



**OFFICIAL REPORT**

**OF THE**

**STATES OF DELIBERATION**

**OF THE**

**ISLAND OF GUERNSEY**

**HANSARD**

**Royal Court House, Guernsey, Thursday, 30th June 2022**

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**Present:**

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Alderney Representatives S. Roberts and E. A. J. Snowdon

**The Clerk to the States of Deliberation**

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

**Absent at the Evocation**

Deputies Le Tocq and Dudley-Owen (*indisposé*);  
Deputies de Sausmarez and Brouard (*relevé à 9h 33*);  
Deputies Leadbeater and St Pier (*absent de l'île*)

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# States of Deliberation

*The States met at 9.30 a.m.*

[THE BAILIFF *in the Chair*]

## PRAYERS

*The States' Greffier*

## EVOCATION

# Billet d'État X

## POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

### Government Work Plan 2022 – Debate continued

**The States' Greffier:** Billet d'État X, the continuation of the debate.

5 **The Bailiff:** Deputy de Sausmarez, you almost made it in time. Would you wish to be relevée?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Yes, please, sir.

10 **The Bailiff:** Thank you very much.  
And Deputy Brouard as well, relevé?

**Deputy Brouard:** Thank you, sir.

15 **The Bailiff:** So, who wishes to speak on amendment number 11?  
Deputy Fairclough.

**Deputy Fairclough:** Thank you, sir.

20 Bizarrely, I am quite drawn to this amendment, and I think I understand the motivation behind it; but for me, it probably raises more questions than it answers, one of which is 'Why did only 17 Members reply to the Deputies' survey, alluded to in point 7 of the explanatory note?' Only the individuals concerned know the answers to that.

25 But this problem of engagement with the whole Assembly, outside of this Chamber, is one of the challenges we all face, be it presentations, consultations, parliamentary meetings, or reviews – including the Reshaping Government piece of work, the very future of our democratic system, and I am not sure the level of engagement with that has been as good as we might have hoped.

So how does one force Members to take part in an arithmetical, hierarchical scoring system, and who designs it? I attended those workshops in 2020 and indicated my priorities at the time. I would

be quite happy if they were published. I believe the overall score gave a guide – a *guide* – to what the big issues were at the time. But guess what? And here is one of the key points: they would now be largely meaningless, because things move on and priorities change.

At the time of the Election, the economic recovery from COVID and education were two of the biggest issues – just two, but those were two of the biggest issues. Eighteen months on, and it is housing and the cost of living, inflation. Priorities change and we need a plan flexible enough to change and respond – which is why, imperfect though it may be, we have a GWP before us this week, facing amendments driven by what many Members see as the top priorities right now. And most of them have been successful, if they are voted through – probably tomorrow, I do not know.

Yes, there is still too much in the Plan; but I believe that is because, when it is broken down into Committees, we can all see the merits of individual workstreams, because we all care about delivering against our mandates – as cumbersome as they often are. And there is nothing wrong with that. And with such huge mandates – some of which do take some time to get your head around, no matter how long you have been studying or watching the States – I cannot be the only Member here who has reluctantly had to agree to de-prioritise work and projects simply because there are not the staff resources to work on them. These are decisions made at nearly every meeting.

I still think the lines are blurred between business-as-usual, the day-to-day work of our Committees, and the bigger policy priorities. For example, I have heard it said, 'If it is not in the GWP, then we should not be doing it'; but that simply is not the case. There is lots of stuff that is not in here; this is not all we or all the staff are doing. And that is one of the challenges, I guess, for Policy & Resources, as they look to match our priorities with resources, both financial and staffing. And that is one of the biggest challenges to achieve our top priorities now, because while these pages of the GWP are full of aspirations, there is less detail on how they will be delivered and by whom – and crucially, for a lot of people, by when.

But for me, that is largely P&R's job. This is our Plan, as an Assembly; but it is P&R's job, in my mind, allocating appropriate resources to ensure priorities agreed by this Assembly get done, and I am happy to leave that to them. And we are able to amend, scrutinise, and challenge on the floor of this Assembly, and that is the way it should be, that is what we have been doing this week.

To conclude, sir, the GWP is not perfect, no political system is perfect; but as this Plan evolves and we see category status applied this time around – and I would like to see more progress on the measuring and reporting of progress – things will get better, I believe, as the term goes on – I am optimistic about that. And just as we are finessing the GWP and fine-tuning it into something that is meaningful, we will have another election, only for the next Assembly to rip up the whole thing and start again. That is politics.

I shall not be supporting this amendment, but thank Deputies Helyar and Prow for laying it and challenging, in a positive way, the priority-setting process.

Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Prow.

**Deputy Gollop:** This'll be good!

**Deputy Prow:** Thank you, Mr Bailiff.

Sir, I rise to support this amendment, and I also thank Deputy Helyar for laying it. It is thought-provoking and I think the debate on it will be of great interest.

Sir, Deputy Helyar started his opening by praising Deputy Soulsby for all the work she has done on the Government Work Plan, and I completely echo that praise. It is a huge piece of work, it is a very difficult piece of work, and I hope any challenge, as Deputy Fairclough said, is positive and must not detract from the excellent work that is done. So I start on that premise.

Sir, we are told through the policy letter, at the Executive Summary, sections 1.1 and 1.9, three things that are very pertinent to this amendment: first, that the Government Work Plan is 'the most

critical work for the year ahead' for Government, that 'the actions of the States of Guernsey need to be focused and co-ordinated,' and:

1.9 Completing actions which have the most potential benefits for our community and economy ... is increasingly important ...

Sir, I do not think that many would disagree with that at all.

Under our Constitution and Machinery of Government, how do we achieve this? The answer, sir, is with great difficulty. The actions referred to are delivered by Committees – or in some cases, by several Committees. They need the resources and finance to do this whilst delivering the 'business as usual' stuff contained in their mandate – a point very eloquently covered by Deputy Fairclough when he just spoke. Sir, this inevitably creates a huge tension because of our system of government. We are a very small jurisdiction in times of turbulence, navigating stormy waters with limited resources and money. Sir, I will not elaborate, as we all know what these challenges are.

And sir, we all understand the need to prioritise, and it has never been more vital. We are told in the policy letter that:

1.4 The Policy & Resources Committee has considered the advice of the Committees of the States and consulted States' Members ...

Sir, in my opinion, this is where the Government Work Plan ship is in danger of hitting a rock. The consultation process is, in my view, flawed and not fully transparent. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) This is reflected in the number of amendments laid. Not only is the understandable tension between the Committees apparent, but also within P&R. It is interesting that three members of P&R are involved with at least four of those amendments. Sir, I have pleaded on several occasions with the Government Work Plan lead in different forums for more engagement with Committees and for greater transparency.

Sir, in my view, the Committee for Home Affairs have been absolute corporate players so far on the Government Work Plan. We have rigorously prioritised, set aside initiatives that we would dearly have wished to progress, and foregone outstanding Resolutions with reluctance and regret. Importantly, they have worked with P&R to bake in our priority actions, some at a slower pace than we would have liked, and have embraced completely cross-Committee working. The justice framework, the domestic abuse and sexual violence strategies being exemplars.

Frankly, sir, I have not quite seen the same level of commitment across the States. This lack of engagement has knocked Committee confidence and not demonstrated the Government Work Plan discipline required. In the words of the policy letter, 'how such work can be managed given the overall picture' and – another quote, sir – to make difficult decisions to arrive at 'completing actions which have the most potential benefits.' For the avoidance of doubt, my challenge is specific to this aspect of the Government Work Plan: the lack of sufficient consultation and Committee engagement and the less-than-transparent prioritisation process.

Generally, sir, I support P&R and we are lucky to have Deputies of their calibre. Also, I echo publicly the words in the explanatory note, which notes:

1. The GWP, whatever its faults, is a positive way of seeking consensus and placing boundaries around an enormous programme of ... [delivery]

This amendment can only strengthen this. I further acknowledge the skills and hard work of those officers working on its preparation, including those in Home Affairs and those at the centre.

So far, I have concentrated mainly on the actions and delivery which falls to Committees; however, ultimately, no Committee can deliver its mandate without the support from this Assembly. My challenge to the Government Work Plan around engagement with Committees applies equally to providing much more real and tangible involvement with Members of the Assembly before such a policy letter is laid. Those Members are the final decision-makers on the prioritisation. The

enormity and importance of the Government Work Plan and the processes around it necessarily makes it difficult for Members. This process cannot be left to a States' meeting, but as much as it possibly can be, take place before debate.

In descriptions of our Government, some arguably describe this Assembly as having an executive function. Sir, that might be the theory – and I read the Government Work Plan's recent last chance saloon press opinion with great interest; a debate for another day. But States' Members cannot possibly act as an executive body when they only meet monthly as a parliament, tied to an agenda. Given the importance of the Government Work Plan, other processes must be deployed, as those suggested within the amendment, to achieve that important level of engagement.

Sir, in the interests of democracy, transparency, and effective government, Committee and States' Members need greater support and robust Government work place processes to collectively set priorities and allocate the resources to allow delivery, and very importantly, to be publicly accountable for it.

Sir, I ask all Deputies to support this amendment. Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Meerveld.

**Deputy Meerveld:** Thank you, sir.

Like other Members, I thank Deputies Soulsby and Helyar for bringing forward this amendment –  
(**A Member:** No.) Sorry. (**A Member:** Wrong amendment.) Wrong amendment! (*Laughter*) Anyway, I support this amendment. But, yes, I am reading the wrong one; I have got my notes on 14 rather than page 11. (*Laughter*) But I thank the Members for bringing this amendment forward and I understand fully the desire to try and improve the functions of Government and make it more efficient and more effective. And it is something I think all governments struggle with: our neighbours in Jersey have just gone through a significant change in the way they do things. And if you look at Guernsey's history, we have done this on a regular basis and are in the process, through the Reshaping Government Working Group, of looking at exactly this: how can we change things?

So whilst I fully sympathise with the desire to bring this forward and to have it discussed, I am afraid I cannot support it, although I sympathise with it. The issue has been raised about the fact that it did not have as broad an engagement with individual Members as was hoped. But then, of course, we have to remember that the previous time this was done, there was a survey done of Members – Members took a lot of time participating in it – but it turned out that the survey was arguably flawed. The results were never published, and that may have discouraged Members from fully participating in this one, because of that fraught process. And also, of course, we have got to remember that most Members have participated in this process via their Committee, if not directly in person – having said which, I do encourage the idea of all Members participating in this evaluation process in future.

But we cannot run a Government by tick-box. You cannot have a survey of Members with limited information available and just simply a one-line description of an initiative that might have very broad and far-reaching implications and then say prioritise that over the next one-paragraph or one-sentence description. I do not think that we can do it that way. Imagine in the private sector – I do not know of any company in the world that has a board of directors where they do a survey of the directors first and then have a board meeting not to make decisions, but simply to almost discuss the results of the survey and endorse it.

In fact, if you went through that process, you have the threat of undermining this Chamber. Issues are meant to be brought to this Chamber and debated, and then we make decisions. In the debate in the last two days, I have changed my mind on certain amendments because I have listened to debate and been influenced by debate; but if I had filled out a survey that had then been published publicly ranking my priorities, etc., almost pre-committing to my vote in this Assembly, then I would struggle with that and the public would, quite rightly, potentially challenge me, and I would then have to justify my position.

Also, there is a danger, if you start doing priorities and publishing it: will Members actually rank it in the order that they believe in their heart is most effective and important for the community, or will you end up with virtue-signalling? 'I'll put social agendas at the top, because if I don't, I'll get criticised.' You could look at – as we have discussed several times in the last couple of days – the unintended consequences of what is ostensibly a well-intentioned suggestion for trying to make Government more effective; but it could have negative unintended consequences.

So whilst I completely support initiatives and conversations like this to improve the effectiveness of Government, I cannot support this particular amendment – having said which, I do think the Government Work Plan process is improving with each iteration and I look forward to it being developed further in future.

Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Gollop.

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

I sit on Deputy Meerveld's SACC and some of the members of that team are working hard with Deputy Soulsby on looking at the Machinery of Government. And actually, I mention that because I concurred a little bit with the excellent speech by Deputy Fairclough as well. The Machinery of Government workstream has suffered a bit from the same malaise that this apparently has of Members not responding – and I must admit, I think I am a culprit on both. There are lots of reasons for that. One is the challenges of our IT systems and lack of user-friendly equipment. Another one is, I am, of course, involved with Committees that are working on this, and we go through the work on SACC, Social Security, and so on.

The third reason is, I do attend the workshops. I did miss, in my calendar/electronic diary, the Machinery of Government workshop and was told again and again they would never have another one, and quite a few of us missed that. You cannot necessarily complain, if you invite 40 people to your party and fewer than 20 turn up, that you do not get much response. I agreed with what Deputy Prow said, as well, about Members perhaps lacking resources and assistance to deliver their priorities.

We will start from that angle because it is not exactly user-friendly, this amendment. It is not only long-winded, but it has a slightly naughty phrase on point 6 of the explanatory note:

6. The electorate has a legitimate expectation to know the views and objectives of each of those States' Members who represent them in order for government to be both accountable and ...

7 ... it cannot be acceptable to fellow Members, or the public, that so few Members have contributed to priorities ... the public is entitled to know politicians' views and what they stand for.

And they are 40 paid Members! Albeit, the Alderney Members are paid less than us; but that is another issue. So there is an implicit criticism: we are not doing our job and we are taking our money under false pretences a bit.

But some of us do not particularly believe in the policy planning process to begin with. Being a long-serving Member, I sat on the States' Strategic Plan group, chaired by Deputy Parkinson and the then-Deputy McNulty Bauer for a while, and every time, people like Deputy Meerveld said 'The next Plan will be better' and that 'This Plan is better than the previous'; but we should not really have a government by plan. Jersey are going in another direction, maybe government by party or something else.

But some of us do not particularly like plans. I think they appeal to people like Deputy Soulsby and Deputy Prow because they are very organised people who worked hard in professional disciplines and organisations; but some of us have not and we prefer to do things when we need to. For example, if, two years ago, you had said to States' Members the priority now would be a shortage of housing and even more rapidly-rising inflation and interest rates rises, you would think we were crazy, because that had not been the agenda for 10 years – yes, I know, the Guernsey Party in particular dealt with issues of housing before their time. Having said all that, although I quibble

about the language of this amendment, I actually think we should have it, (*Laughter*) and I will support it.

Let me point out another point: as we know, we are parliamentarians and the States' Greffier and his team work really hard with us, but I know from experience that if I have not filled in a form or done something that needs to be done, I will be given a gentle prompt now and then to do the work. We have not had that from our policy-facing civil servants on some of these surveys. You get an email, probably one of a hundred during the day, it starts a chain, and it is by somebody you do not know because it has come from an officer who is a researcher or whatever, and it gets lost in the system. So is it surprising that – we do not have researchers, we do not have secretaries, we do not have a coherent management structure – is it surprising you do not get the answers back? And Deputy Meerveld has made the valid point: would you just want boxes ticking?

I will give way.

**Deputy Soulsby:** I thank Deputy Gollop for giving way. I do actually recall that officers did give a prompt for Members on this and in terms of the Machinery of Government survey.

**Deputy Gollop:** Yes, they invariably do; but then you find the prompt and, as I say, they are not ... another thing is, we know some Members – and I am one of them who does – rightly or wrongly – and this went against the corporate ethic; I know it did – we were supposed to go to e-government completely; but some of us, from time to time, still get paper copies of documents. It probably costs the Civil Service machine a bit doing that. But do we get paper copies sent to our home or Government addresses of these forms? No, we do not. So they are entirely in the electronic cyber-universe.

So we might get paper copies for Committee meetings, we might get paper copies for invitations, we might get paper copies for Billets; but we do not for this. Now, maybe that is a failing of some of the States' Members; but you cannot expect all 40 States' Members to be the most competent people in Guernsey, (*Laughter*) and if they were the most brilliant, competent, and able people in Guernsey, would they be representative of our society? No, they would not! (*Laughter*) So the whole thing is a bit of nonsense. And if you want my views on policy planning, I will give them to you – and I would probably write them on Facebook and the media; but that is another story. (*Laughter*)

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Burford.

**Deputy Burford:** Thank you, sir. I am not sure how I can follow that, really.

I will certainly try to persuade Deputy Gollop to possibly vote against this amendment on the basis that I do not think we should have such a fundamental change to our major piece of work this term on the basis of his difficulties with managing his inbox, with all due respect, and perhaps some of us could help him with reminders.

I also have not discussed this amendment with my colleague on Scrutiny, Deputy Fairclough; but interestingly, listening to his speech, mine actually is sort of very similar, except expressed in perhaps slightly more robust language, as is my want.

I cannot support this amendment. Although the GWP process is not perfect, it is just starting to bed in and Members are becoming more familiar with it and the process. The GWP was sold to this Assembly on the basis of annual revisions and I see no case to cancel the 2024 revision process, which this amendment will do.

This amendment tries to use public transparency as its justification for an overhaul of the GWP process by publishing Members' preferences of workstreams, when what really matters is how Members vote in this Assembly. And of course, simultaneous electronic voting will ensure that those interested can see every vote. Irrespective, I have no fear of the public knowing what my priorities are. I engage on social media daily, free of copyright, (*Laughter*) and I respond directly to traditional

media enquiries without employing the screen of the Comms Department, so I am certainly not hiding my views.

280 But I do not really think that a published list of which boxes Members ticked – which, by its very nature, would be outside any useful or easily promulgated context – would be at all helpful. The public is, of course, entitled to know Members' views and any member of the community is free to contact any Deputy on the subject, and many do. There is no barrier to the public knowing what Deputies think presently: we are some of the most accessible parliamentarians in the world.

285 When I stood for the job of Scrutiny President, I had not perhaps quite realised what would be involved when it came to conducting Committee hearings. Instead of having to be across the detail of one or maybe two Committees, Scrutiny Members have to try to get into the detail of all the Committees, and that is a lot of work. This amendment, in my view, would require all Members of this Assembly to know a great deal more about the detail of each Committee's mandate in order to be able to begin to fairly and constructively vote on individual items; because without that detailed  
290 knowledge, the votes would be nothing more than uninformed preferences, and that is no way to create a plan. It was a flaw with the original iteration when we had to do that and I do not want to see it reintroduced.

The Committees know what work they wish to prioritise and the Committees are best placed to make those decisions; however, should a majority of Members disagree when it comes to debate,  
295 then amendments can be laid or the Plan can contain Propositions in the alternate. This amendment will lead to situations where Deputies on other Committees, or even on no Committee at all, can disrupt the carefully proposed workstreams of a Committee. For example, a Deputy who has not taken the time to attend any of the briefings that Education have put on for Members of this Assembly can vote against what the Committee is proposing for the next iteration of the work plan and, with others who are perhaps not well-informed, scupper their work. This amendment totally  
300 undermines our Committee system of Government. If Members do not like this system then please feed into the review, but do not try to undermine it by amendment.

In the explanatory note, Deputy Helyar bemoans the fact that only 17 Members responded to the Recent survey. One could interpret the poor response as indicating contentment, but whatever  
305 the motivation – or indeed, more accurately, *lack* of motivation – in the end, it is up to individual Members, and I do not think the threat of publication in order to get more engagement is appropriate. I do not want people voting for stuff just so they are not shown up in print.

Paragraph 9 of the explanatory note says:

310 ... the public has a right to know who may be pushing expensive and perhaps unnecessary minority issues, ...

(**A Member:** Hear, hear.) Now, we are not told what might constitute a 'minority issue,' so I tried to think of some, and I soon realised that much of what we do in here can be cast as a 'minority issue,' because it only affects a minority of the population.

315 Let's take the SARC, which we voted again to support yesterday: that could quite clearly be identified as an expensive minority issue. It will probably cost around £300,000 a year to run and it will only benefit a minority of our society. I have been campaigning for six years to see a SARC and I have been told in the past that it is not sufficiently necessary against other priorities; but who is going to be judge and jury on what constitutes something being categorised as a minority, expensive, or unnecessary in terms of Members' votes? In fact, I am quite surprised that Deputy  
320 Prow supported this amendment, as it would seem that his Committee would be the most vulnerable to losing workstreams, not because they are not vital, but politely, because they might not be seen as so interesting or popular.

This amendment will lead to some Committees having new work side-lined while others have an excess. In any democracy, there is always a tendency for health and education to be the hardest  
325 to refuse, and I understand that; but that does not mean that the vital work of Home Affairs or the importance of Economic Development or the future value to the Island of the blue economy are not also necessary.

330 So to sum up, this amendment is an assault on the Committee system of Government and the knowledge and experience contained within those Committees. As an Assembly with a high proportion of new Deputies – and as Deputy Trott explained at the CPA meeting last night, a historically low average length of individual tenure – please let us draw on the experience of those who have been working on their Committees for nearly two years, rather than, as Deputy de Sausmarez said, having ‘Government by SurveyMonkey’.

I urge Members to throw this amendment out.

335 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

**Deputy Roffey:** Thank you, sir.

340 This amendment has been put forward on two bases: one, openness – that the public have a right to know what Members of this Assembly believe to be priorities. I hope I have never done anything other than wear my heart on my sleeve as far as that is concerned. I am always very happy to share what my priorities are. However, as a way of actually prioritising the workstreams of this Assembly, this is going from something that is not perfect but becoming a bit more professional, and going right back to the amateurish past of which I have lived through many iterations. I have  
345 known so many of these sorts of exercises and they never ever produced good outcomes. And by ‘good’, I do not mean ‘ones I agree with’.

The whole point of this policy Plan is there are themes; there are areas where workstreams complement each other and actually support each other, and therefore, are more likely to get outcomes. You do a survey with just a list of a hundred different things we could do, and the ones  
350 that come at the top are often contradictory, or the bit that needs to support that workstream does not make the cut, or the two most popular ones will work against each other. It is just an amateurish way of going about things.

As I say, I have been through lots of these exercises, and one that probably sticks in my mind more than any other was one where we went to the Guernsey Bowl. The powers-that-be at the time  
355 said there was £5 million available for ‘service development’, so we all had coloured tokens worth quarter of a million pounds each. And there were presentations from Health, Education, all the various main Committees about the policy developments they wanted to see happen, and we were asked to allocate that money. Most of us played by the game and realised there were competing ones that we needed to move on a broad front.

360 But the five Members of Home Affairs – not the current ones; at the time! – had a pact: all 20 of their quarter of a million pounds tokens went into the Home Affairs in order to skew things that way, in order to get the outcome that they wanted. And frankly, I do not trust the fact that that sort of activity would not go on now! It was so amateurish, I remember a senior civil servant, now retired, I overheard him muttering to one of his colleagues, ‘Thank goodness those tokens weren’t edible!’,  
365 *(Laughter)* because really, that was the level that were operating on. And this is inviting that sort of thing again.

Home Affairs may have six different priorities, really important ones. And if I read a paragraph or two on each of them, I will not know in an informed way which of those six is more important than the other. If people want my gut reaction on things that I know little about, on the work of  
370 Economic Development or whatever, I can give a gut feeling; but Government by gut feeling is amateurish, it really is. We need informed decision making. So I do not mind filling in these surveys. I do not mind doing the sort of exercise suggested here. As Deputy Fairclough, it is a guide about where the Assembly is generally thinking; at that level, it is probably quite useful. But it should not be the prioritisation exercise; prioritisation needs to be done with in-depth information, with real  
375 knowledge. And as Deputy Burford said, really, if we trust Committees – if we do not, let us get rid of those Committees – but if we trust Committees, let those that have really worked through and know the nuances and know what is important actually prioritise their work, and our exercise is then to perhaps make sure that there is a coherent whole that comes out of those various work paths. But to do it on the basis of – even if there was a page on each of these 100 competing priorities

380 and we were asked to rank them, if you really feel that that is progress, making it more professional than it is today – and I think it does need to go further, I think it is a work in progress and we are not there yet – but this is a step backwards, it really is a step backwards to the bad old days. Let us not do it.

385 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Bury.

**Deputy Bury:** Thank you, sir.

Similar to other Members, on the face of it, I do not much mind the amendment. Openness and transparency is a drum I bang fairly often, as, I think, the President of HSC would happily attest to. But similar to others, it is when you dig down into the detail, sir – and particularly, 18(c), the scoring process that will create the 'List', which sounds like some sort of horror movie title and could possibly have similar results. As other Members have said, asking all Members to know the details, the progress already made, the interdependencies of all the workstreams across all the Committees, I presume it is almost impossible. That is why we have the Committee system: so that Members can focus on specific areas, be really properly informed on them, and then when Members are asked to make a decision on that, they are provided with an in-depth policy letter as much as possible to make that decision.

