what we are seeking to achieve and how we intend to deliver it. The natural environment is one of Jersey's greatest assets. Its importance cannot be overstated. Our countryside, coastline and marine environment are central to our Island identity. They contribute immeasurably to our quality of life, our health and wellbeing and our sense of place. They provide opportunities for recreation, leisure and enjoyment for Islanders and visitors alike. They support our economy, not only through tourism and agriculture but through the wider benefits that flow from living and working in an attractive, healthy and resilient environment and, of course, they possess intrinsic value in their own right. The landscapes have attracted species that make Jersey unique and deserve protection, not simply because they benefit us but because they are an important part of our natural heritage. This amendment makes that commitment clearer. It sets out more clearly the practical actions that will support delivery of this work, including the implementation of the Rural and Marine Support Schemes, delivery of the Marine Spatial Plan and the development of a fit-for-purpose biodiversity strategy, underpinned by a State of Nature Report. Importantly, the amendment reinforces the value of protecting and enhancing Jersey's countryside, coastal, marine environment and biodiversity. It recognises that investment in nature should not be viewed simply as a cost but as an investment in the Island's long-term environmental, social and economic wellbeing. The additional wording also emphasises the importance of working closely with those who are the stewards of these environments. Whether that is our farmers, fishers, land managers, environmental organisations, volunteers or local communities, meaningful collaboration will be essential if we are to achieve lasting outcomes. The amendment further highlights the role this work will play in supporting the resilience of our rural and marine economies. It reflects our commitment to championing local produce, encouraging volunteering initiatives, improving the use of public land and ensuring that environmental protection goes hand in hand with sustainable economic activity.

[16:00]

At a time when environmental pressures continue to grow, it is important that we are clear about our ambitions and the practical steps we will take to achieve them. This additional narrative helps to provide that clarity for Members and for the public, while remaining fully aligned with the Government's existing policy intentions. Some Members may question how a commitment to protecting the natural environment sits alongside the Government's ambition to improve regulation

and remove unnecessary burdens. I want to be clear on this point. Supporting a programme of regulatory reform or deregulation does not mean that we place any less value on our natural environment; quite the opposite. Good regulation is regulation that is effective, proportionate and evidence-based. It is regulation that protects what matters most while avoiding unnecessary complexity and duplication. The Government remain firmly committed to ensuring that Jersey's rural and marine environments are properly protected. That commitment is not diminished in any way by efforts to improve the operation of the regulatory framework. Indeed, achieving the right balance is a critical part of responsible Government. I will meet regularly with the Minister for Planning and Regulation to discuss matters where environmental protection and development interests intersect. These discussions will ensure that decisions are informed by different perspectives and that an appropriate balance is reached between environmental, social and economic considerations. It would also suggest that the separation of Ministerial responsibilities in this area is a strength. The fact that responsibility for planning and responsibility for the environment sit with different Ministers allows environmental interests to be advocated clearly and unequivocally within Government. As Minister for the Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries, my role is to champion and defend the interests of Jersey's natural environment, and I will with a vengeance. That independent voice is important. It ensures that environmental considerations are properly represented and fully considered whenever significant decisions are made. Strengthening protection for Jersey's natural environment, biodiversity and marine ecosystems is essential to building resilience against climate change, safeguarding supporting the species and habitats that underpin our economy and well-being and ensuring future generations inherit a healthy, productive and climate-resilient Island. The Council of Ministers considers that this amendment strengthens the Common Strategic Policy by providing greater explanation of how these commitments will be delivered without changing the policy direction itself. For those reasons, I am pleased to propose the amendment and I ask Members to support.

The Bailiff:

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

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

I support this amendment strengthening the natural environment in the C.S.P. but I want to say plainly how we got here. The Future Jersey vision begins by describing Jersey as an Island loved for its coasts and countryside, its wildlife and its clean air, land and water, as the Minister has outlined. I have talked a lot about Future Jersey and the Island outcomes in my speeches over the last few days because, as Members can see, the C.S.P. is set in that framing with these 2. We can see these beautiful columns that we see at the beginning of the document and also at the end under monitoring long-term progress. This all sits within the Future Jersey and the Island outcomes is that monitoring framework. So I think it is important that we scrutinise and judge the C.S.P. and the Council of Ministers implementation in light of that, because they themselves reference to it many times in beautiful colours and graphs in their document. So that is the vision the C.S.P. claims to serve. Yet, when this draft C.S.P. was lodged, not one of its 11 priorities placed nature at its core. Members can see that natural environment as an Island outcome is in fact missing in the column on page 4. Biodiversity also got a single line in action 9.3, which is inside a priority about the public realm and sports facilities. The supporting narrative did not expand on it at all. Others noticed it too. Trees for Life called the omission a fundamental strategic error. The Jersey National Park wrote to the Minister and in its letter welcomed the ambition on the economy and community but said that the third pillar, environmental wellbeing, was insufficiently reflected. It also pointed out that no priority addresses natural environment Island outcome, as I said. The E.H.I. (Environment, Housing and Infrastructure) panel raised this same concern, and we talked to the Minister, but rather than lodging our own amendment we felt it was important for the Minister to acknowledge this omission and provide her own wording. Because we believe the commitment should come from the Minister herself, and I am

really glad that this has now come about. So the amendment commits to a biodiversity strategy backed by a State of Nature Report. It strengthens the Marine Spatial Plan and protection of our countryside, coast, and sea, and it treats environmental spending as an investment, not a cost. That is right in principle, and I think that is really important again to emphasise. It treats environmental spending as an investment, not a cost. However, this is not the first time that this has happened. In the 2023 C.S.P. the environment was one of 7 priorities with a clear commitment to protect and enhance our environment for future generations. But in the 2024 C.S.P., after the V.O.N.C. (vote of no confidence), the priority disappeared. Now in 2026 it has gone missing again, and it was up to Scrutiny to raise it. This, I do not believe, is a drafting slip. It is a pattern which unfortunately is being directed both times under Senator Farnham's watch. The natural environment is not an add-on; it supports our health, water, farming, our visitor economy, and the reasons people choose to live here and work here. Nature should not be something that Scrutiny has to remind the Government that is important to put in the C.S.P. So next time, when the Government is putting together the C.S.P., whether that is still within this term or in the next term, please, I would like to make sure that it is in the first draft and it is put there strongly and as part of the Island Outcome Indicators. It is there and it should continue to remain an important part.

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

Members reading the Council of Ministers amendment to their own C.S.P. might struggle in some ways with the wording. The first part of the narrative says: "We will strengthen the protection of our countryside, coastline, marine environment, and biodiversity." It does not say: "We will maintain existing protections of our countryside, coastline, marine environment." Nor does it say: "We will ensure appropriate protection of our countryside, coastline, marine environment." So, by voting for this today, Members will be in no doubt that they are signing up for a large part of what they voted to go against. They perhaps felt that the word "existing" was not far enough and that, as the Council of Ministers said, we must strengthen the protection, increase protection of such important assets to Jersey. Now, it is not always common that an amendment brought by the proposer, in this case the Council of Ministers, is debated. But the reason it is, is because any Member, and that is one for new Members to remember, can request a debate on any amendment brought, whether brought by the proposer or not. I did speak with the Minister for the Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries and gave her a heads up that I would be making sure that this was debated. There is a reason for that. This C.S.P. is heavy in a few areas. It talks about streamlining regulation, which, as we have heard from the Minister, does not come at the expense of the environment, but it is also one about growing the economy. We have heard from the chair of the E.H.I. panel what was missing. So I think it is more important than just lumping in this extra narrative into the main vote. I think it is far better that every Member sitting here puts their name to what is in this wording, that every Member here votes that their priority, shared with the Government, is to strengthen protection for our countryside, coastline, marine environment, and importantly biodiversity. If there are of course Members who disagree, who think we should weaken protection for our biodiversity, for our countryside, or even now to maintain the existing protections, this is their chance to step off the train, to vote against the Government. But I will take anybody who votes in support of this to consider that the C.S.P. is read better when it strengthens protections for what matters to Jersey, its environment, its coastline, its biodiversity. So that is all I need to say. I am sure all Members agree that it is better that we strengthen these, that we do not forget the long-term assets we pass down to future generations and that we do not just put one or 2 elements and pillars beyond the environment. In fact it is central to all of them.