This suggestion, I feel, completely undermines that process, as well as the principle of this Chamber, the principle of debate. Members are being asked to prioritise the work without hearing from those doing it in any detail and pre-judging their decisions without any debate. It is an oversimplification of the work of our Government. As I said, transparency is not something I want to shy away from; I think it is vitally important, and the thrust of that in the amendment is something I absolutely agree with. But as Deputy Burford said – and I was surprised that Deputy Meerveld did not mention it – I think that is what our new simultaneous electronic voting (SEV), surely, will be a better vehicle for that transparency than this tick-box exercise, because that will be a record of what Members actually did.

And I think this alludes to something that Deputy Inder has said over the last few days – and I do not want to bemoan the Working Committee, because it is vitally important and I do not think it necessarily always gets the recognition that it should – it is what Members do in here and how they vote that makes the changes. So a pre-judged list, is that any better than a manifesto, necessarily?

It is the votes in here that count. So for example, someone might say on their List that they want to prioritise implementing a secondary pension system, but then ultimately not vote for it when it comes down to it. I believe that the new SEV is a better vehicle for that transparency. However, if we could indeed force Members to take part in this tick-box exercise, then why not publish intentions? But it should not make the basis of the Government Work Plan, because Members purely do not have enough knowledge of every single workstream to do that. And Deputy Helyar said himself in his opening speech that it is difficult for Members to amend the Plan as it is because it is so vast, so the same applies to the prioritisation process.

Moving on to the explanatory note: number 7 – and a few other Members have touched on it – it does feel like it is trying to suggest that only 17 Deputies have taken part in the prioritisation process, and that is not accurate, because of our Committee system. The refresh consultation took place at political level with all six Principal Committees, plus the DPA –

425 **Deputy Mahoney:** Point of correction, please, sir?

**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Mahoney.

**Deputy Mahoney:** Whilst that may have happened with Committees, of the survey that was sent out, 17 were returned; that is a fact.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Bury to continue, please.

**Deputy Bury:** Thank you.

435 As I said, it is trying to *infer* that only 17 Deputies took part in the process.

**Deputy Mahoney:** Point of correction, please, sir?

**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Mahoney.

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**Deputy Mahoney:** It is not 'inferring' anything; it is a fact.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Bury to continue.

445 **Deputy Bury:** That is enough tennis.

The Committee system allowed all Members of the six Principal Committees, plus the DPA and SACC, to take part in the refresh process. Now, I did some very quick calculations but I think there were only six Members that are not on any of those Committees, and many of the Members, like myself, are on more than one. So the majority of Members have actually taken part in the prioritisation process, but with a more focused and informed lens than this set of proposals is suggesting.

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As others have said, the GWP is not perfect; Deputy Soulsby herself recognises that. And as Deputy Helyar flatteringly remembered, I had aired my concerns at the last GWP debate. I had been worried that the pace that we had to go at, particularly with so many new Members ... I was concerned that if we missed something because we did not quite have our feet under the table and we were working at breakneck speed, then the opportunity to include it would have been lost for ever – maybe not for ever, but for the term. I was given assurances at the time that that would not be the case and that the refresh process would allow us to do that, and I am really pleased that that has come to fruition.

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So I did have those concerns; but now I have got a bit more time under my belt, I can recognise it more as a really very noble and fairly successful attempt at wrestling an octopus. Does it have everything in it I would like to see? Of course not, and I am sure many others, if not all, feel the same. But I think that is the inevitable outcome in our system of government. I do not think you are going to get to the *panacea* where every single Member is happy with it or that it represents exactly their point of view. It reminds me of a saying I once heard regarding contract negotiation, that was, 'In the end, if no one is happy, then you have probably done a good job, because you have found some sort of middle ground.'

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Sir, this Proposition looks to fundamentally change how the GWP will be drawn together. I pulled from the gov.gg website, under the 'P&R Committee Responsibilities', it says that P&R are:

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Responsible for leadership and co-ordination of the work of the States, including developing and promoting the States' overall policy objectives ...

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This Proposition appears to be removing that leadership and co-ordination and development role from P&R and handing it over to the Members. And I have spoken to several Members over the last few days who have expressed how difficult it has been –

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**Deputy Taylor:** Point of correction, sir?

**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Taylor.

**Deputy Taylor:** I may be incorrect here, but point (d) would contradict Deputy Bury's statement, saying that:

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d. Having received all responses, the Policy & Resources Committee will evaluate the resource requirements to service this List with due regard to the established GWP framework already in delivery in order to lay before the States of Deliberation an affordable and achievable ...

So it is not putting the List in the Members' hands; it is just collating more information with which P&R would make their decision.

485 **The Bailiff:** In relation to that, my view is that Deputy Bury was expressing her view as to what this amendment, if it were approved and then a Resolution came out of the Proposition, would lead to, which is to devolve away from a Committee that has that within its mandate to everyone to prioritise; that is a view that she is entitled to express.

490 Deputy Bury to continue, please.

**Deputy Bury:** Thank you, sir. Yes, that is the point that I was making.

The people that it is handing it over to, the Members, I have had several conversations with Members over the course of the last couple of days who have expressed how difficult it has been to even get to this point that we are at with the document that we have had, with the guidance from P&R, enough to debate, possibly make amendment, and decide, and we are asking Members to do more than that ... this amendment would be.

In summary, sir, I do not envy the job of P&R pulling this all together. It has clearly been quite difficult, and pulling something that is a cohesive document obviously has not panned out in the way that some Members of P&R would have liked; but they have got the difficult job. That is why they get paid the big bucks, I think: to do the hard stuff, to provide the leadership. And they did: by a majority, they agreed to the Plan. So while some Members might not be 100% happy with the final product, this debate is their opportunity to amend it to reflect the items that matter to them most. And this is an open and transparent forum which the public have unrestricted access to.

505 So I do not think that this Proposition does what it is intending or setting out to do and I think it will do more damage than good, so I would ask Members to reject it, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Moakes.

510 **Deputy Moakes:** Thank you, sir.

I am surprised and a little disappointed – in fact, I am very disappointed – to hear some of the speeches that have been made today. What is not to like about this amendment? It basically is promoting accountability, transparency, and scrutiny; and yet, we have two members of Scrutiny who say they will not vote for it. *(Laughter)*

515 A huge amount of work has gone into the GWP. I agree with everybody: it is not perfect; but it has been able to whittle down the number of priorities to a manageable number, and it has done that through engagement at meetings, by filling in a questionnaire that has then been looked at and prioritised, and then now we get to debate it and talk about it properly.

I think that some people are missing the point of this amendment. We are not debating the process; we are debating *engagement in* the process, which was woeful. Deputies were asked to attend meetings and complete questionnaires to indicate what their priorities were for the next 12 months; in other words, they were asked to decide what they felt Guernsey should be focused on. All of those things would then come to the Assembly and be debated.

520 Not every Deputy turned up to the meetings, as we have heard, and only 17 Deputies bothered to respond to the questionnaire. And as my colleague said, that is a fact: only 17 turned up. That is very disappointing, given that the GWP is meant to represent the most important priorities that the Government needs to focus on. It is therefore crucial that all Deputies participate in the process, and I think that the public would expect their elected Deputies to take an active role in developing and shaping and then implementing priorities that affect them and the Island. **(A Member:** Hear, hear.)

So I fully support amendment 11, because it means that in the future all Members will be asked to complete a questionnaire outlining their priorities by scoring them as they see fit. They will still have the opportunity to debate what the outcome of that is in this very room. In addition to that, these responses will then be made public so that people can see not just how Deputies scored the priorities, but who did or did not respond; I think the public have a right to know.

My manifesto is in the public domain, as is everyone else's; however, I am sure the public would be interested to know what we are focused on, as well as what we said we would be focused on. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) So this is, I think, a very simple but effective amendment to build engagement in a process. I will be voting for this amendment, and I urge everyone else who promotes accountability, transparency, and scrutiny to do the same.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Oliver.

**Deputy Oliver:** Thank you, sir.

Deputy Helyar said this amendment is like Marmite; well I actually quite like Marmite, I have it every morning.

I do not mind this amendment. It is just adding a layer of consultation. And I think it was actually Deputy de Sausmarez's speech yesterday that changed my mind, because she said – paraphrasing it – 'We don't really know about other mandates, so how can we get involved?' People get, all the time, involved. We have got a requête coming next debate that is solely talking about DPA, and basically, they want 40 Members to do an open planning meeting on any greenfield site that the States is going to build on. So everybody gets involved in other people's Committees, whether they understand it or not, to be honest. Deputy Lester Queripel always says every one of us in this room should be scrutinising what comes before the States, (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) and I think this is just another level of scrutiny and making sure that the priorities with our limited resources are put in the right place.

So I will vote for this amendment and I urge other Members to.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Inder.

**Deputy Inder:** Sir, thank you for Deputy Victoria Oliver's speech – and possibly Deputy Moakes' as well, actually – because I have had the distinct impression throughout this debate that only certain Committees are the font of all knowledge on their particular Committees. No one else can know about the environment apart from the five members of E&I, no one else can know about health apart from the five members of HSC, and you are not allowed to have any other opinion on it; you are not allowed, you are just not allowed, because they know everything!

I am not like that. When I took this presidency, my offer to any Member of this Assembly ... and I thank Deputy Bury for making reference. And I do believe in this Assembly, because whether you be rich man, poor man, beggar man, or thief, your vote is equal in this Assembly – as is your opinion, until the point you start losing by a majority. So I find it really quite odd that we are told, peculiarly – well, not peculiarly ... The whole Government Work Plan is *our* Government Work Plan, it is about all of us, we are all allowed an opinion, *until* it actually becomes our Government Work Plan and we are told to stay away; you are told to stay away. Effectively, by the sounds of it, as soon as you sit on a Committee, you are a health expert. 'We are now on Economic Development, so do not come anywhere near me anymore, because I know everything.' Good luck with that.

My offer is the same: if I see that list and there are things in there that I have missed, I would be worried, and I would be worried because I would be seeing things coming down the track, and my job would be trying to persuade those Members of the error of their ways, or possibly reflecting on the error of my ways. I just do not get ... We are supposed to be moving away from 'silos of government', and I think we have. Things like: our Chief Minister has set up a Presidents' meeting, we are talking a lot more. I actually went out, strangely enough, for a coffee with – it was after one

of our meetings – the President of the Home Department, myself, and the President of the DPA; that just would not have happened in the last Assembly. It just would not have happened. Those  
585 three people sitting for a coffee just would not have happened. It would not have happened; it is a fact. So our Government is actually ... It is a fact.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Point of correction?

590 **Deputy Inder:** Well, this will be interesting, because she was not there! (*Laughter*)

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** I am going to try. I do not think Deputy Inder can claim that that specific statement is a fact.

595 **The Bailiff:** It is his *opinion*, again. There is a distinction between a Member being able to offer an opinion on something and actually saying something that is factually wrong.  
Deputy Inder to continue.

**Deputy Inder:** So that is the point: things have changed. We are certainly more binded. We have  
600 got, I think, a Government Work Plan that is much better than one that we have ever had before, to be perfectly frank with you. I see no reason, as elected Members of this Assembly, that there should not be more inclusion in the process leading up, so I will be supporting it.

I just want to touch on something that Deputy Fairclough said and I think Deputy Gollop mentioned as well – and it is a bit of a counter to what Deputy Roffey said. Deputy Roffey said he  
605 did not like – I do not know what it was; was it tags in a bucket for five million quid or something like that? We have just been through that. We sat at Beau Séjour with only 18 people, and I lasted 10 minutes, on the Machinery of Government. I sat round a table with probably some of the weirdest questions I have ever seen in my life, asking to put Post-its on a board – and apparently, we are not going to have one of those Post-it sessions again.

610 Now, I would encourage those Members who are leading the Machinery of Government to actually talk to the Presidents, because the Presidents may actually have ideas about how they can make more efficiencies in their own mandates. We are not the enemy. And I found it really quite odd. I sat back, watched – smirked, most of the time – I sat and watched people who actually were not on Committees telling the other Committees how they might be able to do their job. It is very  
615 much like this in Guernsey: what we do as politicians, we always do this, it is always them. We sat at – I cannot remember what it was called: the ‘Cambridge Room’ or something like that? – we had 20 minutes of the history of – I do not know what: and all the others in the world – and then we actually sat and put Post-its on whiteboards. That is not, by any stretch of the imagination, anything that looks like a Machinery of Government process, and it is quite worrying.

620 But moving on to the actual priorities themselves: if it were me – and I have to accept that the Government Work Plan would not have particularly known about this. At the time, there was reduced – I think it was in May – things have moved on. We are going through something called a ‘GRIP process’, and that is effectively the Registry IT Replacement Program. That is actually hugely important, and possibly, between myself and Deputy Moakes, we might have been better to have  
625 added some kind of amendment to add that into some kind of priority. So that is where things change.

And it surprises me: as unsexy as it is, it does surprise me that Moneyval is only number 12 on the priority list, and it is for noting. We have got everything else – we have got housing, hugely important; population, hugely important – but if we have any problems greater than expected over  
630 Moneyval, as unsexy as it is, I am really quite surprised it is only number 12. It should have been a lot higher up in the priority. And had we had that listing process – because something like Moneyval actually sits across ... it is not particularly owned by one Committee; it is one of the things where Policy & Resources gets involved, I think the Home Department does, we do as well – that is where things get missed.

If we had had those conversations between Committees, I think this would have been higher up. It would not have looked good on the front page of the *Press* when we are talking about housing and environmentalism; but it would be a very strong message for business. Moneyval is probably our priority piece of work over the next two years; (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) it really is. But it does not look good on a *Guernsey Press* headline; housing does, social policy, environmentalism, population does. (*Interjection*)

Anyway, I am not worried about this – I might even call it ‘Inder’s List’. I am not worried about this List and this amendment; I think it is useful, it could inform Committees. And my offer is still there from when I took this Presidency: if anyone wants to come and beat down my door and talk about things that we should be doing, they are always welcome.

I will be supporting this amendment.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Queripel.

**Deputy Queripel:** Sir, I cannot stand Marmite; (*Laughter*) I absolutely loathe the stuff. But I resonate with this amendment completely. And for the benefit of Islanders listening on the radio, I want to just recite two extremely pertinent paragraphs from the explanatory note. Paragraph 5 reads as follows:

5. This Amendment is an attempt to ensure a democratic and transparent prioritisation process going forward, and most importantly, that the public understands who, amongst their representatives, has the same priorities which they may share.

Paragraph 9 reads:

9. The GWP process is new and evolving. It is certainly better than the last process, but it is not perfect. Resources are hugely stretched and the public has a right to know who may be pushing expensive and perhaps unnecessary minority issues, and why, and it has a right to know what are the values and objectives of each of its elected representatives. An open and transparent scoring system for concluding priorities must be an obvious democratic improvement in our system of government.

And that says it all for me, sir, which is why I am supporting this amendment.

I am sure it will come as no surprise to anyone, sir, I ask for a recorded vote, please. Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Ferbrache.

**Deputy Ferbrache:** Sir, I am surprised that this amendment has taken the amount of time that it has taken: it started late yesterday afternoon, we have had an hour or so this morning. I am sympathetic to both sides, I really am sympathetic to both sides. The people who have spoken to oppose it are conscientious States’ Members, they are some of the most conscientious States’ Members: they attend things, they research things, and they think carefully – albeit sometimes, my views and their views disagree; but I respect their views and I respect their points of view in relation to it.

Deputy Helyar in his opening yesterday afternoon said, when it was first circulated or discussed, I described it as ‘fluffy’, which is exactly how I did describe it. And I am almost, on this particular matter, in the camp of Deputy Gollop. When he says he does not like plans and there are too many plans, etc. And he has seen, over the last 20-odd years, many iterations of those, and most of them have collapsed into dust and they have produced hopeless, really, wish lists.

The idea of the Government Work Plan is not to be a wish list; to be a practical document and have annual reviews. And it is the most focused – I was first in the States in 1994 and I was out of it for a long time, I came back again six years ago. When I was in it, we had little plan, initially; then I have watched with interest from afar as a non-States’ member, and I saw all these wonderful plans that really did not achieve very much.

680 And then I can remember, one of the worst usages of my time ever was when I came back into  
the States in May 2016: those of us who were Members shortly thereafter went to Beau Séjour, sat  
in a room, and we had this – I still do not understand it. I appreciate I am just a person of average  
intelligence; but it went in one ear, out the other, and up into the ether, and I just did not understand  
what we were there for. It was like a philosophy lecture with no point, no prospect; but we were  
there and some people were very engaged. We had a second session, which was even worse than  
685 the first session; and by the third session, I thought I would rather go fishing, and I do not even like  
fishing! (*Laughter*)

But in relation to that, we do have to have some structure. I am very much akin to Deputy Gollop;  
he made a point ... and again, looking at my speech that I referred to part of yesterday, when we  
were talking about another amendment in relation to GP11, the debate on the Island Development  
690 Plan. In relation to that, I quoted statistics about the fall in conveyancing – there has been a  
significant fall over a period of two or three years in the number of conveyancing, and it was looking  
doom-and-gloom – the contraction of the construction industry – they were in doom-and-gloom.  
They had lost a lot of people over a number of years. They had also fallen from something like  
producing over 6% of GDP to just over 5%; 1% of GDP is a big drop. And we have moved on. As  
695 Deputy Gollop said, who would have thought until recently that we would be looking at high  
inflation, we would be dealing with such a dramatic housing crisis, and other points that he well  
made. So he and I actually agree on most matters and we are almost in agreement on this; except  
I do a diversion, I think we should have this Plan.

Not everybody can attend everything. And at one time, there were lists published about so-and-  
700 so had attended 23 out of 30 Committee meetings or so many States' meetings, etc.; I think that  
was redundant, I do not see the point of that, because people have good reason not to attend  
meetings sometimes. What I am concerned about is that we should, wherever possible, without  
being slavish to it, inform ourselves as best we can. I accept Deputy Inder's point that just because  
you are on Economic Development or P&R, you cannot be expected to know everything and you  
705 are not an expert suddenly. You are not Solomon because you are a States' Member who has been  
elected to that body; but you should inform yourself when you can.

I went recently to what I thought was a very good presentation in relation to the anti-  
discrimination ordinance. I think there were only 12 or 13 States' Members there. Now, I did not  
agree with every word that was said; but I got great benefit from that hour and a half, or whatever  
710 it was. The presentation I thought was jolly good, even though I did not agree with all of it. That  
does not matter: I still learnt things that I would not have learnt if I had not gone. Now, there were  
some people I know who had valid reasons for not being there and they expressed their apologies;  
but I do not think there were 25 good reasons or 26 good reasons for not being there in relation to  
a topic which we will be debating in a few months' time and which will have major concerns in  
715 relation to the Island. And I went the next day to a very good presentation in relation to education.  
Now, there were a few more there; but there were still not enough people there.

So we had, in two days, significant matters of significant import in relation to key issues that this  
Assembly will have to wrestle with and deal with regularly; and yet, there were not enough States'  
Members. There are some who are non-attenders to almost anything. And there was a much better-  
720 attended – albeit by Teams – presentation in relation to the tax review; but still, there are one or  
two Members who never attend anything because they know it all. Now, that is a shame. And I  
would advocate that they do not know it all, because none of us know it all. And even if we think –  
I am not giving way, because Deputy Queripel has just spoken and he has made his points in relation  
to that. While it is still fresh in my mind, I want to say this: we can always learn. That does not mean  
725 we have to go ... I do not like the tick-box mentality thing.

This is an amendment where – I have to be honest – I cannot be [*inaudible*] anymore because I  
do not like too many bureaucracies, I do not like too many tick-box exercises. Deputy Meerveld  
made a good point in his speech: you can genuinely think something today and think, 'This is a  
priority for me'; but in three months' time, six months' time, when it comes to debate, you have

730 changed your mind, or you have changed your mind, as he said, on a particular issue in the last day or two. Facts change your mind, experience changes your mind, and you take a different view.

But that said – and I am still reserving the way that I will vote until you hear what I say when the vote is called – in relation to this, I can see the balance for transparency. If I were to believe today – and I was asked to prioritise or not prioritise in the way that Deputy Helyar has suggested in this  
735 amendment – and let's just pick a topic that may be the subject of some comment in an hour or two: it was about the reform of cannabis. I imagine I will only take 10 minutes when we come to talk about it in general debate; but I may be wrong in that regard. Let's just say, I thought that was, today, when I was doing this exercise in 12 months' time, a number one priority. So I put that and that is evaluated.

740 What worries me – and Deputy Helyar, I have no doubt, in his usual, very able way when he sums up, will deal with these issues that have been raised in this debate – is how will that be evaluated, in the sense that do I give it 10 out of 10 and only give something else 3 or 4 out of 10? How do I do that and what weight is given? The Committees will already have said 'We think this is a priority' or 'that is a priority' and that will be thrown into the mix. As Deputy Fairclough said in a very good  
745 speech that he made this morning, this is the States' Assembly, the States of Guernsey's Plan. Somebody has got to bring it together, which is what Deputy Soulsby does so splendidly, and she has done it for the second time. She pulls it all together with the help of able civil servants and presents it in a way that the States can then debate it.

I am concerned about democracy; I am concerned about, though, people not being transparent, because we should be accountable and transparent. That can be carried to a ridiculous degree. For  
750 example, I was asked by a media outlet recently, because I have got property interests, am I renting them at such-and-such; how much profit do I make, etc.? – none of their blinking business. I make a fulsome declaration of interests, as everybody else in this Assembly does; but whether I charge £1 a week or £100 a week rent is my business, (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) not the media's. So there is a  
755 level of transparency. It is almost a crime, of course, to have anything in some of our society, and some of the Deputies here, I think, sadly feel that, and that is wrong, because we should be aspirational.

So this is an amendment that I can see the merit of: very well-brought, very well-intentioned. I can also see the arguments against it, very well-expressed by the people who have spoken in that  
760 regard. You will hear how I vote in due course.

Can I just say before I do sit down, sir? (*Laughter*) I think it is a point of merit. In relation to Deputy Inder, I think his name is, talking about Moneyval. I have got to mention – because it will be in the public domain, so I have got to mention it – it is actually at number 12 on the areas of priority, and it says:

765 12. To note the continued priority resourcing applied by the States of Guernsey in preparation for the MONEYVAL 2024 inspection as set out in the 'ensure compliance with agreed international agreements/standards' workstream under Priority 2 of the Government Work Plan 2022 framework.

If Deputy Inder reads that as anything other than the fulsome support of the whole of the States of Guernsey for Moneyval, then he is wrong and he is reading it incorrectly. What I have said – I am not giving way to Deputy Inder. What I have said publicly and to all colleagues when we have had  
770 meetings and to all officers when we have had meetings in relation to Moneyval is that it is of critical importance to the economic and financial wherewithal of Guernsey and that P&R will give whatever resources it can, because it is the prime engine of our economy. And if we do not protect it and show we have got nothing to hide, we are a well-run, well-organised financial sector – but nevertheless, we have got to make sure that it is properly investigated, that we have good  
775 investigative procedures, and that if people do money launder or commit economic crimes, they are going to get prosecuted. This is not a sub-jurisdiction, never has been; but it needs all the resources to continue to show just how effective a fiscal jurisdiction we are.

If Deputy Inder was indicating that in any way, we are going to start failing on that, he is absolutely wrong. And I am saying to the media out there, I am saying to the people in here, I am

780 saying to the people of the Bailiwick of Guernsey, this is a top priority. (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.)

Wait and see how I vote.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Murray.

785 **Deputy Murray:** Thank you very much, sir.

I started this week – or was it last week? I have lost the will to live, to be honest – talking about discipline and focus and requesting that from the Members of the Assembly. I wanted to add something else, which is the context. This particular amendment I think is attempting to bring that

790 focus that we require early enough in the proceedings that we do not spend an awful lot of time trying to amend something that many people, including officers, have put a huge amount of time into.

That brings me on to the word ‘context’. I think if there is anything that is missing from this – and this is an impressive document, it really is ... It scares me, actually, when you go through and you see how much work we are required to undertake. I get quite worried because there is no way at all that we are going to deliver most of this, ultimately. We do not have the resources, (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) and consequently, context then becomes absolutely vital. Without context, all this is is a list of things we really would like to get done in some kind of priority order, and the basis of that priority is, primarily, what Committees are putting forward, because that is our system

800 of government. I have got a lot of sympathy for the fact that it is very unfortunate that only 17 Members were prepared to actually add what they felt were the more important things as they saw it, which is a moving target and I completely understand that.

On that particular subject, I would like to actually answer a suggestion that was made yesterday by Deputy Ferbrache to me particularly. Housing: we spent most of this week, I think, talking about

805 housing in one shape or form or another because it has become a screaming priority; I do not think anybody doubts that. The word ‘emergency’ was used several times, I think, during debate. Now yesterday, Deputy Ferbrache brought forward an amendment that actually was successful; however, it gave me some concern because it leaves the DPA with the unfortunate of putting lipstick on a very obstinate pig, which is the IPP.

But there is a way around that, there is a way around some of these issues: and that is if we are actually in an emergency, because the CCA is there to deal with an emergency and can take the relevant action regardless, in many respects, of the Statutes that we are governed by. So I would throw that back as a challenge to be courageous to Deputy Ferbrache to give that some consideration if we really believe that housing has become that critical; and I actually do. I think it

815 is going to affect our economy and I am very scared about that too.

However, if you recall, when we began the process of the GWP last year – or was it the year before? Again, I have lost the will to live now – basically, we were asked, first of all, to rank what we thought were the most important issues facing us; and then the Committees were asked to put forward three action points that they thought were the most important. Now, that is six Principal

820 Committees and another two – Scrutiny and DPA.

So we have got eight Committees: that should mean 24 priorities. We ended up with 40. How much discipline was brought into that? How much focus was brought into that? Not a lot, I would suggest. But all credit to Deputy Soulsby: she worked with that; but should she have had to? I suggest she should not. If we had somehow managed to achieve some sort of consensus about

825 what are the things we *have* to focus on, not the things we *want* to focus on, then her job would have been much easier. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) And I think that is what is missing at the moment: we seem to have no mechanism to give us the context for us to make the decisions that we have to make; not what we want to see happen, what the Island has to see happen in order to survive and succeed and prosper. There is no forum to do that.

830 This amendment attempts to start that process by trying to identify the top 10 priorities that we want to see happen, that we know have to happen, and I do not see that as in any way a negative.

The fact that it is transparent is great, that is a plus. I do not feel particularly strongly about that; but I think it is important. I am more concerned that we identify a consensus in this Assembly that provides the context for us to make the decisions we have got to make, because we are not going to deliver this, that is patently obvious. We have not got the resources to do it. An awful lot of this is historic, well-intended at the time but probably out of date, because housing now is the most important thing that we are actually necessarily looking at. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

So it is a moving target, it cannot be set in stone; but we cannot presume that we are ever going to get to a consensus if we do not create some kind of mechanism to establish that before we set Deputy Soulsby and officers who have put huge amounts of time into this on a course that focuses on the things that are deliverable – deliverable because we need them to be deliverable, not because they happened to be there two years ago, 10 years ago, or however long ago and people want them actually left in, just in case, perhaps; that is pointless.

I suspect – and maybe it is my own personal opinion – we are at something of a tipping point at the moment. So much has changed in the external world that affects us directly, we have to be much more focused, much more disciplined about how we spend our time, our effort, our money, our resources, our people, where we put our investment in. This is just trying to achieve the lowest common denominator, to some extent, that everybody is actually going to go with; that is not where we should be. We should be aspirational. We should be looking forward to where we want Guernsey to be, not just trying to deal with the vagaries of not just our aspirations from however long ago, but previous Assemblies as well. It is out of date! The future is what matters here, not the past.

We learn what we can from the past, obviously; but we must have to have a mechanism that curtails the amount of work that gets put into a very valuable piece of ... if this amendment had actually been brought into play first of all, I would probably think that we would not have all the amendments we have had this week because we would have agreed where the focus lies, and this would actually be a success and we would put our heart and soul behind it and make it work.

So I am going to support this because at least it is an attempt to find that context and that consensus and I would plead with everybody else to support it as well.

Thank you.

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

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Thank you, sir.

We are 20 months into this Assembly, and I think the more we go into it the more we debate about things that are actually not really, I think, relevant to the business on our agenda.

I just want to bring the Assembly's attention back to the amendment because the way I read it, paragraph (c) is about the 'new requests for prioritisation' that might be submitted by the Committees that will then effectively undergo a method of 'arithmetical, hierarchical scoring system'. This is how I read it. It is not the business-as-usual and established programme of work; it is the new items that the Committees might want to get prioritised.

This points me to, really, the really big question: what problem is this amendment trying to solve? I do not see this Government Work Plan being awash with massive lists of new items that Committees have submitted of the additional work that they want to do; I really do not see the problem this amendment is trying to solve. I think in its narrative, it said that the proposer and seconder did not agree with some of the priorities; but what does it mean? Did they not agree with the identified top 10 priorities? Don't they agree with the long list of actions under each of the different themes? What exactly?

Because the amendment, the way it is worded in paragraph (c), is only asking Members to prioritise new additional actions. The way I read it, this is not going to be about having a scoring system for the, I think, the 200-plus – last time I counted – separate actions within the Government Work Plan, only the new actions. As I said, I really do not see what the problem is because I really do not see – all the additional stuff that has been added has really come from the debates we have had.

885 This really brings me to the point that if we accept that, perhaps, some kind of scoring system may be appropriate, there are many faults with it. We have gone through a scoring system at the beginning of this political term with the Government Work Plan. I certainly cringed at the way it was formatted. And this is the fundamental problem: the way you structure a survey, the questions you ask, the weighting you put to different criteria for Members to be used will have a fundamental effect on how the scoring will work, so there is always going to be a bias. And actually, designing a  
890 good survey is really a very challenging skill.

We have gone through this exercise once and it did not lead to any conclusive conclusions. If anyone knows about statistics, a sample of just 40 people is not a statistically sound sample to base some kind of statistical analysis from. Forty people, we all have 2.5% on different votes. Does that mean if one priority receives 2.5% more, it is going to be prioritised? Statistically, you are going to  
895 have, actually, quite a lot of issues with this.

There are all sorts of examples where how you statistically design something has really interesting outcomes that no one wants. For example, Formula One: there was a time when Formula One drivers were scored by where they ended up in the pole positions. So if you have one a Formula One race, you got 10 points; if you came second, you got nine; and so on. And what happened was  
900 that the drivers who were at the top all the time were actually the ones who were ending nowhere near the first and second positions; they were kind of the mediocre drivers who were ending bottom of the pile. But because they consistently ended middle or bottom of the pile, they were getting the high outcomes.

The Oscars are another interesting case: just this year, the film that won Best Picture was not the one that was actually ranked as priority for most of the people who were voting for it. It just happened to be that the movie that was likely to be in the running was a bit of a Marmite movie, and so some people liked it but others did not. So what happened was, the movie that was a much lower priority came out first. These are just some of the examples of the outcomes you are going to get which, actually, no one really wants, but they are going to be trending high in the results.

910 As someone already said as well, if Deputies know that the results are going to be published, your behaviours will be influenced by that. You will have bias in terms of voting because of the fact that things will be published. And most importantly, as Deputy Bury said, in terms of signalling your priorities and objectives, that signal does not really mean much until your vote comes through, and there could be massive discrepancy in terms of your signalling and what the final vote will be.

915 I do really agree with the issues in terms of being able to give your view on subjects where you may not necessarily have really any information. Just looking at the Government Work Plan, there are items I really have no clue about and I put my hands up; but if they come to me with appropriate information, I can make an informed decision. But if you had to ask me to rank 'Develop and deliver Periodic Testing Inspections for road transport,' 'Motor Insurers' Bureau', 'Update parole legislation,'  
920 I would have no clue on what basis to do it.

I think much reference has been made to those 17 Deputies who have submitted ... well, in one of the processes of engagement undertaken. Well, do you know what? Well done to those 17 Deputies, because you care. You care enough so that your views are influencing debate. I think it is a shame for the rest. And if you are one of those who is complaining about the process, to be  
925 honest, do your job!

I think, as part of this, if this amendment is going to be approved, we should have the discipline of having presentations about the subjects that have to be reviewed. And I think Deputy Ferbrache was very correct to note the poor attendance of the presentations that Committees are putting forward – *extremely* poor attendance. We have had the discrimination legislation presentation to  
930 the highly technical field. I found it really useful to attend. And as Deputy Ferbrache said, fewer than 10 Deputies, excluding Committee Members of ESS, attended. Neither Deputy Helyar nor Deputy Vermeulen, who have always said we support discrimination –

**Deputy Vermeulen:** Point of order, sir?

**The Bailiff:** Point of order, Deputy Vermeulen.

940 **Deputy Vermeulen:** Sir, COVID has been doing the rounds and not everybody wants to transmit that; that might possibly have something to do with it. It might possibly be that the Guernsey Party is having its own presentation by the GDA. I do not think it is right to name and shame people as this Deputy is appearing to do.

945 **The Bailiff:** It is not a valid point of order, Deputy Vermeulen, because there is no breach of the Rules, which is what a point of order is for. If it was intended to be a point of correction, then we will take it as that.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller to continue, please. That is fine.

**Deputy Vermeulen:** Is it not unparliamentary behaviour, sir?

950 **The Bailiff:** No, I do not think that it is unparliamentary behaviour, Deputy Vermeulen, on the basis that it has been raised by a number of people. Whether it is relevant to this particular amendment is a moot point; but it has entered into the debate on this amendment because, as it is set out in the explanatory note, it refers to the fact that only 17 people responded to that, so people have developed that. A number of Members have already spoken on the way in which Members  
955 can attend presentations and the numbers who are there. There is no 'naming and shaming', as such; it is just the numbers that are involved.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller to continue, please.

960 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Thank you, sir.

Such a highly technical issue, and if I did not have this presentation, I really would not be able to have a really good understanding about this upcoming legislation. It took a lot of effort for the Committee to put that presentation on. They have gone to extra effort to put on, actually, another presentation, which I believe is going to be next week, and I do take this opportunity to urge Members who were not, for whatever reason, able to attend to perhaps really respect the effort of  
965 the Committee to do it next time.

But really, it raises the question of: if Deputies are not attending, especially on technical matters, presentations, should they be allowed to vote on the scoring system? Or should their vote be given less weight in the scoring system? These are just some of the questions that I have in my mind in terms of the validity and suitability of Deputies to vote on matters without actually having  
970 information on the subject.

If this amendment is passed, I guess it raises interesting questions: shouldn't we be having more of these SurveyMonkey questions for all sorts of workstreams – perhaps the tax debate? We should be asked to score our preference on preferred options for the tax debate. However, my suspicion is that the survey might be a little bit monotonous, because it might say 'Please choose between GST  
975 option 1, GST option 2, GST option 3, GST option 4, or GST option 5.' I think if the question is about engagement in some kind of arithmetic approach, let's look –

**Deputy Oliver:** Point of correction, sir?

980 **The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Oliver.

**Deputy Oliver:** Everybody has been asked their opinion and we have also had invites as to whether we want to go and speak about the tax debate, so I do not think that is correct, what Deputy Kazantseva-Miller was saying.  
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**The Bailiff:** It is not really an inaccurate or misleading statement, as such, is it, in the context of what is being debated at the moment?

Can we please, all Members, just stop and think about getting on with the debate on this amendment, having your say on what is relevant to this, trying to avoid irrelevancies? And we are straying off the bare bones of this amendment, which is simply to insert a new Proposition which can then be voted on at the end.

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller to continue, please.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Thank you, sir.

In my opinion, there are two things that this amendment is trying to do. One, as I said, is about having a scoring mechanism in relation to the new issues; and the second one is introducing this public ledger – or effectively, the score that you have given to these new items. And there is an element of, effectively, the community, as the explanatory note says, understanding the values, objectives, and priorities of the Members; well, I really do not think that is going to have that effect. Just having your score on these new items is not going to do that. There is some kind of electioneering element in this, using the Government Work Plan as an electioneering tool for the election coming up in 2025, and I really do not think that that is really what this Government Work Plan should be about.

I still fail to see what fundamental problem this current iteration of the Government Work Plan has. It is clearly evolving. It is in a very different format to last year. I think, again, it is a credit to how much work has been put into it. I think that identification of 10 priorities is really useful because it, again, narrows those key resources to some of the key areas we are focusing on. It is an evolving beast. We all have the opportunity to contribute to it.

I think we just need to be adults; we do not need to have such prescriptive behaviour on such a fundamental plan of government, which is an organisation of half a billion pounds' worth of revenue, to be so prescriptive as to design a SurveyMonkey scoring sheet. I think if P&R and Deputy Soulsby, as leader on this, find that it may add value to the process, it could be looked at as one of the tools that can be used in the next evolution of the Government Work Plan; but I just do not think we need this prescriptive approach.

So I will not be supporting it, because fundamentally, it does not actually – if you read the amendment – achieve what has been spoken of in debate and we can still find ways to implement it if it is seen as useful and reasonable without the high prescriptiveness of it.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Trott.

**Deputy Trott:** Thank you, sir.

I have not got too much to say, but I think what I do have to say is worth saying. *(Laughter)* I enjoyed Deputy Ferbrache's speech earlier. He said he believes he may be a man 'of average intelligence'; well, I am of the view, sir, that this type of debate has no place for exaggeration. *(Laughter)* I am delighted he and others took that in the vein it was delivered, because I think debates of this nature can sometimes do with a little bit of humour.

I must say, when it comes to exaggeration, sir, I do not believe I am exaggerating when I say that Deputy Kazantseva-Miller takes sarcasm to a new level. The fact that 56.4% of Members failed to engage, which is a staggering number, I think is – in the way in which the explanatory note in the amendment explains – will be multifaceted. It is difficult to say this without appearing arrogant, and I do not intend it to be, but the knowledge gap in this Assembly is enormous. For instance, somebody like Deputy Roffey, who has been here a very long time, will have attended, I have no idea how many, presentations right from the start of the evolution of a policy through to its conclusion. His knowledge will dwarf the knowledge of many other Members in this Assembly.

Now, the post-election process did not go as well as I would have hoped. There are some very able Members of this Assembly – and I exclude myself from this category, sir – who do not have jobs, and they should have. But this Assembly chose not to give some people jobs; in fact, it chose to give other people *lots* of jobs – including the very able, in my view, and aforementioned Deputy Roffey – over others who would have wanted to have played a more active part.

1040 There were also, sir, some extraordinary post-election U-turns, and I have mentioned before those who said 'No new taxes', 'No tax rises', and all the rest of it. I do not believe that they were electioneering, like some; but they clearly did not know what they were talking about, sir, and that has been proved by the about-turn that we have seen once they have come into this Assembly and had a good look under the bonnet. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

1045 There is also scheduling. I want to remind this Assembly that several Members are absent, and they told this Assembly they would be absent, and they had every justification to be absent, because this was not a scheduled States week; but the majority of the States ploughed on. 'It does not matter we are going to be five or six down' or whatever it was. And I was one of them, sir, that could not be here; but I am very grateful to a number of other people who understood the predicament I was in and inconvenienced themselves – a dozen people, as it turns out – and enabled me to attend this meeting. So I would not read too much into the lack of engagement as being the result of a specific matter; but it is, I think, the result of many different contributors.

1050 This is probably not the right time and I will do this more in general debate; but this point does need to be made. That is that our economy is absolutely dependent on financial services, and if this jurisdiction fails its Moneyval visit, almost overnight, housing will not be the number one priority because there will be no shortage of houses on the market. So when Deputy Murray and others reiterate the point – and they are right to do so – that here and now, the housing crisis – the 'housing emergency', whatever language we wish to apply to it – is important, that could change overnight if that particular priority with regard to the Moneyval visit is mishandled. More on that later; but clearly, the relevant Members of the top bench are well aware of that.

1060 Thank you, sir.

**A Member:** With the global situation ...

1065 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Mahoney.

**Deputy Mahoney:** Thank you, sir.

All views are my own – just to perhaps save some time at some point during this.

1070 Several Members have presumably sat here with a view to doing the best job that they possibly can, and I think, probably, one of the only things we agree is that there is a finite resource available to us. We are certainly not going to agree on many things, including, I think as mentioned a couple of times – I forget by who, sorry – what is on the final GWP list; but that is life, that is politics.

1075 Everyone agrees that the whole Government Work Plan process is very detailed and very wide-ranging, as you would expect when you are trying to put a multi-year plan together. What this amendment does is add some clarity and transparency to the process; others have said it, but it is worth repeating. It is no surprise that a number of Members stood up and lauded transparency – you would expect no less, I would suspect – but it is a surprise that they then went on to say 'But not for me, thanks very much!' And as noted by Deputy Moakes, two of those were from Scrutiny.

1080 Also, a number have noted that it is impossible to know the detail of everything when this scoring, etc. is done; but that is just misdirection. No one is expecting in that scoring stage, the initial stage, for you to know any detail about anything. These are broad concepts: 'Is your opinion on this matter that it should be (a), (b), (c), 1, 10,' whatever? No one is expecting you to know any of the details and get down into the weeds of this.

1085 Year 1 saw a set of scores broadly adhered to; but we did have some outliers that snuck in there. Yesterday, though, the mists cleared a little bit when we heard of discussions between Deputies de Sausmarez and Soulsby whereby decisions were made about the inclusion of certain matters which had not really made the grade. So if you wondered how the scores morphed into something other than the actual results, now we know. The cat is out of the bag everyone; nice work if you can get it!

1090 Year 2, though, was different, and it seems to have included far less Member engagement – I am not going to bother with the 17; we have all heard it too many times today already. I asked a few

questions, though, when we found that it was that number of people. The most common replies to 'Why didn't you do it?' was 'Well, what's the point? We spent the time and effort last year and it didn't reflect the opinions anyway of everybody, so what's the point?' And I have to say, it is hard to argue with that.

I will be supporting this amendment – no surprise to anyone – as I believe that the public has a right to know what the priorities are of its paid representatives. **(Two Members: Hear, hear.)** If you do not believe the public has a right to know – albeit that is an interesting stance you should be taking – then vote against this amendment. If you prefer a few people to pick and choose what an entire government focuses on, so be it. There are a lot of people in this Assembly that run home to the tenet of governance whenever they get a chance: 'Governance, governance, and a bit more governance'. And indeed, it is a pretty good safety net to hold on to. So what better than a little bit more? Next year, let's be open with what we prioritise: nothing to hide, nothing to lose.

We have heard in the past few days Members describe amendments as 'good amendments' or 'bad amendments', and there is no MI6 input required to crack that code: this correlates pretty closely to 'an amendment I like' or 'an amendment I don't'. So I will not be categorising this one like that.

To finish, I tried to get a Marmite-themed comment in here; but I just could not, so I am sorry for that. All I want to say is that this is not a tricky or complicated amendment. Do we want to be open with the people who pay our salaries or not? **(Several Members: Hear, hear.)** Do we want people to see what they are getting for their money? I have no issue with anyone knowing which workstreams I rank as a 1 or a 10, but perhaps some people here would rather their views are not on record. I am not one of them.

Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Vermeulen.

**Deputy Vermeulen:** Thank you, sir.

It is interesting to note how the Government Work Plan came about – not the work that has gone into it in this session, but previously. I think the previous incarnation of that was the Business Plan, which was probably drawn up to make sure that – in those times, sir, the States were investing in their infrastructure and putting a multitude of new buildings up. So I think it came about because not all the projects, not all the building, was going to be done at the same time. So that is probably, originally, how it came about.

It is kind of relevant still today. We have heard that the priorities and the emergencies – and I agree that it is an emergency – is housing. And you can zone as much land as you like for building houses; but if, through a lack of investment over the previous years, you have lost all those builders that used to reside here and work here, which the building industry has, it is still going to take some time to spool up that business. I think we lost something like 1,500 builders compared to what it might have been looking like 12 years or so ago. So before things become an emergency, perhaps it is best just to keep the infrastructure ticking over at a steady, consistent level – that is hindsight, anyway. And that is a little bit about how we have come to the Government Work Plan.

Now, Deputy Soulsby, it must be like herding cats, organising 40 of us; but it is important and I am a big fan of transparency, I am a big fan of openness and inclusivity. I think everybody's views need to be heard and I think we need to be open and honest with the electorate. **(A Member: Hear, hear.)** It is no good saying we think pensioners need more money, and yet, in these times where you have got high inflation, chucking other things into the Government Work Plan which were not, perhaps, on people's manifesto. So I am a big fan of 'A man a man, a word a word,' sir; I think that is quite important. So I am going to be supporting this amendment. I am not going to leave you in limbo to wait and see, as Deputy Ferbrache has mentioned. But I will be watching which way other people vote.

And Deputy Ferbrache, I would not be too downbeat about people not attending meetings last week, because as we heard from Deputy Roffey over there, they had severe problems at the Dairy, with half of the staff being off ill, so that plays a – I will give way, sir.

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**Deputy Ferbrache:** I was not pointing the finger at any particular people. And it is a shame (**Deputy Vermeulen:** It is.) that I did not name anybody, because I could have named Deputy St Pier and I could have named Deputy Parkinson; but I did not. (*Laughter*)

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**Deputy Vermeulen:** I agree with you there, absolutely: it is a bit of a shame that we have gone down to personality politics and playing the player, not the policies.

We are talking about a Government Work Plan today and we are talking about an amendment; does this make it better or does it make it worse? I think it makes it far better and I hope that we can all agree and put our political differences aside and vote in support of this much-needed amendment. We have got new blood in this Assembly and we need some new thinking and we should not be afraid of changing the way we do things. And we cannot have that platitude: 'But hands off! We're the old guard and we've always done it this way, so we're not going to change.' Things change, sir.

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Poor Deputy Soulsby: COVID, Brexit, a war; all those things are coming along at the same time. We cannot have a plan with thousands of things which we cannot afford on it; we have got to prioritise it. We have got to look at our priorities, what is important. Now, for me, the economy is important: I want a booming finance industry, (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) I want a building boom on the Island; I think it is needed and that is going to come. I want retail to do well, I want manufacturing to do well. The pubs, the restaurants, the clubs, I want them heaving, sir! That is what I want. And I would like a longer runway, too. (*Laughter*)

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But I quite understand that others might not want a longer runway. But I would never say 'You cannot listen to that; you must listen to this' or try to exclude people's views from a business plan; I think that would be terrible and I am not about to say that that is the way we have got to do things in the future.

So support this amendment. I am completely behind it. I am putting all my weight in – and that is considerable, sir. (**A Member:** All of it!) (*Laughter*) That is quite considerable! I mean, some mention was made of the Deputies from Alderney and they perhaps got paid less than the Deputies from Guernsey; well, you get more bang for your buck in Guernsey, that is all I can say! (*Laughter*)

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1175 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Cameron.

**Deputy Cameron:** Thank you, sir.

I will not support this amendment. Can we really be expected to note everything within the GWP workstreams? I sit on the Environment & Infrastructure Committee, the Education, Sports & Culture Committee, and the Sports Commission; I also sit on eight other sub-committees. It is a challenge to keep my finger on the pulse of everything going on with those Committees, let alone what is happening on the 80 or 90 other workstreams outside the Committees I sit on.

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If we had stuck to the superficial scoring system we had at the start of the GWP process or set too much worth by it, we probably would not have had the blue economy workstream, as no one other than Environment & Infrastructure had a clue what it was back then; yet, it is now widely supported. Moneyval: how would I rate, on a scale of 1 to 6 or 1 to 10? (**A Member:** One!) (**A Member:** Twelve!) I will hold up my hands: I know very little about its importance despite attending meetings on it. Should I mark it as a nice-to-have or simply roll the dice?

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I will not be supporting this amendment because it will deliver false priorities. It is partial to personality politics. It undermines the work of each Committee and it is undemocratic. Please do not support this amendment.

1190

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Blin.

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**Deputy Blin:** Thank you, sir.

I was not intending to speak on this, but it has reached the point where I am very much in favour of this amendment, I am very much in favour of the idea of listing things as we want to do. But actually I will refer to the previous Deputy's comments: I agree with some of his feelings there.

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My concern is this: I am going to take it a little bit further back to when the Machinery of Government ... asking what we want to change, etc. I struggled there: (1) as a new Deputy; (2) it is almost that the questions were wrong – not referring to anything that was *done* wrong. I am more saying, if you had given me the comparisons of the Isle of Man, Jersey, and taken all the pieces – two houses, a second chamber, whatever it is – and some information on them, then I would have been in a better position to try to make an understanding.

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Now I am going to swing that back to what we are doing here. It is like what I have heard various people say: if we have to prioritise, people like myself, who do not sit on a very active Committee, or people like Deputy Trott, who had made the point that there are some Deputies who did not get the chance to be active on certain Committees, our priorities are focusing on the areas we look at; or we just take the general flow of support of what we think is important to make Guernsey a better place. I go to Deputy Vermeulen's brilliant economic list; but we also know there is a lot more on the flip-side of that, whether it be the housing side, whether it be dealing with unemployment and all these other aspects. So we have this flow going on.

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So again, I will prioritise something almost therefore like a manifesto: from day one – I will admit I am still struggling on this – it was the noisy bikes which caused a lot of commotion. But how do you get that? Well, to get that, I would need to work closely with E&I, closely with Home Affairs, work on all those things there. But is my priority more important than other Members' priorities? No, it is not, it is what I am trying to prove on the manifesto.