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

I thank Deputy Curtis for bringing this debate and forcing this debate, because I too had noticed the failure of different drafts of this C.S.P., and also the last C.S.P., to not really include the environment. So I find it quite strange, because I know for instance the Chief Minister is a strong proponent of the

environment, and a lot of the marine environment work has been driven by the Chief Minister, and so it is odd. I feel like it is a collective failure rather than any individual failure, and this debate that Deputy Curtis has given us does mean that we can collectively show our support for our environment; both marine and land environments. I also found it very odd that the election just past barely mentioned the environment. I found it very strange indeed. I sat through 3 Senatorial hustings. Other than the usual platitudes, there was very little said about the environment. That also is one of the reasons we end up having this debate, because the C.S.P. initially did not really have much strength to it with regard to the environment. But we know Islanders massively value the environment in Jersey. It does not matter if they live in town, they live in St. Brelade, they live in St. Lawrence, or Trinity, or anywhere else; Islanders value the environment. They value the countryside. They want the countryside to remain and in town, and I am very pleased this follows Deputy Li's amendment, they want a better environment, an environment with more open ... and I would go further and just say open green space, particularly because St. Helier is not a very green town and it is something that is going to take a very long time for this Minister for Planning and Regulation and future Ministers for Planning and Regulation to rectify, but it is work that needs to take place now. So I think now the beauty of the amendment, which Senator Le Hegarat as Minister for the Environment, Agriculture and Fisheries brings, is that it is all-encompassing. It is a very wide-ranging amendment. It talks about biodiversity, it talks about marine areas, it talks about protections and regulation. It is, in one paragraph - slightly wordy paragraph - but in one paragraph it does very much sum up much of what we need to do with regard to the environment in this Island, as legislators in this Island. I hope that there really will not be anybody voting against this, but if they do, if they feel that the environment is not such an important matter, they should vote against it if that is how they feel. If they do feel that the environment should be relegated to the substitutes bench. Because that is, to my mind, how I felt for the last few years. I say this as much as anything because the 2022 election, environment was front and centre of that election. It was strong and all Members of the Assembly came in knowing that Islanders wanted us to focus on the environment. Then suddenly it just all fell away, and that troubles me. So this is our chance to put that right. The C.S.P. will proudly, front and centre, have environmental protection strengthening it in all its different ways in the middle of it. Our biodiversity, it is interesting, is changing. Some may say it is a crisis, other people say it is changing because of climate change and things like that. As with anything to do with the environment, it will be a mixture of things. But the environment, because of that change from 2022 to 2026 elections, it has made me feel like perhaps we take the environment for granted in Jersey. Yet we know, we have just had a debate on P.F.A.S. in water, we know that Jersey's environment is incredibly vulnerable. But the problem with the environment is it does not always show the damage that we are doing to it. It accumulates the damage, it hides it from us until it collapses, and then suddenly we will wake up and realise the damage that we have done to our environment. So it does need continued and sustained protection, development, and improvement from us and from all Islanders to make sure that Jersey, or that we as the current guardians of this Island, are able to pass along an Island to our children, their children, their children, and so on, that they can be proud of because of its environmental record. There are so many islands of our size which do not have a very good environment, that have been built over, that have lost the very thing that attracted people to the islands in the first place.

[16:15]

But in Jersey I think we have a fantastic balance of urban and rural, but we need to protect both, and we need to make sure that future generations can love this Island in the way that we all do. So I am delighted to see this back on the agenda, and I know there are many people in this Assembly who will support it. We just have to make sure that whoever is there in 2030 for the next elections, and then 2034 and so on, that the environment never slips from the C.S.P.; that is always in there. Because I tell you what will happen, is that the electorate will punish those that do not protect the Jersey

environment. So it is not in anyone's interest as a legislator to not put it in the middle of any Government Plans for the future.

2.11.5 Senator L.J. Farnham:

If I may just very quickly rise to defend my record on the environment. I have always believed that protecting Jersey's environment is a key part of our responsibility to ourselves and to future generations. I thank Deputy Morel for recognising that. I have personally advocated the protection on many occasions from the extension of Marine Protected Areas to the acquisition of seaside land at Grève de Lecq, among others. While I also know that Deputy Jeune is a key champion of the environment, I just felt, given her remarks, I wanted to just put on record, if I could be so bold, as to please accept that on the international stage Members will recall that I have championed the opposition to the abhorrent slaughter of whale and dolphins in the Faroe Islands, who incidentally are going to be hosting the Island Games next year, for which, and I have never mentioned this, I received an international global recognition award from the Sea Shepherd organisation. So I just wanted ... I am sorry, I just felt it was necessary, I feel so strongly about the environment, I wanted to mention that for the record.

2.11.6 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

I am sorry to have to spoil the party to a certain extent, because of course, as Deputy Morel says, nobody is going to vote against this amendment. But there is an element of greenwashing that is going on here, because what we are seeing from this Government is that when it comes to the real commitment to the environment, I am not talking about keeping the Island nice, which we all have a self-interest in that to do it, and to keep the ecology of the Island looking good and functioning well, all of those things are laudable, the more fundamental is about our commitments to the wider world globally and to carbon emissions and the previous commitments we gave to reaching 2050 targets, this Government has completely watered down. We have seen a retreat from the petrol and diesel vehicle policy, so I would like to know how, in that particular case, that policy is going to have an adverse impact on our environment, both in terms of the natural environment; insects, for example, but also local people who live near roads. Government is saying it is OK to keep on polluting longer than we would have, it is OK to keep on driving around in diesel vehicles, it is OK to drive around in petrol vehicles, and, as we know, because a lot of our electricity comes from France, that is low carbon already, the real targets, the real way we make a difference in Jersey is by tackling the issue of petrol and diesel in particular when it comes to vehicles. We were reminded at lunchtime that we live in an Island that is 9 by 5 and it should be possible to make a big difference in these areas, and we are not seeing that. While of course I will be supporting this proposition, we have to remember that, when it comes to the real environmental impact, Jersey is not doing its part any longer and we have stepped away from the aspiration. Why is it important? It is important, not just for the obvious that we have to contribute because every person on the planet, every Government on the planet, has to make a difference. But I suspect, if you were to ask young people, alongside what they wanted, alongside cheaper McDonald's and more green spaces, which is absolutely some of the things that they might be concerned at a very local level, if you ask them ... and when we do go into schools, when we do the political outreach, they recognise that they are global citizens. They are fearful and they are mindful of the fact that we are living in an existential crisis. We had a very good reference to Michael Sheen in the speech that I gave for Deputy Maltman, who I know would be no doubt speaking on this amendment too, were she here, but we have had Sir David Attenborough, who himself has been raising awareness of the existential threat that we face to the planet. We are at the point of only where we can now maybe mitigate about the worst. So I think our children and grandchildren are going to be saying in future generations: "What were you doing in 2026? You knew that this was happening, you knew already since the 1970s, scientists had been telling you that this was coming down the line, and even in 2026 when the news was reporting that it is going to be the hottest summer since last year, and every year now is going to be the hottest summer since the