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And this is one of my fears for this, although I support this, when we start to actually put our list of objectives every year, it is going to become like a repeat manifesto every year – certain culture, certain views, 'Make sure we've got this on it,' 'Make sure we've got that on it,' almost going out to the media to get their support – whereas I think this is something that we should be doing in here and we need to find a better way. So I do agree that it is a good way of prioritising and focusing. I do agree that P&R have a huge important area to make sure it is the right ones; but still, if I talk about the infamous 23, those ones who did not put it down, maybe they could not put all of it down. Maybe they could not complete a very satisfactory list so they kind of rely on working with others.

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I will engage with any Deputy or group or project going on to try and support it, but unless it is done in a way where we can actively make a difference and not just put a list every year ... so I am very much in turmoil. I would like to hear, by listing these things out there and declaring everyone's interests, what difference is that to a manifesto and how will that come into effect to make sure it does not become just a list of ideas every year that everyone is trying to show so the media sees what we are doing?

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Thank you, sir.

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**The Bailiff:** I am now going to turn to the Vice-President, Deputy Soulsby, to comment on this amendment, please.

**Deputy Soulsby:** Thank you, sir.

1240

I would like to thank Deputy Helyar for what he said in his opening speech and others for their kind words; however, I am sorry that I am not able to support this amendment. Saying that, I do believe that (e) has merit and is something we have discussed at Committee before now. There is benefit in making 2023 the last time we go through the process, whatever process that might be, and that is not because it will mean less work for officers and myself. Therefore, should this

1245 amendment fail, Policy & Resources, through myself and Deputy Helyar, will be laying an amendment to keep that aspect of this amendment in play.

But I really cannot bring myself to support the other aspects of this amendment, however well-intentioned, as I believe they are fundamentally flawed. Others have covered off various points and I will recap those, as well as add my additional concerns.

1250 Firstly and purely practically, we are asked to agree a process where the method has yet to be agreed. What precisely are we signing up to? Deputy Ferbrache raised this very issue. It says 'an arithmetical, hierarchical scoring system'; what exactly does that mean? Does it mean that we give every priority an equal weighting? Do we just add up the weighting that everyone has given and come up with an average? Deputy Sasha Kazantseva-Miller makes some really good points on the statistics front, and as we all know, there are 'lies, damned lies, and statistics'.

1255 What happens where there are dependencies between pieces of work? A basic exercise was done early in the term, as referenced by many here today and referenced by Deputy Helyar; but aside from the fact that many new Members did not know what some of the actions were and, notably, did not ask for information before ranking them – and I say 'some', not 'all' – the results were pretty inconclusive.

1260 What happens where there are actions that lead to polarised views and those where no one has much of an issue? Again, Deputy Sasha Kazantseva-Miller made that point. Should we ignore subjects of strong political opinion ahead of those that are broadly middling?

1265 Deputy Roffey, again, raised the issue of outcomes. The problem we have was that Members voted for actions where they could see the end result, but not other pieces of action that were required before that piece of work was undertaken. As I said yesterday, they wanted the baby, but without the labour pains – and believe me, having experienced that twice, I wish that were possible. (Laughter)

1270 I thank Deputy Fairclough for his optimism with the process and I very much appreciate that. He does make good comments about process. And absolutely, as I said in my opening speech, I know the process is not perfect – perfection is very difficult – and I think often, the problem with the States has been trying to produce policy letters and trying to produce an end result and hoping for perfection when we should be supporting the 80/20 rule anyway. He has an issue about BAU versus new policy and I think it probably just falls down to the new resources that are needed. But I do absolutely appreciate his concerns in that area.

1275 Actually, there is nothing in this amendment that compels Members to complete the scoring – and quite right, too. I believe it is wrong that we should be doing so. Members have a right not to complete a scoring exercise *and* a right to change their mind. They should not be shamed into having to make a decision before a debate and having to stick to it. Decisions should be made in this Assembly, not behind closed doors, (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) either alone or as part of a group. (**A Member:** Exactly!) That is why explanatory note 5 completely misses the point. Why do we have debate if not to listen to Members, learn about issues from those who have more expertise than ourselves, and make up our mind as a result of that debate?

1280 Explanatory note 6 says members of the public have a right to know Members' views; of course! But that is precisely why we have debate and we have decided, as Deputy Bury has said, to improve that transparency through agreeing to bring in electronic voting. We also have *Hansard*; that should show how Members have voted very clearly and the reasons for it, and that is a very important point.

1290 Now, I know it seems somewhat old-fashioned – and just bearing in mind what Deputy Mahoney said earlier – but that is good governance. Some Members might not know that HSC in the last term had a governance review undertaken and that review made very clear that the Committee absolutely understood what good governance is, so I am not just saying this as a throwaway phrase. I know it seems old-fashioned; but that is good governance and an important indicator of a properly functioning democracy. For me, this amendment runs roughshod over that.

1295 I agree with Deputy Helyar and others that it was disappointing that only 17 people completed the survey. I find it disappointing that we often have such a low turnout at Committee presentations;

that is something Deputy Gollop and others have alluded to. But I believe it will be important – no, *essential*, actually – that Committees provide presentations to Members about the areas on which they are being asked to vote. I totally disagree with Deputy Mahoney, who thinks that Members do not need to know the detail before they make a decision: how can they make a valid, evidence-based decision on something they do not really know much about?

So I do think Committees will need to lay on presentations, and I actually do think, due to the importance of these decisions, Members will be expected to attend, just as they are expected and required to attend here. As Deputy Trott made clear, he moved his appointments so he could attend. I think he is slightly wrong because we would have a meeting now anyway, because the 29th June meeting would have been in place; it was only Tuesday. Anyway, I think that we should have presentations; I think Members should be expected to attend, just as they are here; and a record of attendance at those presentations should be made and published – (*Interjections*) and I mean attendance for the full session, as well.

This amendment raises the issue around conflicts between Members acting on behalf of a Committee and as individuals. Our Assembly, our parliament, is sovereign and delegates authority to Committees to discharge their mandates. This process puts confusion and uncertainty into decision-making. In what capacity are Members weighting actions: in terms of their individual interests or how they see actions helping the community, or as a Committee Member?

Deputy Prow and others reference amendments – ‘Oh, it is awful! Look at these amendments! Isn’t that bad?’ – and it is seen as a really bad thing, and I just do not get it. That is democracy, that is exactly what we should be seeing! The public should know that people are laying these amendments and knowing what the debate is and knowing the result of those amendments *in public*. That is openness and that is transparency. (*Interjection*)

Now, Rule 4(1)(c) says that the Proposition:

... has been submitted to Her Majesty’s Procureur for advice on any legal or constitutional implications.

What it does not say is what that advice has been. And that was something that Deputy Queripel said he thought was really important, and he wanted to make decisions knowing what that advice was. Now, I know that Deputy Queripel has said he has already made up his mind: he thinks it is a wonderful amendment based on what he has read in the explanatory note. But he has not heard what the Procureur’s advice was, and it does not say what the advice has been, and I think it is important that we all hear that. I would like to make a request, sir – and I have asked in advance – that Her Majesty’s Procureur can provide that advice. I do not know whether you are happier to provide that advice now or after I have spoken.

**The Bailiff:** Madam Procureur, if you have been forewarned of this, are you able to say what advice was given when this Proposition, amendment 11, was submitted to you?

**The Procureur:** Yes, I am, sir.

Thank you to Deputy Soulsby for forewarning me of her request.

Sir, I was sent this amendment by the Committee and I have given advice to the Committee. The advice, in short, sir, was that I saw no legal impediment to the amendment being placed; but that constitutionally and administratively, I did consider it might inadvertently undermine the Government Work Plan’s strategic approach to cohesive priorities and possibly to cohesive service delivery. The reason for that, sir, was simply, as some Members have already spotted during the course of this debate, that in the context of a Machinery of Government system which is very much predicated on the Committee system, I was of the view that undertaking a prioritisation system that potentially pitched the Committee system and collective responsibility and consensus government against individual preferences might create some tensions. Therefore, I gave that advice to the Policy & Resources Committee, but with some caveats and some questions.

In short, sir, I raised some questions for the Committee to consider: I had questions about the weighting, potentially, that the Policy & Resources Committee might afford to that system of prioritisation. So those were questions that might yet be answered or Members may already have discussed in debate, sir. But the thrust of my advice was not that I saw any legal impediment; but that I did foresee there may be some administrative difficulties based on the current Machinery of Government system we have which is based on the Committee system.

Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** So that is advice you have given to the full Policy & Resources Committee?

**The Procureur:** It is advice that has been shared with the full Committee; that is correct, sir.

**The Bailiff:** But was it given to Deputy Helyar and Deputy Prow beforehand?

**The Procureur:** Deputy Helyar had received a separate email from me, sir, but I believe he had seen it, yes.

**The Bailiff:** You will get your chance to reply in due course, Deputy Helyar. Deputy Soulsby to continue, please.

**Deputy Soulsby:** Thank you, sir.

For me, we should take this advice seriously and understand the real issues that will arise.

I just thought I would follow up on some of the other comments that have been made during debate. Deputy Gollop says we cannot expect Deputies to be the most competent in society; well, I think that is definitely reason, then, why we should not be supporting this amendment. *(Laughter)*

I thank Deputy Yvonne Burford for her excellent pinpoint analysis and, as Members will see, my comments align very much with what she said.

Deputy Bury is right and Deputy Taylor is wrong: it will make it harder for the Policy & Resources Committee to put together the Plan next year.

Deputy Oliver is saying we should be scrutinising what comes to the States. Well, yes, absolutely, I do not disagree, but this amendment does nothing to improve that process or change it in any way. This is what we will be doing: we debate a policy on the floor of this Assembly.

I would just like to correct Deputy Oliver as well in terms of her comments about a requête. I think she has been wrongly advised on that. That is nothing to do with the DPA at all and I will explain more next week. But on the second part of this, a requête on an issue –

**Deputy Taylor:** Point of correction, sir?

**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Taylor.

**Deputy Taylor:** Apologies I was a bit late; I was in the library, sir.

I did not say this process would make it easier for Policy & Resources.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Soulsby to continue, please.

**Deputy Soulsby:** No, I did not say that he did; I said that it will make it harder, so it is slightly different.

Just going back to what Deputy Oliver said, a requête on one issue where the vote is decided only after the debate is totally different from all Members being expected to be expert on all issues. If this amendment goes through it will be like having a requête, just without the benefit of letters of comment or debate on every single Committee issue.

Deputy Inder believes in this Assembly, which is really nice to know; I am glad about that. So I would ask him to reject this amendment on that basis. I am also looking forward to him having a coffee with the President of E&I and STSB and I am happy to attend as well, given he is talking about how everybody seems to be wanting to have coffee at the moment, so that is great.

I was actually, though, very disappointed in the comments he made about the presentation given by the States' Greffier when we had the Machinery of Government workshop. I thought it was very important that Members should know the history of our parliament and Government to give them some context and the background as to why we are looking and why our Machinery of Government is as it is now and what we might be thinking of in the future – no, I will not give way. The Deputy has had his chance. As the phrase goes, those who ignore history are liable to repeat it.

Deputy Ferbrache, I am glad he came out very strongly on the Moneyval point. I thought it was unfortunate, what Deputy Inder said there. P&R have been providing a lot of support, both to Economic Development and, particularly, Home Affairs, who really struggled with most of the work on this, to make sure that we can do everything we can in this regard. So I think that is on record.

Actually, Deputy Kazantseva-Miller was right on one comment she made. We are not saying we will not do some similar exercise that we did at the beginning of the term; but we can do a survey for guidance and not for the means that we are expecting to do it in some kind of prescriptive way. We should not be developing policy letters specifically by SurveyMonkey, as Deputy de Sausmarez has mentioned.

Deputy Vermeulen felt sorry for me. I am not surprised. I feel sorry myself quite frequently! *(Laughter)* He says, 'Poor, Deputy Soulsby: COVID, Brexit, war'. It is not my fault! I am just saying. *(Laughter)*

So just in summing up, I understand the appeal of this amendment – especially to those who are members of political parties, might I add? – but do not let it hoodwink anyone. It seems it is a simple solution to making decisions, but it is fraught with difficulty, and at this stage, it is unclear quite what the Policy & Resources Committee is actually meant to do with the results. It is a sheep in wolves' clothing which, whilst claiming to be about openness and transparency, will result in the exact opposite. It goes against the principles of good governance; it is simple as that, which is why I cannot support it.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Helyar, as the proposer of amendment number 11, to reply to the debate, please.

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

Firstly, I would like to apologise to Members; I had not expected this would take quite so long – almost all morning. We have really plumbed Orwellian depths in some of the presentations which have been given.

The real purpose of this amendment is openness and transparency. I have heard some quite incredible things said. It has been almost delicious to hear members of the Scrutiny Committee argue against people stating openly, for the benefit of the public, what their priorities are. I find that very difficult to believe. I also find it difficult to believe that a President of a Committee and a Vice President of a Committee saying that only Committees know best – in fact, several Members have said that, sir – only Committee members know best because they are in the weeds. But several of them have signed a requête trying to stop P&R from exercising its priorities to get affordable housing built. They are not on that Committee, they know nothing about the priorities which have been addressed to the Committee, yet they seek to interfere in it because they feel they know better.

This amendment seeks to try and bridge a gap between Committee priorities and individual ideologies. That is incredibly important. Because that is one of the problems we have with this consensus form of government. **(Several Members: Hear, hear.)** A lot of work goes into things and we have seen many things thrown out in the last 18 months after a tremendous amount of work because people have a particular view which is different from that Committee.

Now, one of the things which is really important here – and the GDA were mentioned and the discrimination legislation; I think they have done a fantastic job of finding out those Members who might disagree with them and trying to engage with them to discuss what their concerns are. I think that has been a wonderful job and the Chief Minister referred to that. And I think actually having a list like this is one of the ways of Committees being able to find out those Members who might need educating on some of the priorities (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) so that they can change their minds.

Now, there have been several things said during the course of this debate – very surprising because they are written in black and white on the amendment. Deputy Kazantseva-Miller was right: this is about new priorities. But it says at the end of that paragraph (c):

... so that such priorities can be collated into a combined, representative priority 'List'; ...

It is not just about the new ones, it is about mixing the new in with what has already been prioritised. And the Policy & Resources Committee – it is not confusing at all about what should be done. The Policy & Resources Committee, under paragraph (d):

... will evaluate the resource requirements to service this List with due regard to the established GWP framework already in delivery in order to lay before the States of Deliberation an affordable and achievable phased programme of priorities.

That does not say we have to slavishly follow the list of priorities that Members have filled out and scored and ranked; what it says that we must take account, we must take the temperature of the room, before we get in here and starting fiddling with things that Committees may have spent many months trying to work together and prioritise.

Let's not forget, these rankings are based on what Committees have submitted to Policy & Resources. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) This is not individuals' ideas. This is looking at Committees' priorities. And yes, I accept, I do not know everything that is going on in the Government and I should know more about some of the things that are going on; but the only way in which we can find out what our priorities are is to ask people. And then when we get into this Chamber next time around to debate this, if we approve this, we will know what people's priorities are.

And that is very important for the public because this document is incredible and it is a fantastic piece of work and it is working really well from the point of view of collaborative working, working across government, and in terms of resourcing priorities, which is what this is all about. But it is almost impossible for a member of the public to understand this debate and what we are talking about and the immense proportions and the breadth, as Deputy Murray said, of the amount of work which needs to be done just to keep the lights on. I think there should be more public accountability and I think the public should know what people's priorities are. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) It does not mean those priorities are wrong. We are going to disagree with each other about things.

The whole point is that we need to find out what the temperature of the room is before we start to have the debate. I see it does no difficulty, no damage whatsoever, to the process of government. I think it will be helpful in people being able to have discussions. Deputy de Sausmarez, for example, or other Members of the Assembly will be able to approach us and say, 'Why don't you like this? Why do you think that shouldn't be important?' These are real debates that we need to be having amongst ourselves as much within and without the public and I think it is very important that we demonstrate transparency and accountability for the work that we do in Government.

Now, Deputy Queripel is very fond of using musical analogies. This one, as a song, for me, would be an AC/DC song: we are trying to avoid *Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap*. We are trying to avoid any insinuation that our work is being done, and our prioritisations are being done, behind closed doors, (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) because that is not the correct way for the Government to prioritise its work. It should be done in here, we should be able to discuss it, and we should be able to see what everybody else thinks. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) If you do not want to go through the process, do not fill the form in. But everybody should know who has and who has not; I think that is important for the public, it is important for other Members.

I would ask Members to support this amendment. Thank you.

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**The Bailiff:** Members of the States, we come to a recorded vote on amendment number 11, proposed by Deputy Helyar, seconded by Deputy Prow.

Greffier, please.

*There was a recorded vote.*

1505

Carried – Pour 20, Contre 14, Ne vote pas 0, Absent 5

POUR	CONTRE	NE VOTE PAS	ABSENT
Deputy Ferbrache	Deputy Fairclough	None	Deputy Gabriel
Deputy Gollop	Deputy Falla		Deputy Leadbeater
Deputy Haskins	Deputy Kazantseva-Miller		Deputy Le Tocq
Deputy Helyar	Deputy Matthews		Deputy St Pier
Deputy Inder	Deputy Meerveld		Deputy Dudley-Owen
Deputy Mahoney	Deputy Parkinson		
Deputy McKenna	Deputy Roffey		
Deputy Moakes	Deputy Soulsby		
Deputy Murray	Deputy Trott		
Deputy Oliver	Deputy Brouard		
Deputy Prow	Deputy Burford		
Deputy Queripel	Deputy Bury		
Alderney Rep. Roberts	Deputy Cameron		
Alderney Rep. Snowdon	Deputy de Sausmarez		
Deputy Taylor			
Deputy Vermeulen			
Deputy Aldwell			
Deputy Blin			
Deputy de Lisle			
Deputy Dyke			

**The Bailiff:** Members of the States, the voting on Amendment 11, proposed by Deputy Helyar and seconded by Deputy Prow, was that there voted in favour 20 Members, against 14 Members, 5 Members were absent; and therefore, Amendment 11 is duly carried.

We turn next to Amendment 14, which has been submitted saying it is Deputy Soulsby proposing it, but Deputy Ferbrache tells me he is going to now.

1510

**Deputy Ferbrache:** Yes, sir I am. I am proposing it and it is seconded by Deputy Helyar.

It is almost self-explanatory. It is almost like a compendium amendment, if I could say that. I am going to read it because Members only received it last night and we have been debating another amendment all this morning. What it say is:

1515

#### Amendment 14

*To delete the following wording from Proposition 1 (as amended by Amendment 2):*

*“and to direct the Committee for Employment & Social Security, in consultation with the Committee for the Environment & Infrastructure, to report back to the States as soon as practical with proposals for a scheme aimed at promoting and facilitating home ownership of a percentage of those homes built on land acquired by the Guernsey Housing Association (‘GHA’) for future affordable housing developments and involving the following main features –*

- i) relevant properties to be offered for sale to qualifying purchasers at 75% of market value,*
- ii) restriction on onward sale at any more than 75% of market value at time of sale*
- iii) GHA to have first option to repurchase”*

*and to insert the following propositions immediately after Proposition 1.*

- (c) To direct the Committee for Employment & Social Security, in consultation with the Committee for the Environment & Infrastructure and the Policy & Resources Committee to report back to*

*the States as soon as practicable with proposals for a scheme aimed at promoting and facilitating home ownership of a percentage of all homes, both current and future, managed or owned by the GHA and any homes managed by the Committee for Employment & Social Security under its 'Housing Department' function, involving the following main features –*

- i) relevant properties to be offered for sale to qualifying purchasers at 75% of market value,*
  - ii) restriction on onward sale at any more than 75% of market value at time of sale,*
  - iii) GHA to have first option to repurchase.*
- (d) To direct the Policy & Resources Committee to examine the options and report back to the States as soon as practicable with recommendations for the provision of States sponsored mortgages, loans and financing options for deposits and purchases of properties available under a scheme aimed at promoting and facilitating home ownership.*

There is no explanatory note because there was not time to print one in the time available.

This is an expansion of what we have been developing and discussing over the last few days. The new element, really, is:

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- (d) To direct the Policy & Resources Committee to examine the options and report back to the States as soon as practicable with recommendations for the provision of States sponsored mortgages, loans ...

Deputy Helyar, as Treasury lead, will expand upon that a little more when he speaks later in this debate.

1525

But hopefully, as we all recognise that housing is such a priority – Deputy Trott is right: if we do not have the money to pay for the situation, we can argue and houses will be worth threepence. But assuming we get Moneyval right, assuming that our finance industry continues to provide all that it has provided for us – and E&I, I think, are confident about that with all the good work going forward – housing is the main consideration that we have got to look at. We are in a crisis, emergency – whatever word we want to use – situation, we need some radical remedies.

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I do not think I need to repeat all that we have said about housing. I ask Members to vote in favour of this amendment.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Helyar, do you formally second the amendment?

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**Deputy Helyar:** I do, sir, yes.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Roffey.

**Deputy Roffey:** Thank you, sir.

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We have had a number of amendments – well, I guess 14, on the basis that this is 14 – and I have been in favour of some – I put forward some myself –

I have been against others, but by and large, there has been none that I would lose sleep over whether they went through or not. This is the exception: this amendment absolutely appals me.

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There are just so many reasons to vote against this amendment. Firstly, there is the timing. There is a reason why we have Rules against late amendments to the GWP. It is because big decisions over priorities need thinking time. This is a really big decision. Albeit, it is over how to allocate resources for an investigation; but we all know – don't we? – that those resources are limited and we definitely cannot afford to chase loose balls that will never become reality. So I hope, Members, unless you really think that the thing this amendment wants to see investigated is likely to become a reality, I hope you accept it would be deeply irresponsible to have it investigated in the first place.

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This is not just a late amendment, it is one that has sprung out of nowhere two days into debate with no prior consultations with any of the interested parties. I certainly hope that every Member of this Assembly who cares about good governance will vote against it. To be honest, I am quite

surprised to see P&R facilitating such a sidestepping of the Rules that are there for very good reasons.

But if the timing, in itself, is one reason for throwing this out, the content of the amendment is an even stronger reason. To explain why, I need to flag up the differences between amendment 2, which we passed yesterday, and amendment 14. Now, Deputy Ferbrache, in opening, says the main difference is the bit that is in (d), about looking at – I have lost the amendment for a second; there it is, I have got it – ‘States-sponsored mortgages, loans, and financing options’. That is not the main difference! If that was the main difference, I would be really quite laid back about this. In fact, that could easily be picked up under one little one of the ... the very first proposal in the main proposals is to look at different forms of market intervention and this falls squarely in it, and I have absolutely no objection to that consideration at all.

But that is *not* the main difference from amendment 2. There are a number. I will start with the minor ones. The first is that it makes P&R a party to any investigation into the issues involved with bringing in a new intermediate housing tenure. Again, I am not complaining about the mortgage bit; but the intermediate housing tenure – why? It is utterly out-with their mandate. Affordable housing is a matter for ESS, and in carrying out that mandate, it is sensible to consult with E&I as it has the general housing mandate. To make this a tripartite investigation will only slow things down – unless of course, we want to move away from a Committee system of government with proper mandates towards a Cabinet system, in which case I would say to Members ‘Be careful what you wish for.’

But of course, the main reason I am sounding a bit passionate, the main reason for voting against it, is that the idea it wants investigating is simply wrong, *deeply* wrong. This is not a time, Members of the States, when we should be remotely considering selling off any of our grossly inadequate stock of social rental housing. In fact, that would be one of the most perverse decisions imaginable – particularly when we all opine so sincerely over the need to tackle the scourge of poverty. It would *increase* rent-induced poverty in the Island.

Now, do I have an objection to the very principle of ever selling off any of our social rental stock? Actually, I do not really. I do not. If we ever find ourselves in some sunlit upland where we have plenty of such accommodation for all who need it, for those for whom – and this is the real, crucial point – there are simply no other housing options, then fine; but we are light years away from that position. Now, in that parallel universe where all of those Islanders who cannot possibly afford to buy their own homes, even at a discount, who cannot possibly afford partial ownership, and who cannot possibly afford the rents in the private sector, in that theoretical universe where we have plenty of social rental units for those people for whom social rental is the only option to get decent housing, then I cannot actually see some virtues to looking at changing some of the tenures on our existing estate; just as I made clear yesterday that I want to see future developments, to have a mixture of tenures that more closely reflect the makeup of Guernsey’s society.

And ideally, if we had bucketloads of social rental housing for the poorer citizens who desperately need such accommodation and, as I say, have no other options, fine, in those circumstances we might want to move in that direction. But I tell you, sir, that will not be in the next decade because we are a million miles from that position. Instead, we have a very significant shortfall in the social housing that we need, a really significant shortfall; and as a result, very many Islanders are living in substandard accommodation or overcrowded accommodation – or more commonly, in perhaps quite decent accommodation, but accommodation they simply cannot afford. As Deputy Haskins was saying yesterday, the percentage of people’s income they are having to spend on rent in the private sector is eye-watering – *absolutely* eye-watering. Sir, rent-induced poverty is one of the biggest plagues facing this Island at the moment, and the biggest part that we can play in answering that plague is having a sufficient stock of social rental housing in order to provide that affordable alternative.

So to debate selling off some our current inadequate stock of such accommodation really does beggar belief. Not only would it be wrong-headed, it would be borderline wicked, in my opinion. Just a reality check for a moment: we have literally hundreds of households on the waiting list for

social housing right now. Behind each of those applicants, behind each of those households, there is a story. I tell you, I get those stories on a regular basis. I had three of them last night when I went home from this debate: two on the phone and one by email. They are genuine and they are often quite tragic. Sir, we desperately need *more* social rental housing and quickly to tackle that problem of rent-induced poverty.

So what sort of message would we be sending out now if we start talking about flogging off some of the social rental housing that we already own? A truly dreadful message for those on income so modest that all the other housing tenures – tenures I support, like partial ownership, selling off for 75% of market value – but for whom that would never be a realistic prospect, and we are going to talk about selling off some of our existing social rental housing stock – an awful idea.

Of course I want to help those who wish to buy onto the housing ladder; I think we all do. That was exactly why I placed amendment 2 yesterday. But there are ways and ways of doing this. Providing some discounted first-time buyers' properties on new developments where those developments will crucially also *increase* the amount of social renting available – that is a reasonable and balanced approach. But to flog off some of our existing and inadequate stock of such housing would be perverse.

And it would be bad enough if this amendment were just wanting an investigation into selling off *States-owned* social rental housing; but it goes far, far further than that. It wants an investigation into selling off *somebody else's* social rental accommodation. How on Earth does that work? Who are we to tell the GHA they are selling off their existing social rental properties? What next? Shall I bring an amendment to investigate forcing private landlords to have to sell off some of their properties under this scheme as well? This really is overstretch by the States, meddling where they have no right to meddle out-with their own responsibilities.

And that, in a way, brings me back to the ultra-late submission of this amendment and the consequential lack of any consultation with stakeholders, because it is patently clear that no one has spoken to the GHA over this. Luckily, I can tell you their position. How can I do that? In drawing up the concept we discussed under amendment 2 yesterday, the board of the GHA was crystal clear: they enthusiastically supported the concept of the 75% of market value, but wanted it stressed at every point and in all publicity that they were absolutely clear this would only apply to their new developments and they had no intention whatsoever of selling off any of their existing stock. So there we have it: a third party leaving no room for doubt, 'Sell off any of our existing social rental housing? No way, José.' And yet, we debate a last-minute amendment calling for a tripartite investigation into that non-States' body doing just that when we know that they will not. What a farce.

Now, some might say 'What is the harm in at least considering it? This only calls for an investigation and a report back.' Well, I will tell you, sir, the very real harm it would do. Yesterday, via amendment 2, we approved the drawing-up of a report on a very discreet piece of work, one which should not actually take that long to produce and one which, assuming that report that comes back is approved, will lead to a very tangible scheme to help tackle our housing crisis – probably the only tangible result that has come out of the GWP so far. Not 'Action this day!' but action very soon. But I tell you what: widen out that investigation not only to include more Committees and not only to look at a much bigger, but crucially, far more controversial issue impacting on a third party whom we know completely and implacably oppose the idea, and it is a recipe for delay. Is that what the States really want? 'We are in a housing crisis, let's build in a recipe for delay.'

Now, if this amendment had built on amendment 2 – which it could have done – if it had said 'Once the sort of scheme already being worked up has been implemented, then please look at extending it to our existing social housing stock,' I would still have been against it, actually, for all the reasons that I have just set out, but at least it would do no real harm because it would not impinge on what we want to do first and want to do in an expeditious way. But as currently set out, it would only serve as a real delaying amendment, and delay is the last thing we need.

As I say, I think the useful part is the bit that Deputy Ferbrache flagged up at the beginning, which is the last part of the amendment, looking at alternative financing issues. I do not know

whether I will support that going ahead, but I am certainly in favour of looking at the idea. I was a strong supporter of the Home for Workers Loan Scheme when we ran it, which was a sort of thing along those lines, but that can be picked up very easily under 1(1) in the Propositions.

Sir, yesterday, Deputy Ferbrache compared me with Margaret Thatcher. Well, I presume that was a reference to the Right to Buy scheme of the 1980s; but if so, I have to tell him the comparison was completely misplaced. Why? Because I do support the right of Islanders to buy their own home. Absolutely I do and I do everything I can to facilitate it, but it should never be at the cost of providing sufficient accommodation for all of those Islanders who will never be in a position to do just that. A society is judged by the way it looks after its weakest members. Our weakest members financially require an adequate stock of social housing; we do not have it now. To discuss flogging off some of it, to me, sends out the most appalling message. This is not the right time to be selling off any of our supply of social rental housing, it is not even the right time to be talking about it. Please reject this dreadful amendment.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Inder.

**Deputy Inder:** Sir, I have never heard so much drama in my life. In fact, the last time I heard this was on the Harbour debate, and Deputy Roffey went and lost that completely, and I hope he does the same thing today. Total and utter amateur dramatics – anyone would think that this amendment, which is incredibly sensible and should be adopted, is in some way going to throw everyone who is on lower pay off the nearest pier.

Really, think about this. Yesterday, we established a principle of 'Future brand-new buildings will be considered for giving a 25% discount'; and somehow, the Deputy has got his knickers in a twist over even the thought of selling off legacy stock. Now, who on Earth who has got an IQ marginally above temperature, has ever actually built something in their life ... would realise the best thing to do is to build brand-new and where possible, get rid of your old stock when possible. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) That is what the whole world would do, what those people who have been in business, who have actually built houses, would do.

I walked into the Members' Room yesterday. Deputy Burford said 'Why are you trying to sell off all of the ...?' It does not even say that! This is headline-grabbing nonsense from the typical headline-grabbing nonsense when it does not go quite right that we get day in, day out, through every opinion column. There is nothing wrong with this amendment. It is perfectly possible that there will be voids, old stock kicking around that someone may even die in one day and becomes empty. A future GHA could give that consideration. And you would never know what: through members of ESS, who all will vote against this, you may actually get what GP11 actually wanted, you may get a different type of people mixing in with your social rental at the moment. What a load of drama over nothing. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) My goodness gracious.

I really do not have much more to say. Yesterday, this States approved to have an anchoring amendment, as far as I understand it, and you established the principle that tomorrow, this Island will pay £100 for something, we will already discount it for 25%, we will put brand-new buildings on top of it, and we will discount it for 25%; but we cannot look at the total stock. This is not going to say 'Do something tomorrow'; this is just asking for a consideration of all of the stock. That is all it is simply doing.

Total amateur dramatics, opinion-grabbing headline nonsense that we get time and time again. Please, Members, find a solution here, adopt this amendment. You have got your anchoring point, your principle has been established. Yesterday, you said, 'We are going to buy loads of land, we are going to discount it at 25%, we are going to put loads of new stock on it.' For some reason, through some imaginary problem that does not exist, we have in some way become some kind of Government that is going to push all social rental off a cliff, as described by Deputy Roffey – utter nonsense. Again and again we hear it. If Deputy Roffey is flashing red on something, you know I have got it right. (*Laughter*)

Vote for this.

1710 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Meerveld.

**Deputy Meerveld:** Thank you, sir.

During Deputy Roffey's very passionate speech, I was frantically writing notes and I hope I cover everything. I have to agree with Deputy Inder. As I have said in the past, I listened to every word of Deputy Roffey's speech. He is a consummate politician. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) He is a master of smoke and mirrors. 'Don't look at this. Look at this over here instead.' (*Laughter*) What we just heard was passionate misdirection. He could almost be sanctioned for using a weapons of mass distraction.

He said this is Cabinet Government because we are proposing that Policy & Resources should be involved in the process. Well sorry, how many Propositions in this Government Work Plan require Committees to work together and co-operate on things? He tried to claim that this is selling off social housing: 'Oh, my God! Tomorrow, we're going to be selling all of our social housing stock if you approve this amendment!' No. As Deputy Inder pointed out, this is a report that simply inserts four words, 'both current and future', to be considered in a report and a proposal.

ESS have passionately supported the idea in the past of pepper-potting. That is when you include owned or partially-owned properties amongst social housing to bring that pride of ownership into a housing estate and stop it being – I do not like the word 'ghetto' – perceived as a social housing enclave. This would enable pepper-potting. You do not have to sell off the entire estate, but you could sell off a few units.

There could also be a trade-off. Again, as Deputy Inder said, any practical person would be looking to sell off old stock as they build new. You do not have to sell off all of it; but you could say, in a new development we will do a split: part of it will be social housing, part of it will be 75% ownership, part of it will be partial ownership. And because we are creating more social ownership there, we can pepper-pot some of these 75% ownership properties as intermediate housing into other areas we already own. We do not have to do it, but at least we can consider it because this would give us the facility to do so.

Again, we are putting in a provision here to maybe do something. Deputy Roffey would have us believe that this decision today is a decision to sell off the entire housing stock and that is the way it was presented. 'Oh, how could we possibly consider?' Well, we are not considering selling off the housing stock; we are simply saying if you are going to do a report, let's have this as part of the consideration of how it could be applied. When that report comes back, this States will have the opportunity to look at it. If there are recommendations to sell off part of the social housing stock, Deputy Roffey will have his opportunity to speak against it and possibly place amendments against it, but it would be ridiculous to not include this in the consideration.

It is a bit like – and the States does have a habit of doing this – 'I want you to look at a problem; but I want you to look straight ahead. Don't look right, don't look left, don't look at anything entrepreneurial or other alternative methods of doing something; only look in one direction.' That blinkered approach has resulted in many issues for this Assembly. And going forward, I would like the States to take a much more entrepreneurial, broader view of things, and this amendment does exactly that. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

Deputy Roffey would have us believe that amendment 2 was 'Action not now, but soon' and that this might delay it. Well again, what is a pragmatic and practical solution? If the consideration of both current and future – the words excelling off 'current' – was going to delay the process, there is nothing stopping them returning to the Assembly with a report initially saying, 'Here is the Plan for the 75%, here is the mechanism. We will come back with a consideration in the future of the current if it is going to cause a year's delay to consider an extra small element on top of this existing policy.' I also like the fact that he claimed that this was the only amendment that created action in the Government Work Plan – action *soon*, not now; well in fact, amendment 12 produced action now and he opposed it.

So again: practical, pragmatic solutions. Include this, take a broad, holistic view of the potential opportunities, come back to the States. If it is going to delay the report, split the report. Come back

with the 75% first and just tell the Assembly, 'We will return with the rest later.' It is absolutely not a proposal in front of us today to sell off social housing; it is simply a proposal to consider in the round the potential to include some sales of social housing whilst looking at implementing this new initiative which we have all supported – or the majority of us have supported.

I encourage the Assembly to look past the smoke and mirrors and ignore the weapons of mass distraction and approve this amendment, which I think is very sensible, practical, pragmatic, and will enhance amendment 2, as it was originally laid.

Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Taylor.

**Deputy Taylor:** Thank you, sir.

I think I am broadly supportive of this amendment. I think my main issue would be, when it comes back to the States, what it is suggesting and giving it real consideration then.

One point – I do not know if Deputy Ferbrache would be able to clarify this or not – it is just something that struck me, it may be totally irrelevant: where we have a member of the public who is in the partial ownership scheme and they might own 80% of their property, what might be happening there? It may be that they would not be deemed as a relevant property to be offered for sale to qualify and purchase at 75%. How might that be dealt with? I cannot imagine we will give them 5% of their property as a cash lump sum and stop charging them rent on the 20%. But equally, if there is a neighbour who has been renting their property or owns – I think 40% is the minimum – and they were offered it at 75%, how that situation might be dealt with, if it even arises?

That is all I would like a bit of clarity on.

Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Gollop.

**Deputy Gollop:** I do not particularly agree with everything Deputy Meerveld has said: that it is a great amendment, it is easy and practicable, and it can be looked at easily. I regretted, perhaps, some of the passion and anger we have heard from some of the earlier speeches because I am actually in a bit of a dilemma on this and I will go into the reasons why.

Obviously I am on ESS, and I have sat on Housing before in Employment & Social Security for many years, and I can only commend the diligence of the Housing, Tenancy, and Property Management team for the work they do in maintaining the properties, allocating people who generally find it hard to get affordable accommodation elsewhere, and avoiding voids, and so on, and great strides have been made. But another part of me knows that there is room for new thinking.

Now, Deputy Ferbrache, at one of the GHA lecture chamber lunches, shook us a bit when he suggested, very early on in his tenancy as President of Policy & Resources, that the time is right to consider a stock transfer; and that, of course, had a response from Deputy Roffey that we on ESS supported. But in reality, we have been looking at the subject without making final decisions. And of course, there are many different financial models of transference – that it loses value to the States when you transfer them to the GHA, and so on, and I will not go into those.

But one model I wanted on the table – but I think I was very much a minority and I did not want to overplay my hand – was to actually look at the practicality of selling off *some* of the States' homes. This amendment, as Deputy Roffey rightly says, is not thought through, it is last minute, it does against the process of policy planning which is that we should have had it several weeks ago, it has not had consultation and it does include the GHA as well. But in principle, for at least the last 10-12 years, I have thought there is possible mileage in looking at what Baroness Thatcher did in the UK, and many of the problems it caused, as well as its successes, and looking to see whether we do need new thinking in Guernsey.

The reasons I will quickly summarise. Deputy Meerveld was spot-on when he spoke about pepper-potting. One reason why I think selling off some States' properties would be a social

1815 advance would be that it would gradually change the culture of certain public or social housing estates so they became more like middle Guernsey and less, perhaps, people all of one income group. We have seen difficulties with social cohesion and equality in society. I also think that you would perhaps see house lanes, you would see environmental improvements. And you undeniably enable a step ladder for people to get on the housing ladder: instead of paying rent, they have a new combination – probably, the taxpayer would subsidise some of the transfers; that had  
1820 happened in 1980s Britain – and over time, people would profit from them.

But where I would be totally against the transfer of social housing would be if we are not building and providing even more units than are available at present. It is totally unacceptable to do what happened in parts of Britain, where the number of quality public housing diminished; I would never support that. But as Deputy Inder says, I would, in more measured ways, support the transfer of  
1825 elderly housing stock that is not energy-efficient, that really is too small for modern-day families. Those properties could be bought up by the existing tenants or young Guernsey couples and improved. (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) So we would win-win, we would have another 2,000 social housing somehow – could be modular homes – and we would have more houses entering towards the bottom end of the housing market. So I do have sympathies for them.

1830 As for Deputy Roffey's view that we could extend it to looking at certain landlords, actually, I am not against that. I think there are certain private landlords on the Island who own dozens or hundreds of properties and perhaps we should look at how many properties people are able to buy. But that is a different subject.

1835 And we need to move away from ideological thinking on both sides here. Yes, probably, this debate has a flavour of that partisan factionalism. But I think the practicality of looking at this when we are in the midst of a crisis is useful. I think a tripartite approach is rational because I suspect my colleagues at ESS and their advisors might think one way, Policy & Resources another, maybe E&I a third, and you need to bring that together.

1840 And my other point here would be that I would not like to see us make a decision in the next year or two on the fundamental transfer of housing stock away from the States – 'reduce the size of the States,' some people want – to the GHA without having looked at all of the options. I have heard some good arguments against pepper-potting States' estates, but I have heard some less good arguments. One, in my view – personal opinion – less good argument is, it makes things harder for housing managers because some properties in the area will be owned by different owners  
1845 or have different infrastructural connectivity. I think that does run up the more paternalistic state that we need to move away from.

My goal is even more houses available for rental to buy: modern, energy-efficient, cheaply- but well-built. And I think if that means we are selling off sites that, in some cases, actually have very good access and views, but that is another question – if that means selling off pre-1980 homes that  
1850 are no longer viable to maintain and repair and run, either by an estate agency or a charity body, it has got to be a sensible option.

**The Bailiff:** Members of the States, we have got to 12.30. Can I just have an indication as to how many Members plan to speak on this amendment?

1855 I am slightly troubled, shall we say, Members, about the time that debate on the amendments – everyone can sit down again for a moment – is taking. Bearing in mind that this is the last amendment, potentially, before we get into general debate, which could run for some time – who knows?

1860 Is there any wish – Deputy Ferbrache in particular – to have a shortened lunch hour, possibly sitting for a bit longer now and possibly starting a bit earlier?

**Deputy Ferbrache:** Yes, sir. Again, obviously I have not consulted with my colleagues. My own view is, yes, if we could continue to stay until 12.45 and come back at two o'clock, but that is just a suggestion.

**The Bailiff:** Is that going to pose difficulties for anyone, if we constraint lunchtime to an hour and a quarter hours, rather than two hours, today? Could you stand in your place if it is, please?

I am going to put to you the motion that we continue debate on this amendment to 12.45 and then we resume again at two o'clock, rather than at 2.30. Those in favour; those against.

*Members voted Pour.*

1870 **The Bailiff:** I will declare that carried.  
Who wishes to speak next?  
Deputy Dyke.

**Deputy Dyke:** Thank you, sir.

1875 I do believe that this is a very good amendment brought back by Deputy Ferbrache and Deputy Helyar for which I thank them.

I have listened carefully to Deputy Roffey. Before I continue, could I just make one small correction from yesterday? Deputy Roffey indicated that I thought everyone wanted to buy a house and nobody wanted to rent; he may have misunderstood me or I may have misspoke. Obviously,  
1880 some people want or need to rent for a multitude of reasons. I thought I would just clear that up.

Deputy Roffey, in his quite aggressive rebuttal of this amendment, seems to suggest that if we implement it and sell existing housing stock to the resident owners, we will in some way be throwing impecunious people out on the street. Whatever family is in a house requires a house and presumably will stay in the house they have just bought –

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**Deputy Roffey:** Point of correction, sir?

**Deputy Dyke:** – so it does not throw anyone –

1890 **The Bailiff:** Point of correction: Deputy Roffey.

**Deputy Dyke:** – out on the street, it does not reduce the housing market –

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Dyke, when there is a point of correction called, you have to sit down, please.

1895 (**Deputy Dyke:** Sorry.)

I will hear from Deputy Roffey.

**Deputy Roffey:** The amendment makes absolutely no reference to existing tenants and I know that the vast majority of our existing tenants would not be able to raise a loan for 75% of the value.

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**The Bailiff:** It is about qualifying purchases; that is what it is talking about, whomever they might be.

Deputy Dyke to continue, please.

1905 **Deputy Dyke:** Thank you.

The point was, I do not think it is going to throw anyone out in the street or reduce the housing available overall; everyone needs a house and there may be some moving around. So that was one point.

1910 My second point is that some of the Deputies we have on Development & Planning have seen a Housing Needs Report. It is actually a very flawed document produced by ESS and E&I which, for some reason, was given our letterhead, D&P, which is something we have not approved. But there are some issues mentioned in it regarding social housing. What it does make clear – and Deputy Roffey can correct me if I am wrong on this – is that, in terms of social housing, the mix that we have is not right: there are too many three-bedroom houses, some of which are not needed, and

1915 not enough smaller units and not enough larger units; and therefore, something has to be done with the three-bedroom houses.

Now, this seems an ideal route, if it works, to reduce those three-bedroom houses in terms of numbers – I do wish Deputy de Sausmarez would stop giggling. (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) That was a serious point: we have a mismatch in housing, we have more three-bedroom houses  
1920 than we need, so this may be a very good way to deal with that issue. And I think that is actually quite a big point.

Just one other point – I do not want to sound snippy but Deputy Roffey said he had always encouraged home ownership; well honestly, by clinging to GP11 as he has, it really has not encouraged home ownership. He has shut it down to a large extent. So I just could not let that point  
1925 go.

Anyway, that is all I have to say. Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Matthews.

1930 **Deputy Matthews:** Thank you, sir.

Just following on from Deputy Dyke, I assume that the targets of the amendment would almost always be an existing tenant; I cannot think why else you would want to sell social housing to somebody who did not live in it.

I am broadly supportive of the amendment. I think it is a good way forward and that is partly  
1935 because social housing can so often be a trap that people fall into. They are in there temporarily, something has happened in their lives – it can be a redundancy or a relationship breakdown, something happens – they fall into social housing, and then it is very difficult to get out of, and people sort of feel stuck there and they feel they cannot get out of it. I think that giving people the opportunity, when it is appropriate – because very often, people do reach a situation in their lives  
1940 where they are able to move on and would like to stay in the same house – and I think that is a good opportunity to be able to give people to do things.

But I do agree very strongly with Deputy Gollop on the point that he made that what we really need to be doing, alongside this, is building more. If there are some being sold off and there is a need for more, then we need to be building more. And we might well be building more appropriate  
1945 buildings, newer buildings, more modern and efficient buildings that are actually a bit better, and it is a good way of doing things.

There are obviously details – I am sure when the policy letter comes, there might be aspects that you might want to change or amend or do something differently to. But in principle, it seems like a good idea to me and I intend to support it.

1950 Thank you.

**Deputy Cameron:** Sir, could I have a Rule 26(1), please?

**The Bailiff:** Well, we have already had an indication earlier as to those Members who still wanted  
1955 to speak, but I will have to invite those Members who still want to speak on the amendment to stand in their places.

Deputy Cameron, is it still your wish that a motion pursuant to Rule 26(1) be put?

**Deputy Cameron:** Yes, please, sir. Could I have a recorded vote, please, sir?  
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**The Bailiff:** Very well.

So the motion is that debate on amendment numbered 14 be brought to a conclusion, subject to hearing from the proposer of the amendment, Deputy Ferbrache, in reply to the debate thus far, and we will have a recorded vote.

1965 Can somebody just go outside and see if there are people who want to come in? (*Interjections*)

No, it is my choice to indicate whether or not people should be called in before I call the Greffier to do the recorded vote.

**A Member:** I did not know that.

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**The Bailiff:** If we had the SEV system, goodness knows what would be going on. *(Laughter)*  
Greffier, a recorded vote, please, on the motion under Rule 26(1).

*There was a recorded vote.*

Not Carried – Pour 2, Contre 24, Ne vote pas 0, Absent 13

POUR	CONTRE	NE VOTE PAS	ABSENT
Deputy Parkinson	Deputy Fairclough	None	Deputy Gabriel
Deputy Queripel	Deputy Falla		Deputy Helyar
	Deputy Ferbrache		Deputy Leadbeater
	Deputy Gollop		Deputy Le Tocq
	Deputy Haskins		Deputy Mahoney
	Deputy Inder		Deputy Murray
	Deputy Kazantseva-Miller		Deputy Prow
	Deputy Matthews		Alderney Rep. Snowdon
	Deputy McKenna		Deputy St Pier
	Deputy Meerveld		Deputy Taylor
	Deputy Moakes		Deputy Aldwell
	Deputy Oliver		Deputy Burford
	Alderney Rep. Roberts		Deputy Dudley-Owen
	Deputy Roffey		
	Deputy Soulsby		
	Deputy Trott		
	Deputy Vermeulen		
	Deputy Blin		
	Deputy Brouard		
	Deputy Bury		
	Deputy Cameron		
	Deputy de Lisle		
	Deputy de Sausmarez		
	Deputy Dyke		

**The Bailiff:** That has clearly been lost, so let us see who wants to speak before we break for lunch.

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Deputy Vermeulen.

**Deputy Vermeulen:** Thank you, sir. I will be brief.

We used to employ somebody who earned too much and was told that he had to leave his States' accommodation. Things happen in life: children grow up, they leave home; sometimes you are successful, you earn more money. And this chap had to move out. Under this scheme, he would be possibly entitled to purchase a States' house or a States' property, and move in.

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We see many hotels on the Island – some of the old hotels fall out of the accommodation sector – but we do see constant new hotels and new bedrooms and new beds being provided by that sector. So we should not worry too much about houses like that being sold. Indeed, sir, instead of buying a plot and building your own house a stage at a time to save some money, as young couples no doubt will, it could be that buying a States' property presents a unique opportunity for a young couple to start out on their life. And what is wrong with them being homeowners? They do not seem to be valued at a tremendously large amount of money. It could open up to a whole new sector.