last year, the planet is burning, and yet we are not changing our fundamental way that we deal with that existential crisis." It is strange that during COVID Governments all around the world were willing to react. I think they did it hopefully in good faith, thinking that there was an immediate existential threat that was possibly going to decimate or kill vast amounts of the population. That was not the case, yet they were willing to make really far-reaching interventions, telling people they could not leave their homes for 2 weeks. But I suppose it is human nature that when the threat is only perhaps 50 or 40 years in the future, there is not that immediacy. But the immediacy is there now, so we should be having the voice of young people in this Assembly. We have some younger people in the Assembly, but I know that when we go into schools, they are asking us about those issues, and I want to be able to look them in the eye later, when I am older, and they say to me: "You were there, you were one of the legislators, why were you not doing more?" I will say: "Well I did do more. When Deputy Ward was part of our party he brought the Carbon Neutral Roadmap and we all supported it, but it has since been watered back." So, by all means, let us vote for this today and make sure that Jersey remains pretty, that it is green, that it has cows in it, that you can go to the beach, that the water is clean. Let us aspire to clean air. That is the other thing which is not in here. But let us not forget our wider global commitments. Are we simply in a position now where we are going to try to mitigate the effects of climate change, we are going to try and build those higher seawalls, whether they are owned by Government or they are not, or we are not sure, or we can do something that might stave off some of the worst effects with the international community, or are we going to lead as an example as a small jurisdiction which is environmentally responsible, not just on a local level, but on the global level? That is not what I am hearing from this Government. It is very much that they want to roll back, they do not want to upset people, and the idea of that just transition, but an effective transition, I think needs to be given much more centrality when it comes to the central environmental policy from all of this Government.

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

I just wanted to highlight very quickly; I was just wanting to pick up on a point that Deputy Tadier made about our carbon and the cars and that we have pushed back that ambition. I just wanted to highlight the cost-of-living issue with that. Everything is always a balance, absolutely we need to do things for the environment. Electric cars are really expensive. Our car finance over here is 2, 3 times in some cases, more expensive than it is in the U.K. From a very practical point, having just bought an electric car, I cannot get insurance for my young 20 year-olds on it. It is very difficult to get car insurance for young men with electric cars, so there is a structural issue that needs to be dealt with before we look at that wider electric car ambition. I just wanted to make the States aware of that.

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

I would just like to say that we all love our green fields, beaches, our history, our hedgerows, our coastal paths, *et cetera*, and Jersey's natural environment is the foundation of the Island's economy, food security, public health, and cultural identity. Because Jersey is a small Island, it is only 9 by 5, its land, sea, and climate are closely tied to daily life. So my question is to the Government: why is something so important and fundamental to our livelihood, our lives, was it missed out of the C.S.P.?

The Bailiff:

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

2.11.9 Senator M.R. Le Hegarat:

That was a very diverse discussion. Firstly, I want to talk about the environment. Those that will have attended the farming conference last week will know that, within that speech I made, I made it quite clear that I am probably one of the few people in this Assembly that was literally brought up in the environment, as in from a very young child my family were in the farming community. I was

brought up as a tenant farmer's daughter initially, and I literally lived in the countryside, lived with that, and so the countryside is not just a policy for me. It is far more than that, it is something that is in my blood. Therefore, as I said, I am very much a person who is going to fight for the countryside and the wellbeing of people within the countryside. From my perspective, and I did mention this at the conference as well, because it was mentioned to me that it would only have been put into the C.S.P. because the media had been given a news release in relation to it. That was not the case, as I said at that time, it was because the environment panel raised the fact that they thought that it should have more narrative to it. From my perspective, 9.3 mentions the environment, and I was more relaxed from that point of view because, as far as I am concerned, it was a strategic up here level, and so therefore I was not concerned about the words because, as I said, I am a fighter for my position and I will fight for the wellbeing of our countryside. So rest assured that that is going to happen. My colleague across the Assembly is smiling because I think you probably could not have more fighters of the countryside than the 2 that are sitting in the environment, agriculture, and fisheries domain. The next piece of legislation coming forward is about Les Écréhous and that is about our water and our marine, so I am hoping that everybody will be supporting that, because it is a part of our countryside. In relation to what Deputy Tadier said in relation to our Carbon Neutral Roadmap, that is still on my agenda front and centre. We are now working towards 2050 because realistically 2030, 2035 was probably something that we were going to have to spend millions on, and when it was first brought I think that we may have been a little bit naïve. However, he mentions about the things that we are doing and, yes, I fully accept what he says in relation to the vehicle side of it, and that was pushed back in the previous Government. In relation to the Carbon Neutral Roadmap, we are still working in relation to sorting out, providing people with an opportunity to have look at their heating systems from the fossil fuel point of view, and moving forward to other alternatives. We have just had the introduction of a Green Skills Academy at Highlands College, and that is phenomenal and it is worth anybody within the Assembly to look at that and see it. So I think the thing is, we are doing things in relation to the Carbon Neutral Roadmap. It is still important to also be aware that I have a team that are deployed in relation to the money that is provided for this purpose from the funds brought in by duty on fuel. It is important that continues because that is the money that is working towards the Carbon Neutral Roadmap. I do not want to stand here for too long, but as I said, I am fully aware of the concerns that were raised in relation to this Common Strategic Policy and people feeling that there was not sufficient in it, the narrative, so that has changed and the narrative was increased. But rest assured, I am here, and people will know it. I would ask for the appel.

The Bailiff:

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

[16:30]

I can announce the amendment has been adopted unanimously:

POUR: 43		**CONTRE: 0**		**ABSTAINED: 0**
Senator L.J. Farnham				
Senator I.J. Gorst				
Senator A. Maclean				
Senator M.R. Le Hegarat				
Senator T.J.A. Binet				
Senator H.M. Miles				
Senator M.E. Millar				

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

The Bailiff:

That completes the amendments.

2.12 Common Strategic Policy 2026 – 2030. (P.75/2026) - as amended

The Bailiff:

We now return to the proposition. Does anyone wish to speak on the proposition as amended?

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

The Government has described this C.S.P. as the strategic framework for the Council of Ministers' term of office, setting out the Government's priorities and direction of travel. I agree with that description, it is the Council of Ministers' framework, it sets out the Government's priorities. So I have to ask why is the whole Assembly being asked to approve it? This is the heart of the question of how it was developed, the timescale was short, the drafting was done by the Council of Ministers alone, non-Executive Members were offered a one-hour briefing, and only after the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel pushed for it, we got a single workshop of an hour and a half. That is 2 and a half hours of input for non-Executive Members on a plan that runs for the rest of this 4-year term. That is not co-production. I am not criticising Ministers for writing their own plan; that is their job. My concern is what happens next, a document written by the Executive, for the Executive, is then put to the Assembly as if it belongs to all of us. This Council of Ministers is a coalition in all but name. Its Ministers stood all on different manifestos, they hold different political views, they lead very different portfolios. The Common Strategic Policy is where they set out what they can agree on together. It should be published, presented to this Assembly, debated and scrutinised. But it is their agreement, it is not mine, and it is not the Assembly's. So either this is the Government's plan presented to the Assembly and held to account, or it is the Assembly's plan built with the Assembly from the start. What we have now is neither, it is a Government Plan document put to us for approval after very little involvement. This is matters for accountability. Once the Assembly approves the C.S.P., Ministers can say the Assembly endorsed their priorities. That blurs the line between those who govern and those who scrutinise. Scrutiny work is best when the line is very clear. This is not a new concern; in 2006, the year after Ministerial Government began, a proposition was lodged by Senator Shenton. He argued that the Strategic Plan should be seen as the Council of Ministers' manifesto and their roadmap, not a policy document needing the Assembly's approval. He warned that Ministers could hide behind it. That proposition was withdrawn. But 20 years on, the question I think still is there. I have lodged amendments to the C.S.P. myself; I have done it as part of the E.H.I. panel, and I have voted pour for some of the amendments that non-Executive Members have brought, I have pressed contre for some, because it is the only route this process gives non-Executive Members to influence it. That again says something about this process. I wanted to let the Assembly know that shortly I will lodge a proposition asking the Assembly to change how the Common Strategic Policy will be handled. Ministers will still be able to prepare it, refer to the Scrutiny, but they will present it as a report rather than lodging it for approval. The Assembly would then debate it in committee without a vote and Ministers would have to report back on progress each year. It would apply then for the next C.S.P., which will be after the 2030 election. Let the Government own its plan. Let this Assembly then hold them to account. This is how I believe Ministerial Government should work. For the same reason, I will not support any change that weakens the Troy Rule, keeping the Executive as a minority in this Assembly is what gives scrutiny its independence, because Scrutiny is one of our pillars for democracy and it should be strengthened, not diluted. Therefore, and I know Senator Farnham will reel at this, but I will not be voting for this C.S.P. But I want to be clear why; it is not a judgment of the Council of Minister priorities, it is not a judgment on the Ministers themselves accepting individual amendments from different non-Executive Members, it is because I do not think the Assembly should be asked to approve them at all. This is why I am bringing

forward that proposition to change it, and it would be inconsistent of me to argue that and then vote to endorse this current C.S.P.

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

As chair of the Corporate Services Panel and the main respondent in this debate, I want to begin by making some observations about the process through which the Common Strategic Policy has been developed. I will then of course make some comments in my own capacity as a States Member and be clear about distinguishing between the 2. Firstly, with my Scrutiny hat on, it is important to note that Scrutiny does not make Government policy, as eloquently described by Deputy Jeune just before me. The political priorities of the Council of Ministers are matters for Ministers to determine and for the Assembly to consider. My panel therefore decided not to undertake a separate policy review of the C.S.P. itself, as we felt that would have been inappropriate. Instead, what we have done is focused our Scrutiny resources on the proposed Budget through which many of the Government strategic priorities will need to be funded and delivered. But that does not mean that we made no observations about the process through which the C.S.P. has been developed, and I do think that there are important lessons to be learned from this. The first concerns the way in which the Council of Ministers developed its strategic priorities over the summer. We noted that the published meeting records for July and August showed that the Council of Ministers had one formally recorded meeting during that period. By comparison, Corporate Services Panel met twice, Economic and International Affairs Panel met 3 times, Children, Education and Home Affairs 4 times, and Environment, Housing and Infrastructure twice. So at least 4 Scrutiny Panels individually met in a formally recorded meeting during those 2 months; more than the Council of Ministers. I am not of course suggesting that Ministers were not working during the summer. I understand that informal workshops took place and there is nothing inherently wrong with using workshops to develop strategic policy. Indeed, having previously served as a Minister, I appreciate the value of being able to discuss ideas collaboratively, and the panel understood that. But those workshops do not provide the same publicly accessible record as formal Council meetings, for which the panel gets agendas and papers for. We do not have the same visibility of their frequency, who attended, what was considered, or how decisions were reached. That matters when we are considering the development of a document intended to guide Government for 4 years. Our concern was not simply about how many meetings took place; it was about transparency of the process and the ability to understand how Government arrived at its priorities. The second observation concerned engagement with Scrutiny before lodging. No draft C.S.P. was shared with the panel for comment during its development. The panel's minutes of 22nd September recorded an offer of a briefing for 28th September. That was the day before the C.S.P. was lodged. We do not regard that an offer of a briefing at that stage was a substitute for meaningful engagement during the development of the document. The consequences of that approach have become apparent. Following discussions with the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel, the Government found it necessary to lodge its own amendment strengthening the commitments concerning Jersey's countryside, coastline, marine environment, and biodiversity. That amendment was welcomed, but it raises an obvious question, would it not have been better for those matters to have been identified and addressed before the C.S.P. was lodged? Earlier engagement with Scrutiny could have allowed panels to highlight omissions or practical concerns before the Government finalised its document. That would not have required Scrutiny to determine Government policy. It would simply have enabled panels to provide relevant observations at a stage when they could genuinely inform the process. A third observation concerns engagement with States Members. A workshop was arranged for Members but it took place after the C.S.P. had already been lodged. That is an unusual way to approach a document intended to establish a Government strategic direction for the full term and it leaves a question: was the workshop intended to provide Members with a genuine opportunity to influence the Government's priorities, or was it primarily an opportunity to present and explain decisions that had already been made? There is a difference between consultation and presentation. Both may have their place but they serve different

purposes. Those are the observations about the development process. The Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel will continue to examine the proposed Budget, the resources allocated to Government's priorities, and the arrangements for monitoring delivery. Whatever the outcomes of this debate, Ministers will need to demonstrate to Scrutiny how the commitments in the C.S.P. are reflected in departmental plans, expenditure, and measurable results. Our next job in Scrutiny will be to scrutinise how Ministers deliver, and that is where links to outcomes become important. The Government still has work to do in this respect, particularly in respect of outcomes-based accountability and making clear and substantive links to the Island Outcome Indicators. That concludes my observations as panel chair. I now want to speak in my own capacity as a States Member and co-leader of Reform Jersey. I want to explain why I am so disappointed with what is missing from the actions in this Common Strategic Policy. At the beginning of this debate, I spoke against the proposal to bring forward a revised C.S.P. next year. I did so because I believe a newly-elected Assembly and a new Council of Ministers should establish a clear strategic direction for the full 4-year term. I still believe that, but the more we have examined the document, and the more we have debated the proposed amendments, the more concerned I have become about the direction it sets, because this was an opportunity. An opportunity for a new Government to look beyond the immediate pressures of its first Budget. An opportunity to establish what it wants Jersey to look like in 4 years' time. An opportunity to make meaningful commitments on the issues that Islanders have told us matter most to them. I do not believe that the C.S.P., as it now stands, makes sufficient use of that opportunity, and my disappointment is not simply about the amendments that have been defeated. It is about what those decisions have left out of the Government's actions. Throughout this debate, Ministers have repeatedly told us about work that is already taking place. We have heard about existing schemes, ongoing reviews, consultations, and programmes under development. Much of that work is welcome of course, and some of it began during the previous term of office, and I certainly do not want to dismiss the efforts of officers or Ministers who are working to deliver improvements. But there is a fundamental distinction between describing work already underway and committing to the outcomes that work is intended to achieve. The C.S.P. is not a report on Government activity. It is supposed to establish the Government's strategic priorities. Its actions should tell Islanders what Ministers intend to deliver over the next 4 years. They should guide departmental planning, they should influence decisions about resources, and they should provide the basis on which this Assembly can hold Government accountable. What is omitted from those actions matter just as much as what is included, because when resources are limited, when departments are competing for attention, and when difficult decisions need to be made, the commitments contained in the C.S.P. will help determine what takes priority. I am concerned that some of the issues most important to Islanders, what we heard about during the election, have been left without clear commitments. I do want to acknowledge the improvements that we have managed to make during this debate. I welcome the Assembly's strong support for Deputy Alves's amendment on transparency and accountability. That was an important contribution to strengthening the C.S.P. I also welcome the constructive engagement that led to agreed changes concerning carers and disability inclusion. Having worked closely with both areas during my time as Minister, I know how much those commitments matter to people, and I appreciate that Ministers were willing to work towards wording that reflected those priorities.