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Sir, in closing, the States has been criticised in the past for not thinking outside the box, and the box that they use for thinking inside has been very small. In this respect, this is a new idea and I am

going to support it. I am going to embrace it and I think – with a housing crisis emergency going on – this amendment is exactly the wider perspective we should all be looking at; it really does present more benefit than harm.

**The Bailiff:** Has anyone got a short speech that we might take before lunch?  
Deputy Parkinson.

**Deputy Parkinson:** Sir, my speech can be very short indeed. This amendment, I think, might be more acceptable to Deputy Roffey and those who are concerned about the stock of social housing if there was some proviso that where units of social housing are sold off, there should not be any reduction in the total number of social housing units available, so that old stock could be sold off and replaced with new stock, but only to keep the numbers – I will give way.

**Deputy Roffey:** Thank you to Deputy Parkinson for giving way. It would be entirely acceptable to me if the proviso was that we actually had a significant net increase in the amount of units of social rental, because we do not have anywhere near enough so far.

It is not the concept; it is the timing. It is 'cart before horse'. We have insufficient, at the moment – if we look at selling them off at the moment, it seems to me to be perverse.

**Deputy Parkinson:** Okay, it might be better, from Deputy Roffey's point of view, if the proviso was that there should always be an increase in the number of units available for rent. I merely suggest that a proviso that said there should be no reduction would perhaps be a compromise that the Members of the Assembly could accept. If anyone was minded to move that amendment, I would be very happy to second it.

**The Bailiff:** Members of the States, the voting on the motion pursuant to Rule 26(1), proposed by Deputy Cameron, was as follows: 2 Members supported it, 24 voted against it, and 13 Members were absent at the time the vote was taken, and that is why it was declared lost.

We will now adjourn until two o'clock.

*The Assembly adjourned at 12.44 p.m.  
and resumed its sitting at 2 p.m.*

## **POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

### **Government Work Plan 2022 – Debate continued**

**The Bailiff:** Welcome back, Members of the States. Anyone wishing to speak on Amendment 14?  
Deputy de Sausmarez.

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

I hope I can, not lower the tone, that would not be right, but maybe lower the temperature of debate, compared to where we were before lunch. I think it was getting more heated than it needed to be and I think much of that, sadly, comes down to responses to who was speaking rather than what they were saying. So I would like to focus on the issues.

Deputy Roffey has already done a good job of explaining the key differences between this amendment and Amendment 2 that was supported very convincingly yesterday and really the focus, I mean other than the difference of adding the additional 1D on, which I think is relatively uncontentious is that this, unlike the proposal embodied in Amendment 2, asks the Committee for

2035 Employment & Social Security to look at homes, both current and future, managed or owned by the GHA, and any homes managed by the Committee *for* ESS under its Housing Department function. Other than that, the details remain the same.

I am in a very similar boat to Deputy Roffey in that I like what this does but the problem is the timing. Not just the timing of how the amendment was brought, which Deputy Roffey talked about, but more specifically the timing of the report being done and, even more importantly, when that could be reasonably implemented.

2040 Yesterday morning, I was delighted to be invited to an event celebrating the anniversary of social prescribing. It was lovely. And at that event, I was talking to people on the front line of that service and they were telling me that their hearts sink a bit when, as so often is the case, the person being referred to them, has, at their core, a housing issue, because they realise that, fundamentally – and there are some things they can do to help in some circumstances – but fundamentally we do not have enough housing to be able to properly address this problem and it is the lack of affordable housing that is at the core of the problem and, frankly, at the core of many people's misery and this is what was being told to me in quite a heart-wrenching way yesterday morning.

2050 Of course, like other Members, I am also on the front line of constituent concerns and have helped first-hand, wherever I can, and understood the difficulty of being able to help first-hand. These people are primarily, or many of these people are, those waiting for affordable housing and we just cannot provide that to them, even though they are eligible, even though, as Deputy Roffey says, the stories that they tell, it is heart-breaking. The need is so great but we cannot meet the needs of these members of our community because we do not have enough affordable housing.

2055 So we have people who are already housed in the affordable housing sector but, as others have pointed out, we also have a waiting list of hundreds. We have hundreds of applicants and some of those applicants are single person applicants but some of them are families, some of them are couples. So there are very many people who are not appropriately housed at the moment, who qualify for affordable housing but we cannot meet that demand.

2060 I think it is important to bear in mind that the waiting list is currently very big and really we know, because of the lag that we referred to yesterday, the inevitable lag between even planning applications being approved and housing being developed. There is an inevitable lag so we know that we are not likely to be able to satisfy that need for some time yet. So this is a very real and pressing issue.

2065 But the reason Deputy Dyke reprimanded me this morning for laughing, I am sorry, I was not laughing in mirth and I did not mean to offend anyone, I was laughing in disbelief because I was really quite taken aback by some of the speeches. Very well meaning, I am sure, but there seems to be a fundamental misunderstanding of who this scheme, outlined in Amendment 2 and picked up and duplicated in this, who that would be accessible to.

2070 Well, I can explain to Members who it would not be accessible to and that is in the vast majority of cases, the people currently living in social rental housing and all the many people on the waiting list. The scheme outlined in Amendment 2 is designed to broaden access to a broader range of people. It was not designed to overlap with the people currently living in social rental housing. Because of the criteria, because of the eligibility criteria, the conditions that need to be met in order to be accepted onto the waiting list or into social rental housing, by its very nature, almost by definition, bar a windfall, really, it is unlikely that those people would be able to access the scheme outlined in Amendment 2.

2080 So, although I appreciate, I completely agree with the sentiment. It is wonderful if we are able to facilitate greater levels of home ownership but, please, be under no illusion that this is not about giving current tenants of social rental a way to buy their own home. So, if we are tasked with looking at current as well as future homes currently owned/managed by GHA or ESS or what was the Housing Department, then really we are talking about displacement, potential cannibalisation of those homes.

2085 It is not going to be the people currently living in them, by and large, who would be able to take advantage of that. So that is what it comes down to. This is the fundamental problem. And so it

comes back to timing, which was really my main point. But I completely agree with the sentiment of this. I completely agree that in the future it would be a wonderful scheme to extend further and it would be something I am keen to explore. But not when the need is so pressing now and not when our waiting list is so long.

This is not a reasonable time to do that and the further problem relating to timing is that, by looking into it now, in the full knowledge that it would not work now, we could potentially delay the implementation, or it would delay the bringing back of the report and potentially the implementation of the scheme. So these are my issues for timing. It is not with the content *per se* it really is more to do with the timing.

Pepper-potting. Sorry, also, Deputy Roffey – I think it was Deputy Roffey, someone – was talking about rent-induced poverty. I think it was Deputy Roffey. And Deputy Haskins referred to it in an earlier point in the GWP debate as well and, again we need to be clear about who the scheme will benefit. Is it likely that people currently trapped in rent-induced poverty would be able to access the scheme that is embodied in this amendment and originally in Amendment 2. So I think we need to be very clear-eyed about who will benefit from the scheme and who will not.

There has been some talk about pepper-potting, as well. Now I remember back, way back in the IDP debate, speaking strongly in favour of pepper-potting and I completely agree but again it comes back to timing. In the current context, where we do not have enough affordable housing by a country mile, the idea of eating into that stock, somehow depleting that stock, is just not sustainable.

Now of course there is a plan to continue to develop more. We are doing that as much as we can, as fast as we can. As a Committee, we are really driven by that but there are constraints. We can only go as fast as land is being made available, planning permission is given, builders can do their thing. So it takes a bit of time.

We are working absolutely as fast as we can on that, so of course we are also providing as much more affordable housing as we can but I think Members really do need to understand the degree of need and the size of the sheer quantum of members of our community who are in need of this so, having one tap ... no, that analogy is not going to work! But we need to put a lot more stock into the system to meet the unmet demand before we start thinking about taking any of that stock out.

Now the last thing I want to talk about on this issue, because someone – possibly Deputy Gollop, possibly Deputy Matthews – mentioned environmental efficiency and actually I completely agree. Now this is an issue dear to my heart and Deputy Gollop knows as well as I do that some of the States-owned housing in particular is in need of considerable upgrading in terms of thermal and energy efficiency and there are plans, we are working on plans to do exactly that.

But I do not think it makes any sense to be giving away – sorry, not giving away – but to be losing stock from that sector before we have had a chance to upgrade it because, again, if we think about the people likely to access and benefit from the scheme, are they likely to have the capital required to do those upgrades?

So actually I think it would make far more sense for the States to be able to crack on and do a programme and leverage any efficiencies of scale that we can lean on to get that housing stock up to scratch before we even think about it. So I think actually from an environmental point of view it makes much more sense, again, to wait before we start thinking about this next phase and I completely agree, it is a perfectly reasonable next step.

I would have been far happier, incidentally, if this Proposition had simply sought to add on that aspect of the report but I really cannot support it in its current form because it deletes Amendment 2 and replaces it with no flexibility with the new wording, which binds this aspect, bakes this aspect in. So that is why I cannot support it but I hope that has helped explain to Members a little bit about who this scheme embodied in Amendment 2 yesterday is likely to benefit, who it will not benefit and some of the issues around timing. But for those reasons, even though I think there is much to be commended in the content of the Proposition, I cannot support the Proposition in this form.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Moakes.

**Deputy Moakes:** Thank you, sir.

As I have said on numerous occasions this week, we are in the midst of a housing emergency and we do absolutely need to build more private and social housing. However, I think to suggest that this amendment depletes social housing stock is a red herring and I will come onto that in a minute.

I supported the original amendment, too, but said during debate that I preferred Amendment 13. The reason for this was primarily because it gave existing tenants the right to buy their homes rather than limiting it to new tenants. Why? I believe in aspiration for the many, not for the few. Limiting it to new tenants seems unfair, given that many existing tenants who would not be able to afford a home on the Open Market would be excluded. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) (*Interjection*) Discrimination.

And remember, every home sold to an existing tenant will have the same person or people living in it as before it was sold. How is that depleting stock? It is the same people needing housing. Mixing up the types of housing. Pepper-potting, I think it has been called today, is also a good thing. Owner-occupiers, partial owners and renters, etc. What is not to like about that? (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

Finally and importantly, every single home sold will contribute towards building new, high quality social housing. The States owns a large amount of land, ring-fenced for social housing, already. This money could kickstart building. I really cannot believe that anyone here wants to discriminate against existing tenants and I urge everyone to vote yes to this sensible, pragmatic and aspirational amendment.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Brouard.

**Deputy Brouard:** Thank you, sir.

I will be supporting this amendment. I think it is a very good amendment. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) I got cross quite a few years ago – I think it was with Social Security at the time – when they had an estate at Mont Arrive and there were some very substantial houses there. Substantially built. I mean they were not modern from that point of view, but they were substantial houses. You know, the roofs were okay, the walls were okay but they needed a lot of upgrading.

Unfortunately, what happened, despite my protestation to say no, they were demolished and a new estate was created and obviously it was all better houses, it had better insulation and all the rest of it. My argument was I would have much rather sold those houses off to young couples to have a go on the property market, (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) use the money to build another house somewhere else for the tenants that they have and if young people are still the same as I was when I was young, the things we put up with, with our first house, that you would complain if you were paying rent for it.

I did not have a back door. I mean there was nothing there. It was a curtain. It looked as though the carpet fitter had buried three cats underneath the kitchen floor because the stalactites were coming up from the salts that were being discharged, as it were, because there was no damp-proof course. The bathroom for many years had a portable bath from the point of view that it had a flexible hose on it because it had to move around as building works were being able to be afforded as and when you did.

But you would put up with that if it was your own house. You would not put up with that if you were paying a landlord. I think we have got an opportunity here. There are some properties that we own as the States that actually, rather than try and renovate them ourselves, it may be just better to sell them into the marketplace, use the money and build another house. That way you have two.

The present system, where we seem to demolish and then rebuild and try and cram a whole load more onto an estate, I just do not get it, and the carbon footprint of the property that you are

destroying, the slates which have come from Wales, the granite that has been crushed to make your blocks, all of that is all lost and you just have a pile of rubble, which is then used as hardcore for the roads.

2195 I think that is a complete waste and the idea that Environment is saying actually it is better to have insulation, I am totally with that, but the idea that you have got a substantial building and you then demolish it to put another substantial building it just does not work in my mind. So I am very pleased with Deputy Ferbrache and the team for bringing this forward.

2200 It does not mean we have to sell all the States' properties. It just means that there may be a few, here and there, where we can let go, let somebody else have the interest in it and also then use that money to make more social housing.

So I will be fully supportive of it and thank you very much for bringing it forward.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Leadbeater, is it your wish to be relevéd?

2205 **Deputy Leadbeater:** Yes, please, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Thank you.  
Deputy de Lisle.

2210 **Deputy de Lisle:** Thank you, sir.

This is certainly the right time for something in the order of this amendment to be placed forward. Obviously, it will not be something that will be put in, in the next little while but it is important to look at this and do the studies that are required within the amendment right now and get it moving forward.

2215 I like the ideas, of course, of Deputy Parkinson and I think Deputy Gollop in regard to ensuring that if one of these houses is purchased by the existing tenant then another is built and that tenant, of course, will upgrade that particular property as he finds the money over the years to do so, and bring it into a really profitable habitation, if you like, for himself and others that follow.

2220 One thing that I did not like as a suggestion in this whole business of housing was the idea of shifting the current housing stock over to the Housing Association. I think that is totally wrong and I would not, in any way, want to. Because if you look at the situation in England, I mean there is a lot of criticism now of these housing associations and the way they are dealing with their tenants. In some cases, there is frantic home-building and six-figure executive salaries are the new norm over there and, against a background of government de-regulation, cuts and subsidies, the worry is for the relationship between the associations and millions of their residents.

2225 The big weakness of housing associations in England is their lack of accountability. They publish very little. They are not subject to freedom of information requests and it is too easy for them to become complacent. So we do not want to get into that situation here, if we can avoid it and it is far better, as they are finding in England, to have their council housing set up as well as housing associations if they are ever to meet the demand that they have for housing in England.

2230 So it is better to have two regimes, if you like, moving affordable housing forward, rather than just one, particularly one that might be constrained, somewhat, with this, as I say, frantic home building and six-figure executive salaries and the lack of accountability and the complacency, very often, of the situation. So we can avoid that here by retaining what we have.

2235 I have always thought that if we are to do anything like this in terms of subsidising to some degree, this 25% or whatever, it is important that the people that are living in the States' housing get the first choice. If anything is to be solved, or moved, then it is important that those people that are living and renting in social housing currently are the people that are given the first right of purchase and we know that not everybody will be able to take that opportunity.

2240 But they might be able to take that opportunity in time as we go along and as we go along with the building of new houses then perhaps those people will find themselves in a position whereby they can afford, later on, to actually acquire the rental housing that they are living in.

So having said those few points, I really feel that this is an amendment that we should progress with because when I look at 1D, it is stating it is:

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... to examine the options and report back to the States as soon as practicable with recommendations for the provision of States sponsored mortgages, loans ...

– and so on and so forth, in order to be able to move this particular idea forward.

So it will not be in five minutes. It will not be done as quickly as some people feel that it might be done. It is going to take time and it is something that a lot of people will welcome and, while they cannot actually see themselves currently capitalising on this particular idea, they might see in the future that there will be that opportunity for them if they are able to find the monies later on to do it. So it really does provide a lot of hope in the housing market for a lot of people for their future and their families' future.

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Thank you, sir.

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**The Bailiff:** Deputy Oliver.

**Deputy Oliver:** Thank you, sir.

I thank Deputy Ferbrache and Deputy Helyar for bringing this amendment. This is not something that is going to happen now. It is just like the first proposal where it is going to have to be looked at and report back to the States, as is the second, 1C. The one thing that I would say and I think many people have said it, is I would not want to see less social housing in the market because otherwise I think you will have a bigger build-up of waiting lists and that would not be a good thing.

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But the other point is, when you sell social housing, I think what is also going to have to happen is, I would not go selling any in, say, the Genats Estate, which is going to be rebuilt, because then you will have to compulsorily purchase it back. Otherwise you could end up with problems with a number of social housing that you cannot actually, if you want to change ... Sorry, I am not explaining myself very well.

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If you are planning on doing some development, do not go selling off those houses, because then it will make it much more difficult to do that development. So plan carefully, is what I am trying to say, of where you actually put these schemes because it might actually cause more problems than it solves.

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That is all I have got to say.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Trott.

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**Deputy Trott:** Sir, briefly, I remember vividly, back in 2000, the housing problems that we faced then. They were different than they were today in many respects but there were some similarities. Deputy Roffey is a very modest chap and I think he paid some credit to the Jones Requête, which certainly helped stimulate debate and I was the second signatory on that Requête and for some time we thought that Deputy Jones, my very good friend Deputy Jones, may have been unwell enough to deliver the speech and I was prepared to step in. But it was very much the issue of the day.

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The implementation of the Housing Association, though, was driven by Deputy Roffey. He was belt and braces behind it and I am very grateful that he pushed that through. What we did was we ceded a significant amount of States-owned social housing into the Housing Association, to pump prime it, to give it an asset base from which to go out and start borrowing the money to become head and shoulders the most dominant house builder in Guernsey in the however many years it is since. Probably, I think it was 2005, so it is 17 or so years now in its implementation.

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And we did that for a number of reasons. One of the primary reasons was to keep it at arm's length from the States because we all know if the States gets involved in trying to do something, things are inevitably likely to happen slower. So an unencumbered housing association could go

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and get the necessary funding, driven by a board who were competent with expertise in the field and it has been a consummate success.

One of the problems I have with this amendment, because I happen to agree with the principle, a Guernseyman's home is his castle, the more home ownership we can get the better, is this concept – and Deputy Roffey highlighted it in his opening remarks – that we would want to tell the Housing Association, 'You will do this with stuff that is owned by you.' When its evolutionary principles were to give them the autonomy to do what they felt was best and indeed to have the liabilities on their balance sheet as well as the assets.

So that is an issue for me, particularly bearing in mind the message that we got from Deputy Roffey this morning. That is that they do not want to do this. So I think we can be fairly certain what the answer will be and, of course, they are the lion's share of social housing these days. I do not know quite how many properties they have got and I would be very happy to give way to Deputy Roffey if he is able to advise us but my belief is that they are the largest property owners ... I give way.

**Deputy Roffey:** Not quite right, no.

They have just over 1,000 and growing. The States has about 1,600 and shrinking and when the Genats goes across, of course, the balance will change more. But of course if P&R has got a strong desire for all of the stock to go across, as I understand it – I am not quite sure about that financial deal but P&R are the ones with the finances – so if that happens then they will have all of the social housing stock within possibly a year.

**Deputy Trott:** Okay, thank you for that. That is useful.

So my trepidation is really based on the fact that I think we already know what the Housing Association's board of directors will say and I very much hope that that does not precipitate a set of behaviours and actions that none of us would want but time will tell because I do expect this amendment to go through.

The other area I wanted to raise, sir, is the wording in 1D, where not only States-sponsored mortgages are talked about and mortgages, of course, are asset-backed, mortgages are against real property but also loans. Now the idea of the States getting involved in loans in this way – lending in an unsecured fashion, potentially – fills me with absolute horror because the public sector is not equipped, in my view, to undertake those sorts of banking relationships. I use the word loosely and in inverted commas.

So I would be interested to hear from Deputy Helyar, when he sums up, and I think will it be Deputy Helyar? Of course, it will be Deputy Ferbrache. If he could address those two issues, the first about the potential consequences if the Housing Association's board is adamant that it does not wish its autonomy to be compromised, which is how I would behave, I have to say, if I was a member of that board. And also the issues, as he sees them, around the States, the public sector, the taxpayer, in a non-COVID-type environment, providing unsecured loans, potentially, to those who wish maybe to undertake house improvements or whatever the case may be.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Helyar.

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

I think I have said this a few times in the Assembly that I believe in helping people up not helping them out. I do support this amendment. Obviously, I second it, so that is a natural progression. I grew up in the 1970s next to an estate at the Pecqueries, which at the time was one of the Island's roughest and most difficult estates.

I used to knock about with the kids over there, sometimes literally, and it was a tough place. The baths were full of coal. Quite a few of the houses had had chip pan fires that had never been decorated over. It was a tough place and that was before the days when the Genats was built.

2345 It is funny about the Pecqueries because Deputy Roffey referenced it in terms of new-build property and when I first tried to get on the property ladder, the Pecqueries, when it was first built next door, was one of the places that we looked at and I think there were about – and I could be wrong so do not please hold me to account – but I think they were about £88,000, something like that. Brand new houses, three bedrooms. Incredible price in comparison to what you think today and that is just 30 years ago. It is not that long ago and the prices have gone up absolutely  
2350 extraordinarily.

My parents benefited from the States' loan scheme. My dad built our first house, just down the road from there, as a bungalow, as Deputy Inder was saying. A few mates clubbed together, we had a mate who was a chippie, a mate who was a blockie and they put the bungalow together. It was a lot easier in those days because plots were cheaper and life was simpler. They had a couple of  
2355 greenhouses next door and they grew freesias and tomatoes and came home from work and picked freesias till midnight.

Treasury does need to be involved in this process. That is the old way it happened but Treasury does need to be involved in this process because if we sell an income stream, whatever it may be, current housing or future housing, that belongs to the States, we lose it forever. So we have got to think really carefully about whether this is the right thing to do and there are very important things to consider here so, for example, the valuation that we have looked at for social housing so far  
2360 values that housing as social housing.

It is an assumption, if it is transferred, that it will remain in that status because clearly if you value a States' house at £75,000, it is worth a lot more if you sell it on the Open Market. So one of the issues that arises in this amendment is around valuation, 75% of the market value. What does that  
2365 mean?

I am in favour of offering some States' housing to people that are living in it. I think it has been said widely that it is accepted that, pepper-potting is one of the phrases that has been used, but it has been accepted widely – gentrification is another word that is used, that has not come up yet in  
2370 debate – if people own their own houses, they take responsibility for them.

Let's not forget, we are not talking about people that have been living in them for a few months or weeks, in some cases decades. Several families, different generations have grown up in the same house. They have paid time and time again their rent and they have got nothing for it because they have been kept by the Government's own rules, they have been kept poor. They were not allowed  
2375 to earn any more. They were not allowed to do any better for themselves. They were not allowed to step up.

What I would like to see is some more aspiration in this. Let's really get involved and let people do what they want to do. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) It is really, really important, because if we can reverse engineer some of the several social problems that we have got in the States, where we club  
2380 people together, who will not necessarily want to be living in the same place, or in those circumstances, this is an opportunity I think for us to look at the problem from a wider perspective.

And what are we asking for here? We are asking for a report. I think we can tell from some of the speeches that we have heard already from members of ESS what the result is going to be in the report. It is going to be no, isn't it? It is going to be no. Fair enough. If that is the conclusion and it  
2385 is backed with the proper evidence, I am fully willing to accept it.

But that is not an excuse not to explore it. And it can be done quickly. All sorts of things have been rushed through quickly in the last few years. We can move quickly if we prioritise and that is what this debate is about. It is about prioritising. We have a housing problem. Whether we call it a crisis or an emergency, we need to get on, and I think the States can use its considerable reserves  
2390 if it wants to, to assist the market and Deputy Trott was quite right to ask the position. We should not be competing with the commercial sector.

We should not be competing but we should be able to step in to help people to step up. I have had lots of people contact me saying, 'I live in a GHA house, I cannot afford to save the money for a deposit for it to move up, because I am paying so much in rent.' What about the States' providing  
2395 that deposit? What about the States helping people to step up and move up and move on? It is a

good thing for the economy if we invest in it and it is a good thing for the population if we help them with their tax money to support the economy and to support the housing situation.

Members, all we are asking for here is a report. We are not asking for anybody to reach a conclusion on it today. I would say please accept the amendment and let's have a debate about it when it comes back to the Assembly. (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.)

Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Alderney Representative Roberts.

**Alderney Representative Roberts:** Thank you, sir.

I should not perhaps vote on this item but I am going to and I will give you the reasons why I feel I can. I think Deputy Roffey is to be commended for his passion, actually, because I think passion is a great quality. But unlike Deputy Roffey, I could not stand Mrs Thatcher. In fact, I hated her. However it gave me and my late wife Anna the chance to buy our own first house. So I am in favour of helping lower paid residents go forward.

I know what it is like to be a tenant and I know what joy getting our first home meant to a 24-year-old couple with two young boys and with little money. So I am breaking in holding back my vote on Guernsey housing and I am going to vote on it for these reasons. We are one Bailiwick and we have many young Alderney people living here and some of those couples could be applicants.

For that reason, I am going to support this amendment, sir. Thank you.

**A Member:** Hear, hear.

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

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Thank you, sir.