[16:45]

These examples show how the C.S.P. could be improved through the amendment process. They also demonstrate that accepting improvements proposed by Members was not a defeat for Government. It is part of the Assembly doing its job. But we must be able to distinguish between welcoming individual improvements and endorsing the overall strategic direction, and that is where I have difficulty. Of course, we have a mixed Assembly and a Council containing Members with different political priorities, and I understand that compromise is necessary. But the commitments that Reform Jersey put before Islanders in our manifesto were not incidental promises. They reflected a coherent

view of the sort of Jersey that we, as a party, want to build. A Jersey where people can afford to live well, where work provides security and fair treatment, where housing is affordable and secure, where young people see opportunities to build their lives, and where public services support people effectively throughout their lives. I do want this Government to succeed where it can improve the lives of Islanders. I will of course, and the party will, support good proposals. We will also continue to work constructively with Ministers, and we will also continue to use Scrutiny to examine how public money is spent and whether Government delivers the outcomes it promises. But constructive engagement does not require us to endorse a strategic policy that we believe falls short. While recognising the positive commitments in this document, I recognise the improvement secured through the amendment process and I acknowledge the work that has gone into preparing it. But I remain disappointed by the important actions that are missing. What is absent from the C.S.P. is not merely wording, it is a commitment to outcomes that Islanders need Government to deliver. Those omissions will matter when departmental plans are prepared, when resources are allocated, and when this Assembly seeks to hold Ministers accountable for their performance according to this C.S.P. For me, the test of this C.S.P. is whether it provides a sufficiently ambitious direction for improving Islanders' lives over the next 4 years, and I do not believe it does. For that reason, I cannot support it.

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

Where do I start? I am very happy with the way the C.S.P. has been developed. I think the Government has done a good job and they have put forward something that is very realistic. I do disagree very much with Deputy Feltham, with what she said about certain parts of it. We have all had a chance to have an input, we have all had a chance to put an amendment in, and many people have, and so we have had an opportunity to develop what we are all voting on now. I am going to echo very much what Deputy Jeune said. I agree with her completely. I do not think this document should be coming to the States Assembly. I believe it is a document that is representing the Council of Ministers and what they plan to do for the next 4 years. Although I do like much of the C.S.P., and I am very much in support of it, I am going to abstain from this vote. The reason I am not going to vote contre is because that would imply that I disagree with it and that would then be giving me a voice in this. As I am not part of the Government, I do not think I should have a voice in it. I do not think I should have a vote in it. That is the main reason why I am going to abstain. Any Member that agrees with me, I would urge them to consider also following me and abstaining from this.

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

I thoroughly commend the C.S.P. No, let me read that again. No, it definitely does say that, I thoroughly commend the C.S.P. So, for those momentarily confused by my conversion, I do of course mean Chris's Strategic Priorities. **[Laughter]** This document was drafted at our kitchen table over 2 hours one morning. I did share it with the Chief Minister a few weeks after the Council had lodged their rival C.S.P. and I was kicking myself for not getting in first. I am sure I could improve on my version of the C.S.P. given maybe another hour's work. Indeed, as it is not subject to the Troy Rule, others could even supply suggestions to make it better. Given the Chief Minister's lead that the items should be tangible, mine were specific, measurable, and timed. It will probably surprise no one that I concur with Deputy Jeune's view about how the C.S.P. should be treated. Yesterday the Chief Minister advised me that I will not be voting for his C.S.P. Being respectful of his wisdom, I will follow his advice on this occasion. I think I have said my piece.

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

I just wanted to make a few comments from the perspective of the Scrutiny Liaison Committee, recognising that the C.S.P. is ultimately a political statement of the Government's priorities and ambitions for this term, as people have already mentioned. Yes, it is for us to debate those ambitions and decide whether it supports the direction being proposed. But I do want to draw attention to

something which I believe is fundamental to the success of the C.S.P. as we have developed it. A strategic policy is only as meaningful as the ability to deliver it and we can have very worthwhile ambitions, and I suspect there will be considerable agreement across the Assembly about many of the challenges facing our Island. But the important question is how these ambitions are going to translate into practical, measurable improvements in people's lives. I think there are some shortfalls in the C.S.P. in relation to that. So I would encourage Government to think carefully about the relationship between the C.S.P., the annual Budget, and the performance information that is subsequently made available. These should not be separate exercises; they should form one connected framework. If we are going to commit ourselves to particular outcomes, then we need to understand what resources are required, what workforce capacity is available, who is responsible for the delivery, and what timescales we are working towards. I also think we need to be careful not to confuse activity with achievement. Producing a strategy, establishing a working group, or commissioning a review, may represent progress, but they are not necessarily evidence that the outcome we set out to achieve has been delivered. The public should be able to see what has changed as a result of the commitments we have made today and the work that we have put into debating this over the last 4 days. There is also an important question about the coherence of the C.S.P. itself. The priorities cannot simply sit alongside one another as individual ambitions. They need to work together. Housing, economic development, skills, workforce planning, public services, and the sustainability of our public finances are interconnected. Decisions in one area will inevitably have consequences for another, and that is why I believe the Assembly should be interested, not only in the individual commitments, but in whether they collectively provide a credible and deliverable programme for Jersey's future. As chair of the Scrutiny Liaison Committee, I want to be clear that our responsibility is not to endorse Government policy or to take ownership of its delivery. Our responsibility is to ensure that the Scrutiny function is able to examine the decisions Government makes, the evidence upon which those decisions are based, the resources that have been committed, and ultimately, as others have mentioned, the outcomes achieved. We must be able to follow the commitments made in the C.S.P. through into implementation and hold Government to account for progress throughout the term, not simply at the end of it. I would therefore encourage Government to ensure that its reporting arrangements provide meaningful information to the Assembly and the public, allowing us to distinguish between what has been promised, what has been delivered, and what has been achieved. We all want to see a constructive relationship between Government and Scrutiny, but constructive does not mean uncritical. Effective scrutiny is an essential part of good governance. Ultimately, the test of the C.S.P. will not be on the quality of the language we use to describe our ambitions today, it will be whether, 4 years from now, Islanders can point to tangible improvements in their lives and say that this Assembly and this Government fulfilled its duty to Islanders and made a positive difference to people's lives.

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

I have given considerable thought to how I will vote on the C.S.P., and I want to start by saying that I support much of what is in it. There are some very worthwhile ambitions and commitments. My concern is less about the content and more about the structure and the absence of a clear strategic framework. Fundamentally, this comes down to a lack of shared understanding across the Assembly about what a Common Strategic Policy should be. Had I been a Member of the Council of Ministers, I would have urged a different approach, perhaps a bolder vision for Jersey, supported by a framework to guide decisions over the next 4 years. Perhaps, had all Members been actively consulted before the document was produced, we might have reached a greater understanding of its purpose. But the truth is, when I first read the C.S.P., I was underwhelmed. I felt we had a collection of worthwhile ambitions organised into 4 pillars, separate headings, without enough consideration of how they work together. Four pillars alone do not make a strong structure. What matters is how they are connected and what they collectively support. I would have liked to see each commitment assessed across all 4 pillars. Does it support them? Is it neutral? Or does it create a conflict? If it

does create a conflict, how do we mitigate that? Equally, are we missing opportunities to make those commitments work harder? Investment in sports facilities, for example, should connect to preventative healthcare and healthy ageing. Over the last few days, I have actively participated in refining these C.S.P.s, and I am genuinely pleased with some of the amendments agreed. Unlike Deputy Feltham, I think there is some really good stuff in here. None of my comments should be interpreted as a lack of confidence in the Council of Ministers. There are strong Members in this team. Great work is being done, and I genuinely want this Government to succeed. But, ultimately, this is the Council of Ministers' C.S.P. We have helped you improve it. Now you must take ownership of it and responsibility for delivering it. I will be there to help you do just that. So, while I cannot wholeheartedly endorse the C.S.P., neither do I wish to vote against a Government I want to succeed, and that is why I will abstain.

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

As the chair of the Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel, it is important that we recognise the ambition within this Common Strategic Policy, particularly its commitment to improving health outcomes, supporting vulnerable Islanders, and investing in prevention. However, there are several areas of concern that require closer scrutiny. Firstly, while the C.S.P. sets out a broad vision, there remains a lack of measurable targets and clear timelines in a number of health and social care commitments. Without defined outcomes, it will be difficult for both this Assembly and the public to assess progress and hold Government to account.

[17:00]

Secondly, there is concern about the growing pressure on our health and care workforce. The C.S.P. acknowledges workforce challenges, but more details are needed on recruitment, retention, and succession planning to ensure services remain sustainable over the long term. Thirdly, the panel will be looking carefully at how commitments to prevention and clear intervention will be delivered in practice. Investing in preventative services is essential, but these ambitions must be matched by adequate funding and a clear implementation plan. Finally, the panel remains mindful of the ongoing cost-of-living pressures faced by many Islanders and the impact this has on their health and wellbeing. The C.S.P. must demonstrate how it will protect those most vulnerable and reduce health inequalities across the community. The panel looks forward to a constructive engagement with the Ministers as we examine these priorities in greater detail, ensuring that the commitments made today result in a meaningful improvement for the Islanders tomorrow.

2.12.8 Connétable S.W. Pallett of St. Brelade:

I am very much in support of what the Government has put forward, but there were various things I noted down during the last few days that worry me, but I am keen to make sure that the Government delivers on them. Do I have faith that Council of Ministers will invest in, and I think the Chief Minister is not here, but he would probably expect me to say it, are we going to invest in sports and recreational infrastructure? Many people in the community believe that the clock is running down for many of our ageing sports facilities. I will give swimming as an example. We are going to have somebody going to the Olympics in 2028, a local swimmer. Most of us know who it is. It is not me; it is Filip Nowacki. Now, he has done that because of the good facility we have got but they are breaking down and we need to replace them before too long if we are going to carry on. That is just one example of sports facilities that we need to invest in. I found it very interesting and I very much supported Deputy Li's position. I would like to remind her that there was a skatepark built at Quennevais. The efforts that we had to go through in this Assembly to get that built was extremely hard. That is just one small skatepark that cost a couple of million pounds, never mind a big facility. We have got to be really careful about the timing on some of these things and make sure we invest. That investment has been beneficial to a lot of young people in this Island. You only have to go up there every weekend to understand the benefit to them. I am pleased that Government have realised

they have got to invest in it, but there is a clock running down on this. St. Brelade's natural environment obviously is very close to my heart. P.F.A.S. is an issue for St. Brelade and I am glad it has been brought up, and I thank Deputy Maltman for bringing that forward. It is in the coastal National Park, which should have the highest possible protection, so I am pleased that we are going to do something about that. In terms of investment in this Island we really need to think about where the jewels in the crown are. St. Brelade's Bay, St. Aubin, Gorey, they are all areas that I am afraid are looking very tired. We have to think about where we are going to invest what money we have got. I have always been a fan of Fort Regent and I have been desperate to see it refurbished, but I think we are going to come to a point where we have got to decide what we are going to invest in, what draws visitors here. I am coming around to tourism. What draws visitors here? Is it our natural environment and the beauty of areas such as St. Aubin? I think it is. Would they want to come to a revamped Fort Regent? Possibly. But if we cannot afford that where are we going to invest our money? We have to think carefully about what we are going to invest in. I am coming to tourism because tourism is not really mentioned in this C.S.P., and I think that is disappointing. There are a lot of people in the Island that think there is a future of tourism, and I am one of those, so I would hope this Council of Ministers is going to think very clearly about where the future of tourism is. I am going to mention one more thing that has not been mentioned, and that is mental health. It is not mentioned in here separately and I think we are beginning to forget about it. There are mental health problems in this Island that are quite acute. I think the Minister for Health and Social Services knows that, and I am hoping the Minister is going to help deal with that. But it is also part of making sure that everybody's physical and mental wellbeing is understood and is dealt with proactively. I think a Member spoke not so long ago and talked about a joined-up approach to wellbeing. For me that needs to be the next head of Public Health. There does need to be a joined-up approach. We talked about this 8, 10 years ago, and I do not think we have really progressed on it. So there are things that need to be improved, things that are very close to my heart, but investment is a key word in Jersey in terms of this coming 4 years and I just hope that we invest in the right ways. I am going to support the C.S.P., I am going to support my good friend, the Chief Minister, who I know has got the best interests of this Island at heart, and I wish him well for the next 3½ years.

2.12.9 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:

I want to rise to respond directly to my Constable, who I think has made some very important and significant points. I want most of all I guess to offer reassurance and, in the absence of my Assistant Minister colleague, Senator Kersten, who has responsibility for the sports portfolio, I want to say that as a Ministerial team we are exceptionally focused on the issue of sports facilities. We are acutely aware of the dilapidation and the need for investment in those assets, and indeed to consider what we may need to do to develop new assets. We understand the need. Of course these are words; we will be judged on what we deliver. I will say that we will not be able to deliver everything. We will not. There are going to be pressing requirements for infrastructure and spending, and we will have to prioritise, we will have to make clever choices about the way that we do this, but we are absolutely focused on it and I know it is something that Senator Kersten is exceptionally passionate about. A small note, we should, I hope, be able to develop the skatepark in St. Helier within the next year. It was held up by a planning appeal but I am hopeful that we will be able to do that. I do want to say that I consider myself quite lucky to be the Minister for Infrastructure at this moment. I think this C.S.P. places investment in our key infrastructure front and centre. It is highlighted in a way that has not been highlighted for many, many years, and it is operationalised through improvements in the way that we budget around infrastructure that I think give considerable hope that we are in a different position in terms of our attitude to infrastructure investment. I know that there are still going to be lots of very difficult discussions to be had about where the money comes from, about what it will be spent on, but it is a better position to be in as a Minister for Infrastructure than it has been for a very long time in my view. That is something worth celebrating in this C.S.P., and I put that forward as a partial response to the Constable's comments but also a wider point in terms of the C.S.P.