I think I just want to say, first of all, I mean, I agree with Deputy de Sausmarez. I think it is a shame that amendments come this way, deleting completely a previous amendment proposed and then, well, not copied fully, copied with very fundamentally amended Propositions and then something else. I do not know why it could not be just accepted. We voted on the amendment. Bring a new amendment that just adds to it. Why do you have to completely delete the Proposition? The spirit in which this amendment is brought, I think we can learn from.

I do want to talk about what is the fundamental housing problem we face right now. The problem is about the supply of housing. The number of houses available, both for buying and for renting in the market. We have had an influx of people moving to the Island in the last couple of years. So that is one: supplying properties, both for buying and for renting.

The second problem is the price of houses, both for buying but also for rental and we have heard the stats about how much it costs to rent a property. So really the fundamental issue of the housing situation is about an affordability to rent and buy but also the supply.

So I do not fully understand how just playing, effectively, with existing stock that we have, is solving the fundamental problem of the supply. I think the Committee for ESS has made it very clear there is a massive waiting list for all sorts of housing: key worker housing, social rental housing, partial ownership, there are massive lists for them. I really do not understand how shifting people who need social rental housing to people who want to buy actually solves the problem right now.

I think it is kind of misguided in terms of really trying to intervene in the market to solve the immediate problems we have. So I do have concerns that we are misplacing our attention to doing something. What we are trying to do is shift the proportion of people who own properties versus those who rent but is that the problem right now? The emergency housing problem right now that the Island is actually facing. There are plenty of countries around the world, like Germany for example, where there is nothing wrong with home rental. In many cases you may choose to rent.

As I said before, the problem is about, really, the supply. So this amendment does not lead to, in any way shape or form, increasing the supply and it is putting potentially stress on the stock of

social housing that we have right now, which will perpetuate the problems we have because we have really big waiting lists. So I appreciate that we want to do everything about housing but I think there is a level of, are we trying to solve the problem that is in front of us right now?

On 1D, I think it is quite interesting because there was a project, for about six years now, to set up a Government-backed, effectively, a bank or so on. It was very heavily supported by the former Treasury Minister and P&R – not Treasury Minister but Chief Minister, Gavin St Pier – and there was a project being developed at Economic Development at the time by officers.

It did not proceed and Deputy Ferbrache, I believe, at the time, was the President of Economic Development and the justification given for that was the private market is solving the situation. The private market is offering the loans and the mortgages so there was no desire to step into competing with the private market. I think if only we have the longer term thinking on that, where potentially Government intervention is required in these situations.

So at the moment, what Amendment 2, I believe, was offering previously – I am getting lost in the amendment numbering – but the previous amendment we voted for is a very different kind of amendment because it is just about whatever is going to build and helping in those limited situations to increase home ownership.

This is a completely different piece and I am concerned that we are diverting attention, probably, from actually intervening where we are solving the issues around supply and we are potentially trying to control some issues around pricing availability and I think that is really where we need to be immediately focusing our attention. At the moment I am cautious that this amendment would not help us do that, even though I accept that this amendment is about just bringing forward the report.

So at the moment I am not sure which way I am going to vote on this and I would also like that we vote on different items, 1C and 1D separately. Can we do that?

**The Bailiff:** You cannot do that. It is a single amendment, so it is going to be a single Proposition to delete the words that were in Proposition 1 and to replace them with two new Propositions.

Deputy Soulsby.

**Deputy Soulsby:** Thank you, sir.

I will be brief. I thought I would just respond to one comment that Deputy Kazantseva-Miller said about how the amendment was put together. It was done in that way because it is really difficult to be able to change what was Amendment 13 into Amendment 2, which had then become part of the Proposition. It was to make things easy for Members to understand what is going on, basically. So it was not for any other reason. It was quite difficult to do. I think I would have preferred two amendments. We ended up with one but I will explain why in a minute.

I do, of course, support home ownership. Absolutely and I am sure everybody in this room does. I supported Amendment 2. I do have concerns and I do not know if they have been properly satisfied from the debate. I have got similar concerns to Deputy Trott but I have also got the issue around the existing properties being sold off. The fact is, while we have got a pipeline, which over the last year really have put in a lot of effort to get the pipeline going, we have got land that has been bought and we are expecting lots more housing to be built, that should not make people think that that means we will have a surfeit of housing. Because we will not.

The whole point, all the reports that we have had, certainly in previous terms if Members want to look at them, will show, that we have got a lower amount of social housing than we should have for our population and we need to fill ... well that is why we are doing what we are doing. That is why we are looking to build now because there is such a lack of homes.

So if we are saying, oh, we are going to sell off some of the existing stock, we are reducing the stock that we have and that is the bit that really bothers me. I hear what Alderney Representative Roberts says about how Thatcher's right-to-buy really benefited him. It benefited a lot of people who became very wealthy home owners in the UK and ended up being private landlords and did very well out of it; that is true.

2500 But between 1979 and 2017 there was a reduction of 4.5 million social houses in the UK and that has resulted in a huge amount of homelessness in many parts of the UK and it has caused real issues for local councils there. Indeed, I think in Scotland and Wales they have reversed the legislation in their devolved administrations to prevent right-to-buy because of the problems it has created.

I remember when I was a kid, when it happened, and everybody was so excited and there was  
2505 Margaret Thatcher going to the first person who had sold their home but in the end it has caused a real issue and that has always been at the back of my mind. It has always made me concerned about it.

I am less concerned with Amendment 2 because we will be planning it and we are saying we are not reducing the amounts of social housing, we are planning it into the whole process and ensuring  
2510 that we do have the social housing we need.

I would also like to address another point that was made saying this will mean people in social housing now have the opportunity to buy their home. Well the situation here is actually very different from what it might have been in 1979 when there might have been too much social housing and it might have been some benefit in allowing some of the social housing to be sold off.

2515 But as I say, we do not have a surfeit of ...

Sorry, I do not know if Deputy Inder has got something ... I will give way if he wants me to.

**Deputy Inder:** I was talking to Deputy Prow, so sorry about that.

2520 **Deputy Soulsby:** Well, I would appreciate it if I could be able to speak without having to shout over you, thank you.

So my concern is, and I am happy to give way either to Deputy Roffey or de Sausmarez about whether they believe we have occupants of social housing on the Island who will be in the position to be able to buy that property.

2525 **Deputy Roffey:** I thank Deputy Soulsby for giving way.

Quite a lot of empirical research has been done by our staff about that and there was virtually none of our existing tenants who will be in a position to raise the commercial loan that is needed in order to take advantage of the scheme and buy their own home. So it is going to be very much  
2530 people who are not currently in social housing, and there is nothing wrong with that because there are people out there that are between that level and the level of being able to buy on the private market.

But please do not run away with the idea that suddenly people who have lived in their home for 30 years are going to become proud home owners because that is not how it is going to work out.

2535 **Deputy Soulsby:** Thank you.

That is what I expected the answer to be. I am glad Deputy Roffey has been able to confirm it.

Although, I do not think I can support this amendment but if it is passed I will not vote for the first bit but I will be still happy to vote for 1D. Deputy Kazantseva-Miller is absolutely right. This is  
2540 not a new idea, actually, it has been looked at by a former Policy & Resources Committee, I think, and even before that it was thought of as an opportunity. It did not go anywhere because of the reasons she gave.

I do not think we ever had a report on it, though, and I think that possibly might have been something that we could have and so it might not come to anything but at least we will have  
2545 something that we can look at that would enable us to determine whether the evidence is there. So I am afraid I cannot support the amendment but I certainly can appreciate parts of it.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Haskins.

2550 **Deputy Haskins:** Thank you, sir.

In response to Deputy Soulsby, well, I do know one who can. So there is at least one. So the assertion from Deputy Roffey that virtually none, one out of 1,000, okay ... The second thing that was said is it is going to slow everything down. It is not going to slow it down because these houses are not even built yet. That is the one in Amendment 2. Third point, it is just a report. So if you do not like it, you can amend it how you see fit and what you would like when you go forward.

In response to Deputy Trott, well again, with this policy letter, that I assume is going to be a policy letter, or how it is going to be presented to the States, that I assume, and I seek clarification, will address the difference between GHA and the social element and how that will come across, if it could be done.

The fourth thing that I would like to say is when someone now owns their own home, let's say they only use two rooms, but they have three rooms, they can now let out one of those rooms. That is then extra income and, with this housing crisis, do you think that might help? An extra unit? I think so.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Bury.

**Deputy Bury:** Thank you, sir.

As is the way of this debate, I have no doubt that this amendment will go through, but some things do need to be said and things that have been said in debate just need to be countered. The aspiration, of course we should be aspirational, our community should be aspirational, everybody should. As, I think, Deputy Roffey said yesterday, though, everybody's aspirations are different and it does not mean they are wrong.

But the experience and I think we call them clients in ESS, or customers, that we have living in our social, rental properties, talking about aspiration in the way that it is being spoken about, in this Assembly, I am afraid, sir, just smacks of being completely out of touch of the living situation of a lot of those people.

Aspiration for a lot of those people is knowing where next week's food shopping is coming from. That is aspiration and, of course, yes, as a Government we should be helping them to get further in their aspirations to be higher, if that is what they want. But there is aspiration and there is reality. That is the reality for a lot of our social, rental tenants, and that point cannot be lost within this debate. That is the point that Deputy Roffey was just making, that this scheme does not apply to our social rental tenants, okay?

They cannot aspire a money tree. If they could, maybe we could do that too and solve our GST problem. It is easy to say in here, there are not many people here, if any, that are living in that situation, so just please to Members, they need to understand that. The criteria and eligibility for social rental, as Deputy de Sausmarez was talking about, is really low income. And it is broader than that but, for example, a few people have told their personal stories about where they grew up or levels of income etc.

So not too long ago I was definitely in the in-work poverty band. I did not even have a low income job. It was actually fairly average for Guernsey but because of my circumstances, my outgoings were quite high. I was in private rent. I was taking home £2,000 a month. My one-bedroom flat was £1,000. So, okay, 50% gone. This is a one-bedroom flat I am living in with my three-year-old daughter, okay? And I am paying £500 for expensive childcare.

So no one has to be a good mathematician to understand that, after some bills, the petrol that I did need because I had to drop the child off to the expensive childcare and get to my relatively well-paid job, so petrol, bills, it did not leave us a lot. So not a great situation. I did not qualify for social rental. The criteria is quite difficult.

So people in social rental are not suddenly just going to be able to buy a property, even if it is at 75% of the value. And the point I did want to make, which Deputy Kazantseva-Miller was making, was that I thought the housing crisis emergency was that we did not have enough. This does not

create any more. The sentiment of it, absolutely, but the waiting list, there has been a lot of talk about the waiting list so I just want to go through that.

2605 Over the course of 2021, the different quarters, and this is just social rental: 303, quarter one; 318, quarter two; 350, quarter three; 337, quarter four. Where we are now, quarter one, 350. So you see where it is. Over a year, it has increased by 50. The sites that we have secured and that we are sure of at the moment, we do not have accurate figures but, based on the Strategic Housing Indicator, we are looking at about 135 social rental units, at the moment, with what we have got secured. Hopefully, obviously, more coming on line.

2610 So 350 on the waiting list, that has increased by 50 in the last year, 135 coming on line in when? A couple of years?

**Deputy Dyke:** Point of correction.

2615

**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Dyke.

**Deputy Dyke:** According to the HAG paper itself, you have got 573 potential social housing sites, plus the data park has just been built with more sites. So in terms of land you have already got, it is 573.

2620

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Bury to continue.

**Deputy Bury:** Well, as I said, these are the figures that have just come through from the Housing Department. They are sketched out. This is the land that we are *sure of*. I do not know if Deputy Roffey would like ... I will give way to Deputy Roffey.

2625

**Deputy Roffey:** I do not want to extend this but people do have to understand the difference between the affordable housing provision, which is what the HAG papers were talking about, and the element of that, which is for social rental, which is the figures that Deputy Bury is talking about. So key worker housing, partial ownership, all of those schemes, have to be deducted from that.

2630

At the moment the only planning applications going in any time soon is 91 for the Fontaine Vinery, which is already in, and quite soon 135 for Parc Le Lacheur but that does mean not all of those are going for social housing. People here have been saying they want a mix. There will be a mix. So only an element of that will be for social housing.

2635

**Deputy Bury:** Thank you.

Yes, I did say at the start this is purely social rental because it will be the social rental houses, presumably, that will be put under the 75% scheme.

2640

So the maths does not add up currently at this time. It has increased 50 in the last year and since we are in a housing crisis and people are being pushed out of affording private rentals, how big do we think the list is going to be in a couple of years' time, when the new properties come on line?

So while I am not against the sentiment I do think the point that Deputy Kazantseva-Miller was making in terms of volume, actual numbers, the amount we have, that is the problem in front of us and I absolutely do want to help middle Guernsey because, like I just said, that is where I was. I did not qualify for the social affordable renting but I can absolutely say I needed some help.

2645

So I do want to help there, but right now, in terms of our social rental availability, we do not have enough. There is an unmet need and it is increasing and this Proposition does, despite the muttering and people saying opposite, it does suggest that we take it out of that stock and turn it into a 75% purchase. So yes, I am afraid that just does not add up.

2650

And another point, just to Deputy Soulsby was mentioning around homelessness, and I think this is broader than this particular amendment but where we talk about inter-dependencies. If there is potential that we are going to reduce our social rental housing stock, which arguably for some people is their only choice – it is their *only* choice – and yet our emergency housing action, which

2655 is an action at ESS we have regrettably, playing the game, had to put further down this term, no emergency housing, reduced last option stock. Those two things do not go together.

I cannot support this amendment as it is, based on those things. However it will go through, a report will be done and hopefully that work can be used in the future when we are in a better position in terms of social rental stock.

2660 Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Mahoney.

**Deputy Mahoney:** Just very quick.

2665 Just a couple of points. I am not going to get into numbers because I think people are making them up and throwing them around but of the 130 or 50 – I am sorry, I did not catch it – 135 houses which Deputy Bury has just quoted and the 576 which are in the HAG papers but then Deputy Roffey tells us that the difference between those two is all going to be key worker and partial ownership, I think, was the other thing.

2670 So I would be very interested if he could provide those exact numbers, then, of the difference between 570 to 135, but what are the breakdown between key worker and partial ownership. That seems like quite a nice lot of houses. Also just Deputy Roffey says he has empirical evidence, held by ESS today, that no one can buy these houses, so I wonder if he would like to share that at some point, as well, with the rest of the Assembly.

2675

**The Bailiff:** I will turn to the proposer of Amendment 14, Deputy Ferbrache, to reply to the debate, please.

**Deputy Ferbrache:** Sir, just before I begin, Deputy Roffey did want to make a point. I am quite prepared to give way for him to make that point.

2680

**Deputy Roffey:** I really wanted to answer two questions. When I am asked questions I like to answer them.

2685 No, I did not say nobody. I said almost nobody. The vast majority of our tenants are not going to be in a financial position to take out a mortgage on 75% of the value of their property. And that is an exercise we have done because we are interested in this exercise. As for the numbers, part of the difference is that not all affordable housing is social rental. We are building specialist units like the ones we are about to do at Sandy Hook for people with special needs. Yes, we are doing partial ownership and, yes, we are planning quite a lot of key worker housing.

2690 But also the numbers in the HAG paper were on everything that the GHA owner could possibly do in the future, like the bottom section of the Fontaine, which we know cannot be brought forward for a number of years because of flooding issues needing to be resolved. So what Deputy Bury was talking about is what is practical to do over the next few years.

2695 **Deputy Ferbrache:** I am very grateful to Deputy Roffey for his comments and also very grateful for those comments because that shows there is not one solution that fits all. There are so many matters that need to be addressed in relation to housing. There are no easy answers. There are no quick answers. But let us do something.

2700 What Deputy Moakes said is that he wants to be aspirational. Deputy Bury said in some cases that means people just paying their bills next week or paying their bills tomorrow and I accept that. But there are degrees of aspiration. Our home ownership shrunk from, I think Deputy Haskins gave a figure in a previous debate, something over 70%, something about 60%, whatever it is. It has shrunk by a fair bit over a relatively limited period of time.

2705 Now the quality of accommodation, we had Deputy Brouard's homespun thing about his toilet and bathroom and kitchen floor and all the other stuff. I was very interested in it and it reminded me of another Deputy who sometimes tells of his situation whereby, until the age of 12, he had an

outside toilet, the only inside toilet was made of plastic or metal and you had to empty it outside every day.

Now we are moving on and we are moving on in relation to the quality of accommodation. That is the idea that we should be doing. That is the point that we should be making in relation to all of this.

Now I voted, and most States' Members voted, it was overwhelmingly voted in favour of Amendment 2 yesterday and it was one person against, clearly said it was a very good amendment. Now whatever happens if this amendment fails then I will certainly be repeating my support of that amendment, or it will then be a Proposition.

But in relation to all of this, why can't we be aspirational? Because people say, Deputy Soulsby, I think, gave, I am sure inadvertently, a false analogy about all the properties in England that have been sold pursuant to Mrs Thatcher's opening up of the council tenancy occupancy from 1979 onwards, over the next 30 or 40 years.

But Amendment 14 has that if there is a sale by a qualifying purchaser, the GSA have to be given the first option to repurchase. So that weakness, and it was a weakness in many of the council sales in the UK, has been closed, because you would have to sell your house back or offer it back to the GHA. If they did not want to buy it then you would be able to sell it to somebody else.

Now, also, I do not think it is beyond the wit of anybody to say, when you are looking at qualifying purchase and I accept we are talking about a report, so the report will come in with the detail but isn't it more likely than not, isn't it more common sense than otherwise that the type of people that will qualify as a qualifying purchaser will be the current tenant of that property? (**Member:** Hear, hear.)

Now they will want to better themselves and I know that is almost, for some people, that is almost an anathema. But they will want to better themselves. Now, whether we like it or not, and I had uncles that lived in States' houses and they were good States' tenants and they looked after their property. So I do not come from, I do not talk from theory, I talk from practice and from reality. And they looked after their States' houses – because that is what they were called in those days – and my Uncle George actually won prizes every year for about 10 years, for his garden at Rectory Hill. And then he moved to Les Genats when Les Genats was constructed because he and my auntie were then older people, they moved into a smaller property there.

But the general truth is, if you own a property, you look after it better. You have more pride in it. That is no criticism of other people, it is just a truism. That is the way that it works. So the more that you can encourage home ownership in a controlled environment, in a very well-regulated environment, it must be better.

Now, Deputy Trott says, 'I have got a couple of questions.' I will answer those questions now. The first was what about imposing it upon the GHA? Well we, the States of Guernsey, were quite happy, for example, to say to people who own developments that are going to have 20 houses or more, you have got to give up at a cost, 30% nil cost, 30% of your property. We were quite prepared to do that. I am not criticising that decision because sometimes you have to intervene. You have to look at the rights of others and it is not beyond the wit of this States that we may have to, in relation to certain developments in the future, adopt some kind of compulsory purchase, high taxation, kind of proposals to make sure that developments take place.

I appreciate Deputy Trott is right, with the inference and the implication of his statement, that it will mean – it could mean I should say, not would mean – could mean some interference with the autonomy of the GHA. It could do that. That is the truth of it. I would hope, because they are good, reasonable people, who have done a very good job over 20 years or so, that they would accommodate reasonable considerations, reasonable discussions and a practical solution could be reached.

He also made a good point, a very good point, about mortgages he understands, what about unsecured loans? They are a risk for everybody and, generally, he and I would know that people who get unsecured loans, their rates of interest are generally higher, because they are not secured. The intention of this, and it is something that will have to be carefully considered, so it is a point he

2760 has validly raised, is that there are some people who are good people but they might need – I am making a figure up – £30,000 for a deposit. They have got £15,000. So they might need an unsecured loan of £15,000, for argument's sake. Well, if appropriate checks can be made and if it is affordable, that might be achievable.

2765 But I appreciate it has got to be looked at with great care and I certainly agree with him that the public sector has not been as good as it can be in relation to those matters. For example, it came before, and it is an analogy rather than a direct situation, it came before P&R just as recently as Tuesday, when we looked at quarter four, we looked at recent corporate figures, the housing arrears for the States-owned houses, as I call that accommodation, are in excess of £1 million and 75% of that, or 73% has been for more than a year.

2770 GHA is much better at managing. Their finances are much better in relation to that. They do not have as many arrears. They control them better. No, I am not giving way unless I am factually wrong, in which case I can be corrected. But in relation to that the position is Deputy Trott, with all his considerable experience both in the States and outside, is right to have those concerns. I have got those concerns too. It is something to be looked at because this is a report. This is not an absolute, this is a slam dunk deal.

2775 I think the only person who actually asked a question, because everybody else had views, was Deputy Taylor about the people on partial ownership, etc. Again that is something that will have to be addressed because I accept fully I think the point behind his question or his comment was, they cannot be out of kilter. They have got to be addressed in some way. They will be looked at in relation to what we are talking about. So, again, it is a good point. Because you cannot have this scheme doing that and that scheme doing this unless there is good logic between the two.

2780 Now, we can always find reasons for not doing something. We have all used various adjectives. We have all described the housing situation and it is in a perilous state. I do not think we have used that word before, I quite like it. I do not like to say it in relation to housing but it is in a perilous state.

2785 What we are seeking to do, and Deputy Gollop I think hit the nail on the head with his speech – twice today I have complimented his speeches! – he said, look, aren't we better to have new stock rather than old stock? Now if people buy the older States' properties, the older GHA properties – former States' properties – if they buy those for 75% on all the qualifying terms, that money is going to be paid to the GHA, because they would have sold it for £100,000 or whatever the figure might be. That can then be invested by them into new stock.

2790 Deputy Parkinson made a good thing, he said he would support an amendment if there was a proviso about one in, one out, and Deputy de Lisle made a similar point. That is something, to me, that should be looked at when we look at this particular problem. It should be looked at, I would hope it would be looked at, because the last thing we want to do is to depress the level of housing. We want to increase it. And whether it is social housing, whether it is affordable housing, and we use those terms almost inter-changeably, or whether it is housing for key workers, there is a great shortage. We need more housing. Whether it is a flat, accommodation, nursing homes or whatever.

2800 I do not want to delve ... No, I am not going to do it because we will go off at another tangent in relation to the debate we are going to have in July about building in a field and not building in a field. We have got to get on with things. We could always find a reason to say you cannot do this, you cannot do that, you cannot do the other.

2805 This is the idea of a report, as Deputy Helyar says, it need not take a long time for this report to take place. With goodwill, because a lot of the information is already there we have had figures from Deputy Dyke, we have had figures from Deputy Bury, we have had figures at P&R, all that information is there really. It just needs putting together in a sensible, comprehensive manner.

2810 So again, it is not a difficult issue. Now Deputy Roffey says, 'Why are P&R involved?' Well actually I do not think I was an obstructive element on HAG for the last nine or 10 months, at all. In fact, I thought I was reasonably constructive in connection with that. So I would have thought we have got the senior – senior in a sense where we have got the overall responsibility, really – senior Committee, you have got E&I and you have got Deputy Roffey's Committee all looking at it

together; the paymaster, if you can call it that, albeit it is public money, the other Committees responsible. I really do not see that there is a problem in relation to those Committees all working in the same way going forward.

I could say a lot more but really this should be an amendment that should sail through by a clear majority. It seems to me, again, the Assembly is dividing in relation to the people who say they have greater social – they do not say, they imply – they have got a greater social conscience than others. My social conscience is as great as anybody in this particular room. I come from a certain background. I do not talk in theory. I did not like being poor. There are people who will always be poor. I am very glad I am not poor any more but, in relation to that, I want everybody to be as aspirational as they can be, whether it means paying their bills next week or having the opportunity to get on the housing market.

**The Bailiff:** Members of the States, we come to the vote on Amendment 14, proposed by Deputy Ferbrache, seconded by Deputy Helyar. Deputy Inder, would you like a recorded vote?

**Deputy Inder:** I would, sir.

**The Bailiff:** I do apologise, Deputy Queripel, you were slow off the mark there! So there will be a recorded vote on Amendment 14. Greffier, please.