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

Many Members, including one Minister, and indeed panels, took the opportunity to amend the C.S.P., and we have now spent 2½ days discussing the document. We have all had an opportunity to speak and/or vote the way we felt was best for the Island. Deputy Feltham made what I thought was a very good speech, and we would all do well to listen to the content again. Like my fellow Connétable of St. Brelade I would also want to see work done on investing in sport, and I am encouraged by the Minister for Infrastructure's words. I am disappointed that despite repeated assurances from a number of Ministers that they are working on getting access to school facilities, it does not appear as a key objective, so I will bring my standalone proposition. It was something I was trying to do as a Minister for 2 years, I had no support from other Ministers for Education and Lifelong Learning and/or officers - particularly officers - and it is public buildings that we should get access to. In terms of St. Helier, greenspace and community access, the public of Jersey owns schools - it is not headteachers, it is not boards of governors, it is us the public, and we should have access to those facilities for young and old alike. I have a lot of empathy for the proposal that Deputy Jeune says that she will be bringing to the Assembly for future C.S.P.s. We are discussing this C.S.P. today. Scrutiny is designed to be a critical friend and I do think they have picked up on items which perhaps the Council missed, and I think it has been good and strengthened the document. We, as an Assembly, are a new team and we will go through the same process as all new teams. We will storm, we will form, and hopefully one day we will get to norm. I feel today may have been a bit stormier than the Chief Minister would have hoped for. While I respect individuals who choose to abstain, I remind everyone that we are elected to make decisions to lead our Island. I would encourage Members to get behind this C.S.P. and to hold Ministers to account throughout the term.

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

In the coffee room just a minute ago the Chief Minister asked me will I be supporting. I must say, I walked into the C.S.P. debate with a strong view that I would be not supporting the document. I think it has room for improvement. But I am re-reading it and while it is not the C.S.P. I would have brought forward, I am not in the Government. I ask myself, if everything I brought forward in this - and I apologise to Members for being 5 of the 24 amendments - was accepted, would I have any reason not to support it, in the sense I had brought every change I think was necessary to bring to make it workable. Well, now, I did not get everything across the line; I got 3 out of my 5 through negotiation. I got it through overturning the Council of Ministers in a great moment, and I lost 2. **[Laughter]**

Deputy M. Tadier:

Would the Deputy remind us what that was?

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I will not, to save the Chief Minister's blushes. In all seriousness, the areas which I had concern about, a mentality to build houses without an evidence base has been addressed with a Scrutiny Panel amendment. A fear that Members would be endorsing a document that frankly I still have not got my head around, despite the lengthy debate today, we understand is not an endorsement of its content and it should be taken as a support for Infrastructure more widely. So while I do agree and think perhaps this is not a document the Assembly should be supporting in future, I have to honestly ask, am I here to take a position of opposition or am I here to try and make the work of this Assembly the best it can be? I thank Members for the support they have given to what I think has been a set of thoughtful debates, that has left the C.S.P. looking far better than it did walking in. That is what this Assembly can bring when it performs at its best. So I am far more positive. I look at the Chief Minister, I think it is either a pour or an abstention but as I do not like to abstain he might even get my favour on this one this time.

[17:15]

2.12.12 Senator A.J.H.M. Maclean:

As we approach the end of the day, and hopefully the conclusion of this debate, I am reminded that there is one thing on which all Members of this Assembly rarely disagree. We all have ambitions for Jersey and to create a better future for all. Where we occasionally differ on who should pay for it and how. As Minister for Treasury and Resources I have the sometimes unenviable responsibility of reminding Members that the public purse is not a bottomless purse. This Common Strategic Policy sets out our ambitions for Jersey. It identifies the outcomes we must address and the Island we wish to leave for future generations. It is, quite rightly, a statement of direction. But a strategy is not a spending commitment, and ambition is not a substitute for affordability. This Assembly has considered quite a few amendments during this debate over the last 2½ days. Many have been well-intentioned and a number have undoubtedly strengthened the policy and direction that has been set. Every additional ambition brings with it an important question: what will cost, how will we pay for it, and what might we have to stop doing in order to deliver it? The reality is the Government cannot do everything, everywhere, all at once. It is about prioritisation. If we attempt to make everything a priority we risk making nothing a priority. Fiscal discipline is not an obstacle to delivering this Common Strategic Policy. It is the very foundation upon which its successful delivery depends. Without sound public finances there can be no sustainable investment in our health service, our schools, our infrastructure, or the support that we provide to those who most need it. We must, therefore, be prepared to make choices, to prioritise, to challenge existing expenditure, to eliminate waste and duplication, and, above all, to ensure that every pound of taxpayers' money delivers the greatest possible value. The significant growth in public expenditure over recent years should remind us that spending more does not automatically mean delivering better outcomes. The measure of good Government is not how much money it spends but what it achieves with the money it is entrusted with. The C.S.P. provides our direction. I believe it is a good direction and it is a better direction now it has been amended accordingly. The forthcoming Budget and the intended 3-year financial plan for 2028 to 2030 must provide the discipline, the prioritisation, and the resources necessary to turn the direction into meaningful results. We must resist the temptation to fund permanent commitment from temporary revenues, or to promise what future generations may struggle to be able to afford. I wholeheartedly support this Common Strategic Policy and the ambitions that it contains but, let us be clear, we will not be judged by the length of our list of aspirations or the number of amendments we have accepted today and over the last few days, we will be judged by what we deliver. The surest way to disappoint Islanders is to promise everything and deliver too little. Let us, therefore, be ambitious in our objectives, disciplined in our spending, realistic in our promises, and relentless in our delivery. That is how we will turn this Common Strategic Policy from words on a page into the lasting improvements that I believe that Islanders really require. I urge all Members to fully support the Common Strategic Policy and give the confidence to Islanders that this Assembly as a whole wants to improve their lives.

The Bailiff:

Does anyone else wish to speak? If no one else wishes to speak I call up on the Chief Minister to reply.

2.12.13 Senator L.J. Farnham (Chief Minister):

It is a different suit, by the way, than the picture in case anyone is trying to check on the branding. As we come to the close of this debate I would like to thank all Members for the thoughtful and most of the time constructive - I think it has all been constructive, even the criticisms have been constructive - and considered contributions they have made. Members from across the Assembly have engaged seriously with the challenges facing our Island in an unstable world, which is why stability and continuity remains important. The quality of debate - and I think it has been a good

quality debate over the last 3 days - in general has reflected a shared commitment to securing the best possible future for our Island. We have heard different perspectives and different priorities, and that is important in a debate of this nature. I was going to say I wish Deputy Jeune's idea had been submitted about 6 weeks ago; it is something that I have heard Members and Members have discussed in the backrooms over the last few days. Of course we bring this Common Strategic Policy as part of a commitment under the States of Jersey Law, which was introduced at the beginning of Ministerial Government in 2005. Perhaps it is time to review that. We are a new Assembly, there have been some good and interesting comments made, so perhaps it is time to have a think about how any future Government sets up its plans, whether it comes to the Assembly for a debate or whether it lodges as a report. I had the fortune, or misfortune, to be here during the debates on Ministerial Government and 2 key factors of that move - because the Clothier Report was not implemented in full, parts of it were selected - were the importance of the Troy Rule and a Common Strategic Policy. It was called a Common Strategic Policy because the Government had to come and get the endorsement of the Assembly for their key policies. I thank Deputy Jeune for her consideration, and if she does decide to bring a proposition I would be happy to discuss it with her, as would other Ministers, as we build that idea up. It was a very long year for previous Ministers and previous Members, going into the elections which finish in almost the middle of the summer, and then getting to work on putting a Common Strategic Policy and a Budget together is quite challenging, over the summer period where Members and officials were constantly battling with leave and holidays. I cannot remember without looking how many formal C.O.M. meetings we had. It seemed like a lot. We did have a lot of workshops. We create notes from workshops but the way it works is those workshops were policy under development workshops. We develop the policy, we work it up, we formally approve it at a meeting, we lodge the Common Strategic Policy for 12 weeks, we then share with Members, trying to be inclusive as possible. I try as Chief Minister - it is a huge honour to hold that position at the will and the choice of this Assembly - to be as inclusive as possible with every Member, and I will continue to do that. I apologise if some Members felt we were not as inclusive as we could have been, but we did try, and I think all Ministers were as receptive and collaborative as we could be in accepting amendments or amending amendments, and some we had to reject. But we have aimed to find a good, workable compromise and I agree, if the Assembly support this, we will have ended up with a stronger and improved Common Strategic Policy. Politics aside, because while this is a place of politics, and politics by its very nature can be a confrontational pastime, Islanders really are not that interested in the politics between us in here. They want us to get things done. Across the Assembly there is recognition that Islanders are concerned about many things, affordability, that we need more homes, that we must support economic growth, invest in our infrastructure, protect our environment and maintain strong public services. That is what they want us to do. There is also recognition that these ambitions must be delivered within a framework of responsible public finances. Members may differ on the precise route we take but there is a broad agreement about the destination, and I think the Members who have said they are unable to support it, or those Members who wish to abstain, would have to agree we are all of the view that we are pointing in the same direction. The purpose of the Common Strategic Policy is to provide direction for the Government and, in some instances, for the Assembly, identify priorities, and focus effort on those areas where Government feels we can make the greatest difference over the next 4 years. We set the Common Strategic Policy out as an evolution of the past one, informed not just in detail but informed because I think we felt having a document that set out a list of tangible deliveries worked. There were criticisms that previous Common Strategic Policies did not do that, they were a broad, quite large document that tried to cover everything. One of the things I found out when I became Chief Minister - and I think Members of the previous Government will have to admit - is that when we got into a Government we realised that there were hundreds and hundreds of priorities and lists, to the point where if you try to do too much you achieve little. As one of my teachers said to me a long time ago, it is best to do a few things well than try to do everything badly. That is what this policy seeks to do. To remind Members, we have 11 key priorities: targeted action to ease cost-of-living pressures; secure Jersey's

competitive edge and financial related professional services, including the 2 responding on the effects and the opportunities of A.I.; secure Jersey's competitive edge for the local economy; reduce regulation and red tape; increase the provision of lifelong learning; provide more homes and upgrade core infrastructure; improve community, safety and Island resilience; continue to improve our health services; improve the public realm, community spaces and sports facilities across the whole Island; revise the carbon neutral roadmap and develop a practical and affordable transition to net zero by 2050; deliver a leaner - this has been amended since then to Deputy Tadier's words - and more efficient public sector; and of course an important 12th amendment on transparency. I think those are all laudable objectives that this whole Assembly should embrace because they reflect I think the concerns of the public and provide the help and support that the public are looking for. It commits us to tackling affordability; increasing access to housing; strengthening our competitive edge in the international financial services market, and Deputy Voisin's ambition to run a similar programme for the local economy, which is most welcome; investing in our future through the Investing in Jersey programme, and maintaining the financial discipline that underpins all of this.

[17:30]

As Members have rightly reminded us throughout the debate, the Government will ultimately be judged not by its intentions but by its delivery. The success of this C.S.P. will, therefore, be measured by the outcomes we achieve for Islanders not just in Government but all of us here in this Assembly. I want to impress upon all Members that the hand of collaboration was not just extended for the C.S.P. We will have - and I speak on behalf of all Ministers and Assistant Ministers - an open door policy to discussing ideas and propositions with all Members for the duration of this term of office. The question before us today to consider as we approach the time to vote is not whether this document is perfect, because no document ever is. The old adage is the enemy of a good plan is the quest for a perfect plan. Perfect plans do not really exist. The question is whether it provides a clear, credible and responsible plan for the years ahead. I believe it does, your Government believe it does, and I hope the majority of Members will agree that too. Approving the Common Strategic Policy will also send an important message to Islanders that we are putting their interests before our political disagreements, that this Assembly understands the challenges they face, the challenges ahead, has confidence in our future, and is prepared to provide the leadership needed to secure it. Our duty is not simply to respond to the circumstances of today, but to leave Jersey in a stronger, more resilient, and better prepared position for tomorrow. I am losing my voice, but I should get to the end. As I said, we finish in a much stronger position thanks to the input of Members and Ministers, and now it is time to look forward to the budget. I commend the Common Strategic Plan Policy to the Assembly and I ask Members to support it.

The Bailiff:

The appel has been called for. Members are invited to return to their seats and I ask the Greffier to open the voting. If all Members have had the opportunity of casting their votes I ask the Greffier to close the voting. I can announce that the Common Strategic Policy has been adopted by the Assembly:

POUR: 32		**CONTRE: 10**		**ABSTAINED: 2**
Senator L.J. Farnham		Deputy M. Tadier		Deputy S. Gleave
Senator I.J. Gorst		Deputy C.S. Alves		Deputy G. Raimondo
Senator A. Maclean		Deputy M.B. Andrews		
Senator M.R. Le Hegarat		Deputy T.A. Coles		
Senator T.J.A. Binet		Deputy L.V. Feltham		
Senator H.M. Miles		Deputy H.L. Jeune		

Senator M.E. Millar		Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée		
Senator S. Kersten		Deputy B. Ward		
Connétable of St. Mary		Deputy L. Carpenter		
Connétable of St. Martin		Deputy C. Rebindaine		
Connétable of St. Brelade				
Connétable of St. Helier				
Connétable of St. John				
Connétable of St. Ouen				
Connétable of Trinity				
Connétable of Grouville				
Connétable of St. Saviour				
Connétable of St. Lawrence				
Deputy L.M.C. Doublet				
Deputy K.F. Morel				
Deputy G. Voisin				
Deputy R.E. Binet				
Deputy A.F. Curtis				
Deputy C.D. Curtis				
Deputy M.R. Ferey				
Deputy J. Renouf				
Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson				
Deputy K.M. Wilson				
Deputy C. Leck				
Deputy V. Li				
Deputy R. Parker				
Deputy P. J. Romeril				

Senator L.J. Farnham:

May I propose a 30 minute adjournment? We are not staying? I thought we were staying.

The Bailiff:

I think you might be on your own at 6.00 p.m. Chief Minister. **[Laughter]** There is a risk of that.

Senator L.J. Farnham:

I am sorry, Sir. It has been a long day.

The Bailiff:

Are Members content to adjourn? The States stand adjourned until 9.30 a.m. tomorrow morning.

ADJOURNMENT

[17:34]