*There was a recorded vote.*

*Carried – Pour 23, Contre 8, Ne vote pas 4, Absent 4*

**POUR**

Deputy Fairclough  
Deputy Ferbrache  
Deputy Gollop  
Deputy Haskins  
Deputy Helyar  
Deputy Inder  
Deputy Mahoney  
Deputy Matthews  
Deputy McKenna  
Deputy Meerveld  
Deputy Moakes  
Deputy Murray  
Deputy Oliver  
Deputy Parkinson  
Deputy Prow  
Alderney Rep. Roberts  
Deputy Taylor  
Deputy Vermeulen  
Deputy Aldwell  
Deputy Blin  
Deputy Brouard  
Deputy de Lisle  
Deputy Dyke

**CONTRE**

Deputy Falla  
Deputy Roffey  
Deputy Soulsby  
Deputy Trott  
Deputy Burford  
Deputy Bury  
Deputy Cameron  
Deputy de Sausmarez

**NE VOTE PAS**

Deputy Kazantseva-Miller  
Deputy Leadbeater  
Deputy Queripel  
Alderney Rep. Snowdon

**ABSENT**

Deputy Gabriel  
Deputy Le Tocq  
Deputy St Pier  
Deputy Dudley-Owen

**The Bailiff:** Well, Members of the States, the voting on Amendment 14, proposed by Deputy Ferbrache, seconded by Deputy Helyar, is as follows: there voted Pour, 23 Members; Contre, 8 Members; 4 abstentions, 4 Members were absent and I declare Amendment 14 duly carried.

Now there will be made available to Members, as soon as it can be prepared, this is not quite a sticky back plastic moment, but a composite set of the Propositions that you are now going to debate generally but let me just run through what has happened. In respect of Proposition 1, there is an insertion at the end from Amendment 12. In respect of Amendments 6, 4 and now 14, there are inserted Propositions 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D.

2840 Proposition 11A has been inserted by Amendment 8. Proposition 13A has been inserted by Amendment 1. Proposition 14B (iii) has been added by Amendment 9. Amendment 15 has been added to by Amendment 3. Proposition 17(i) has been added to by Amendment 8 and Proposition 18 has been inserted by Amendment 11.

2845 So those who have kept up with that know what they are going to be talking about straight away. Those who need the composite set of amendments might want to wait before they speak in general debate. And you will all remember what the Vice-President said on Wednesday morning, that we are now going to build upon.

Who wishes to go first? If there is no ... Deputy Gollop.

2850 **Deputy Gollop:** This Government Work Plan – I have got to get the title right – is at least not only, as Deputy Soulsby and others have identified, more significantly researched and prioritised and resourced but I think probably from a readership point of view, although it is full of appendices, is actually easier to follow because it is perhaps more focused and we do see within them the top 10 recovery actions, although they are still pretty broad: housing, education, skills, digital  
2855 infrastructure, children, population, climate, regeneration, transport and health recovery. With the emphasis on new ways of working, long-term sustainability, effective Government. And also the legislation being hoped for being put across. I will talk about accounts when we get to that probably on another day now.

2860 And that is really good to see. But it is still quite generalised, the priority areas. It does not necessarily provide something that is easily identifiable as something unique because it is the old argument about logical positivism. If you say what the opposite is and you say, 'Can you say that?' is it a rational statement? Because very few governments would say, 'We want to be ineffective. We want lower standards of health or education.'

2865 So it is very much on that level and I suppose my theme today is there is not enough in the Plan or enough emphasis on either the economic direction as a society we wish to move towards, a generation of new industries, preferably low impact but nevertheless improve the kind of situation Deputy Bury and others have talked about of hard-working, young people being stuck almost in a poverty trap, even though they have got good jobs.

2870 And the other thing it does not have and I hope Deputy Queripel will contribute to this, as he always does, it does not really have enough vision on arts and sports and culture. I mean I think we could do a lot more to define Guernsey by that kind of thing and maybe environmental initiatives as well. And that is where the difference comes.

2875 Edinburgh, as a city, is not just the capital of Scotland and a place of banking. It is also world-renowned for its comedy and drama festivals, for example. We have a lot of good work here but we do not seem to really focus on it and that has an impact on tourism as well. So that concerns me and it is rather complicated on what is a priority A and what is a B priority, or one, two, three or whatever the notation is. Because we had a little bit of a mini debate earlier today when Deputy Inder identified that the Moneyval preparations are number 12.

2880 But in many ways, I might contradict something I said earlier, it could arguably be number one because Deputy Trott was spot on, as he always is especially in these matters, that various problems we talk about like connectivity or the cost of housing or land prices or even traffic pollution, are actually, in the scheme of things, relatively minor. They are the problems of success and if we had a collapsing economy and a declining industrial base in whatever we are doing, we would soon have other problems that would be more far-reaching.

2885 And although I might question just how big a resource we need in Moneyval, for example, there is absolutely no doubt that Deputy Prow and others understand fully –

**Deputy Soulsby:** Point of correction, sir.

2890 **The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Soulsby.

**Deputy Soulsby:** I believe that Deputy Gollop is getting confused and I do not think it was helped by Deputy Inder's comments earlier this morning, and I thought Deputy Ferbrache had made it clear that Moneyval is a top priority. It is a must-do action, which we agreed in the GWP in 2021. We put legislation in, accelerated legislation for it and put a lot of money into it. Just because it is number 12, which is just a 'to note', does not mean it is not of value. It is actually a must-do action so I just needed to correct that impression, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Gollop to continue please.

**Deputy Gollop:** Yes, thank you very much.

But I think that raises perhaps the point, Deputy Soulsby clarifying it, of how you actually lead the hierarchy of these things and how you number them because I agree with Deputy Soulsby that it is a very important priority and needs as much resource as we can afford, so that is exactly the point and all the different amendments because people who are sophisticated in these things understand the importance of Moneyval to our economy, professional services and society but it might not necessarily be number one in the media or with the public.

That is the difficulty we have of ensuring we move ahead. Because I agree, again, with Deputy Bury, that I was disappointed that emergency housing had dropped down the list but I understand the reasons for it. In my opinion, emergency housing cannot only be done effectively in Health & Social Care, as I believe they are, working with St Julian's, but it is precisely an issue for the third sector.

Again there is not enough emphasis in this. I mean, I remember, I think it was Rt. Hon. David Cameron who said we need a great society, we need more impact from the third sector and I think maybe to get some of these aims and aspirations and workstreams to go at the fastest point we actually do need to kickstart even more effectively partnerships with the third sector because that indeed might speed up some of these workstreams by being done in a different way.

So I support the report. I am not a great believer in strategic plans, though, because I think priorities frequently change. We live in rapidly moving times and we would be perhaps wiser to have a model whereby, instead of having the Plan, as effectively our collective manifesto, we were more effective at delegating powers to individual groups of States' Members or Committees or agencies that could get on with the job without being hampered by existing procedures.

But I do support the Plan as it is, as amended.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Queripel.

**Deputy Queripel:** Sir, I was going to speak but I am waiting to see the consolidated recommendations, proposals, because I did not pick up on what you said, I am afraid. I did not follow what you said. I was writing a speech.

**The Bailiff:** Are you standing up to deliver a speech now, Deputy Queripel?

**Deputy Queripel:** I suppose I could make it now, sir. Yes, sir. Alright I will make it now.

As Deputy Gollop said when he spoke, there is not enough emphasis put on sport and the arts in the GWP, but that is nothing new. Governments all over the world simply do not get – they *do not get* – the value of sport and the arts to the community. So we are no different.

Yet sport and the arts both generate the feel-good factor and put smiles on people's faces. After all, when do we see people smiling? Do we see them smiling when they leave a presentation on health or housing or tax or education or whatever? No, we do not. Do we see the smiling when they leave a musical or sporting event? Yes, we do.

Now having said that, I have great faith in the Sports Commission and the Sport Strategy and I have great faith in the Arts Commission and the forthcoming Art Strategy. So I do not think there is any more I can say on that and I did not see any need to bring an amendment to this Work Plan

when we have got both of those, one in train, one in action already and one about to be implemented. So I put great faith in both of those and all the volunteers, of course, and all the staff that work at both Commissions.

Sir, I want to talk about the issue of, and Deputy Trott touched on this issue recently when he spoke on Amendment 4, I want to talk about the issue of one person living alone in a large house with redundant bedrooms. I think he said we should seriously consider that whole issue when the Housing Action Plan is laid in front of the States. Now he did not say whether he was going to support that or not and I am not saying this because I am assuming he said he is going to support that sort of Proposition. But I have said what I am about to say in previous Assemblies on more than one occasion but I will say it in this Assembly.

If a Proposition is included in that action plan that asks us to agree to force a homeowner out of a house that does have redundant bedrooms in it I will rally wholeheartedly against that Proposition. What right does any government have to force someone out of the home they paid for and they choose to live surrounded by their memories?

We have heard it said on more than one occasion in this debate that the IDP is your flexible friend. But that flexibility lurches from one extreme to the other. One only has to look at the carbuncle on top of Fort Richmond to realise that and right next door to this building is a brand new, state-of-the-art absolutely amazing building that is, in my opinion, a work of art. I have been paying very close attention to its construction these past few months and it is quite obvious the people who are building it pay very close attention to detail and they are proud of their work.

But the building itself is totally out of keeping with its surroundings and should never have been allowed to have been built there. But it was allowed because it complied with the planning policies for the IDP. So there was no point whatsoever in me objecting to it at any stage because all we ever get to hear is that a planning inquiry will take 18 months to complete and cost about £200,000.

So I very much look forward to the review of the IDP because we will all have an opportunity to feed into it and have our say, hopefully. I said hopefully because is that review really going to happen in this term or are we going to be told a lack of resources meant that it could not be undertaken? I was absolutely amazed when Amendment 12 was passed because, as far as I can see, that will put the DPA in complete disarray and I have actually written a poem entitled *The DPA is in Complete Disarray*. But I am sure everyone would be glad to hear, sir, that I am not going to cite it in this speech, although I may recite it in another speech in the future!

Sir, I served as a Member of the DPA for the vast majority of the last term and at times it was quite dysfunctional, several Members resigning over the term and we were never allowed to settle. I am looking around. I do not quite know how many Members of the DPA we have got in here. I think we have got two. Okay. It is a great shame because I very much hope the current DPA, under the excellent leadership of Deputy Oliver, is settled. We cannot afford it to be unsettled. I wish them well in trying to sort out the mess they have been put in by the Members of the Assembly who voted in favour of Amendment 12.

Sir, I have said it before in my speeches in this Chamber and I will say it again, I do not believe in global warming. I understand there are those who do but they must realise there are also those who do not and I am one of those who do not. And those who do simply have to accept that. So there is no point in trying to browbeat me into submission. They have their views and I have mine. The best thing we can do is agree to disagree.

Having said that, I have no intention of trying to block all of the work that has been done by colleagues in the Assembly and by civil servants behind the scenes. I have no intention of voting against any of the Propositions that relate to it in this Government Work Plan.

Moving back to housing. Some Members have said during the debate on the amendments that the spatial policy on GP11 must be working because several units of affordable housing are now in the pipeline. Well on that point, as we all know, GP11 was introduced five-and-three-quarter years ago and it is finally looking as though it is about to do what it was meant to do.

But five-and-three-quarter years is even longer than Sir Alex Ferguson was allowed to fail as manager of Manchester United before he was given money to go out and buy success. I have always

wanted to say that in a speech, sir! And now that I have I will move towards a close by asking for a recorded vote on Proposition 14A, please, a recorded vote on Proposition 14B. On that issue, sir, are we allowed to separate (i), (ii) and (iii) in 14B?

3000       **The Bailiff:** No, Deputy Queripel, it will be a vote on 14A. If that is lost, then we go onto 14B, but only if it is lost.

**Deputy Queripel:** Ah, okay, sir. Thank you for clarifying that.  
Thank you, sir.

3005

**The Bailiff:** Deputy McKenna.

**Deputy McKenna:** Thank you, Monsieur le Bailli.

3010       If I could speak on 14A, sir. I understand the legislation of cannabis is a hot topic and, as a concerned citizen and father of four, I wanted to write some considerations as to why in my opinion this is a very bad idea. Currently people smoke cannabis at home. It is out of public view because it is illegal. It is a classic case of out of sight, out of mind. It appears not to cause too much issue or offence amongst the community as a whole because it is confined to the indoors.

3015       I am certain that most of the population who think that cannabis is fine to use, it is because they are not confronted by it on a daily basis. Should cannabis be legalised, the general public will suddenly walk through St Peter Port with the stench of cannabis in the air. Cannabis users will be sat outside a café, smoking freely, ruining your lunch –

**Deputy Leadbeater:** Point of correction, sir.

3020

**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Leadbeater. What has Deputy McKenna said that is misleading or inaccurate?

3025       **Deputy Leadbeater:** Deputy McKenna assumes that any adult use cannabis regime would see people sitting outside smoking cannabis but that is not the case, sir. It certainly is not the case in other jurisdictions around the world that have done so. It would still remain illegal to smoke cannabis in public places.

3030       **The Bailiff:** I think, Deputy Leadbeater, one would have to wait and see what is actually coming back. Deputy McKenna to continue.

**Deputy McKenna:** Sir, if I could bring up a point of order, Deputy Leadbeater has an interest in the cannabis industry and is that not a conflict of interest, sir?

3035       **The Bailiff:** If there is a declaration of interest that should be made, it should be made before any Member speaks and certainly before any Member votes on the matter that is covered by it.

3040       **Deputy McKenna:** I do not think this is something that a non-smoker, a non-cannabis user would want for them or for their children. It is a bit like Brexit. People will think it is a great idea until the harsh reality smacks them in the face of what it looks or smells like.

3045       So when they finish their lunch, or their spliff, how will the person get home? Because maybe they will drive their car and the last time I checked there is no current legislation for drug driving because Guernsey legal resources tell me that Section 1 of the drink-drive Law cater for those unfit through drink or drugs, but my research suggests there is a subjective test carried out by a doctor, should one be available, to attend the cells at a police station. So maybe the States can focus on getting relevant legislation in place to combat the wider social issues before they jump on the perceived money train.

Speaking of money, I do not know what the plan for the future is for the States of Guernsey but I assume they will look to corner the market on cannabis and sell it at what they believe is a competitive price. My concern is that whatever price they sell it at, crime groups will undercut that price of cannabis and it will be obtained on the black market more cheaply and a better quality strength because it will be legal to possess and there will be no consequence.

On that note, my biggest fear is organised crime coming to Guernsey and I would hope that the States of Guernsey are not so naïve as to think that legislation of cannabis will not attract drug lords from around the UK and further afield. Guernsey will see criminals, the likes of which they have never experienced before in this Island.

I spent many years in a small little village in the north of Ireland, called Belfast. They used to say, 'Belfast, the place where tourists go for laughs and end up in stitches.' (*Laughter*) How long? Well long enough to be the eight-times champion of all-Ireland and lucky enough to have had 52 international caps for Ireland. So I was there long enough. And I made sure I played in every national loyalist area and wanted to be a champion to all but, believe me, every community was decimated and desecrated through drugs and through organised crime. I am not giving way.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Point of order, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Point of order, Deputy de Sausmarez.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Sir, I do not understand how this relates to the Propositions in front of us. I am reluctant to interrupt Deputy McKenna but we are not debating whether or not to legalise cannabis, we are debating the Propositions set out in the GWP and I am struggling to find relevance in what Deputy McKenna is saying.

**The Bailiff:** I am going to give Members like Deputy McKenna, who is the first to speak on the alternative in Proposition 14 as it is, the opportunity to explain why he would not support moving to Proposition 14B, which is what he is doing. He is setting the scene for that. But once it has been set there will not be the opportunity for other Members to repeat what has already been said by another Member as to why it is not a workstream that should be followed.

Deputy McKenna to continue.

**Deputy McKenna:** Thank you, sir. I have a train of thought to come to.

So as I say, I fear that violent crime will rise and Police will be stretched and Guernsey will become a more unsafe place to live because at present the drug lords use mules because they do not want to be caught. But if cannabis is legal they can set up shop in Guernsey and they can come and go as they please. The drug lords will have a far superior supply of cannabis than the States of Guernsey can ever have. I think it would be incredibly short-sighted to think anything to the contrary and are the States of Guernsey really happy to own that risk?

Now turning thoughts to vulnerable people, at present alcohol is a big issue for those who abuse it and this in turns reverberates to their family and their children. So people speak of cannabis making people mellow, but have we considered what this may look like for young children not properly cared for? Are the States of Guernsey happy to farm out cheap cannabis so lower socio-economic families can have a further addiction to put upon their children? Now whether this risk is something the States of Guernsey want to own on this lifestyle for vulnerable children, I do not think they do.

How will cannabis smoking affect education? Will it have an effect on our children and how their learn? Does a stoned student learn at a better rate than an alert student? While school grounds have always had a non-smoking policy, the students will always ...

My apologies, Monsieur le Bailli, my friend Deputy Trott I have been respectful for you for two years. We had lunch together today – (**The Bailiff:** Deputy McKenna –) One more minute will see me out –

3100 **The Bailiff:** Deputy McKenna, you are not allowed to address another Member directly.

**Deputy McKenna:** My apologies again, Monsieur le Bailli.

**The Bailiff:** I understand. Can I just ask you to pause briefly?

3105 It is important when we are in this Assembly that Members do respect one another. There have been a number of comments during the course of the last few days about people not behaving quite to the high standard that we like Members to behave. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) Now when somebody like Deputy McKenna is on their feet it is important that Members sit and listen, please, to what is being said. But equally, Deputy McKenna, it is not your job, as an individual Member to  
3110 criticise another Member, just as it was not for, I think it was, Deputy Dyke in respect of Deputy de Sausmarez yesterday to do that.

It is my role to control debate. Now we accept that there is a little bit of cut and thrust in something as significant as this. We recognise that some Members do not get up and speak as frequently as some others, who are perhaps more robust if there is chitter chatter going on in the background. Again, that is something that happened earlier today.  
3115

It is really important for all of you, if you want to have a conversation with somebody, the best place to do it is outside the Assembly room. If you want to sit here and listen to what a Member is saying, there can be and there is in a lot of other parliamentary assemblies, a degree of heckling that goes on, but we do not normally operate in that way.

3120 But equally, once you are on your feet, it is up to the Member who is speaking to override what is going on in their minds and to address their comments so those who want to listen to them can take them on board and work out what they want to do about any particular Proposition.

So with that, Deputy McKenna, I invite you to resume but you do need to come back to this either/or option or whether it is just vote against the entirety of Proposition 14, if that is what you  
3125 are speaking to, please.

**Deputy McKenna:** Thank you, sir, and I have nearly finished.

My point, what I was trying to make, was while school grounds have a non-smoking policy, the students have always found a way around it. Cannabis are not just cigarettes because the whole  
3130 issue, if we bring this in, I think it is bringing a vulnerability to our youngsters in the community. I believe there would be a rise in crime to fund certain habits and while pro-cannabis users will tell you that not all drug users go from cannabis to harder drugs, a lot do.

Now, in the 1970s, sir, the cannabis, when it was smoked, had a THC, hallucinogenic value of about 4% and today, if you go to Amsterdam, it is about 60% and the skunk market in the UK, which  
3135 is the high THC cannabis, is 17% and in California you can buy wax dabs at 90%. So there is such a wide range of product. It is extremely dangerous.

I have researched and understand the benefits of medicinal cannabis and I said in my manifesto and I stick by it, I am a believer in medicinal cannabis and CBD oils for the benefit it has to medicine. It is a positive. But also I have researched the psychosis and paranoia that comes with prolonged  
3140 cannabis use (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) and how mental health can deteriorate and on occasions, unfortunately, some turn to suicide.

So what price do the States of Guernsey put on this? The adult mental health system is creaking as it is and I do not think the States of Guernsey would want to put their name to that and the reason I say that, sir, 1998, a friend who became my best friend came to the Island. He was – and I  
3145 want to be careful what I say – I loved the man, he was a doctor, six foot one, tall, handsome, brilliant golfer, life and soul of the party, everybody thought he was amazing. He was born on May 6th the same date that my son was born and, just an incredible individual.

During lockdown he decided, when he had sold up – I want to be careful what I say – he decided he would smoke cannabis. He moved to Belfast and unfortunately he is no longer with us and I will  
3150 be speaking about him at his memorial at the end of the month. He developed psychosis. A brilliant man. I know it will not happen to everybody but it happened to him and the reason why I found it

hard to take is because my own brother smoked cannabis and over the last 20 years has attempted to take his life four times and developed psychosis.

I just do not want the Island that I love, where we open up to the world with the cruise ships, showing the wonderful beaches, the wonderful community that we have, I do not want to see drug tourism. I do not want stag dos and hen nights where they come over and think that this is the way the ... I just do not want our Island to change. That is really it. And because of the pain it has caused me through the people I have loved, I just beg that we do not do it. So, sir, I will be voting against 14B and I will vote for 14A.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Cameron.

**Deputy Cameron:** Thank you, sir.

I thank Deputy McKenna for his speech. The things he talks of is the current situation and the reason that we need regulation. I ask Members to support 14B. Not supporting it will result in the continuation and deepening of the illegal cannabis market, where there are no controls over what toxic substances are being added to cannabis, who it is being sold to and with the proceeds effectively being taken out of our economy as they are not taxable.

That is what will be detrimental to Guernsey, not a well-regulated, transparent and respectable industry that is making positive contributions to the environment, health and economy of Guernsey. We currently have at least 1,000 medical cannabis patients in Guernsey, average monthly prescription costs around £500,000 which equates to £6 million *per annum*, the vast majority of which is going off-Island. Medicann, the largest cannabis clinic in Guernsey has all consultation fees and prescription costs being paid to its Jersey company and therefore not subject to Guernsey tax.

Under the existing regime, Guernsey is therefore losing the opportunity to tax almost £4.5 million in cannabis sales each year, right now. Through you, sir, Deputy Prow reported on BBC Guernsey on Wednesday morning that cannabis is a class B drug for a reason but did not elaborate on what that reason is. Why doesn't that reason apply to the Netherlands? Why doesn't it apply to Canada, Thailand, Georgia, Malta, Mexico, South Africa, Uruguay, Germany and 19 states in the US?

In short, a regulated cannabis industry in Guernsey will supply at least £2 million a year tax revenue stream. It will increase our tourism offer. It will safeguard our children from accessing it on the black market. There are health improvements, job opportunities. Members, we regularly receive emails on the various issues: COVID vaccinations, abortion, Ukraine war, schools, housing, to name a few. Wrongly or rightly, one issue has prompted more emails than any other subject, the liberalisation of the cannabis laws.

These emails were not the frequent, mass copied and pasted messages that we have received on other issues. They were individual and articulately written. Please listen to the people of Guernsey. Please support Proposition 14B. Members are becoming infamous for their can-kicking. Please do not kick this cannabis Proposition down the road.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Inder.

**Deputy Inder:** Sir, thank you.

We are really now talking about the Propositions themselves, aren't we? So in short, sir, I genuinely think this Government Work Plan is in better shape than it was when it started. That is no criticism. We are told time and again this is a Government Work Plan for all of us and all of us have won and all of us have lost something over the past three or four days.

Just with my Economic Development hat on, I am not going to go over the Propositions regarding housing. I think that argument has been well made and I do thank the leads on the Government Work Plan for realising and putting that centre and central to our road to recovery. No homes, no jobs. No homes, no economy. No homes, no key workers. No homes, no real economy. No homes, no incomers to benefit our beautiful Island and our very successful and booming

economy. So that really is quite good news. I think there is a very strong and positive message that has come out of three days of fractious debate.

We are shortly going to have a policy letter, I have been part of a working group, along with Deputy Roffey, Deputy de Sausmarez, Prow, Moakes, a number of our Assembly and anyone else I have probably forgotten – Ferbrache and Deputy Soulsby in places – of a working group that has worked very well. I suspect, and I am happy for Deputy Prow to correct me, fairly shortly we are going to be seeing a draft of that and that indeed will inform what our future Population Strategy is going to look like and it will be within the next couple of months, something that we will again be debating.

We have got housing and population, two key features of this Island's future, embedded at priority one, also Proposition 1 and Proposition 2. All the right message. I am fairly sure the bit that we have not discussed is the skills and human capital. I am under no doubt at some point through general debate Deputy Kazantseva-Miller will give us a piece on that, but just for a bit of background there is some great work run by Deputy Sam Haskins, Deputy Kazantseva-Miller as lead and the Committee is getting sight of it shortly.

It looks in fairly good shape, both Committees have to go through it. Again, that will be presented, I do not know if it is by policy letter, it may or may not be by policy letter, depending on the outcome of the joint committees, but it is in fairly good shape so that is great news. Housing, population skills, we are all heading in the right direction.

I am not going to talk generally about areas I do not know an awful lot about but I am going to talk briefly about 14A. I do not really particularly want the cannabis debate now but what I am going to do is I will be voting down 14A and voting for 14B but, genuinely because that debate, I honestly believe needs to happen, there has to be some kind of output. It just needs to happen.

I am a great believer ... and I have got to be careful what I say now without wanting to turn the rest of this afternoon into the cannabis debate. In my view, prohibition has never worked particularly on practically on anything but that does not mean we have to unleash the dogs of absolutely everything; but I am of a fairly strong view that I will never, ever, vote for anything that looks like Amsterdam. Nothing. I think Deputy Prow made an argument that in any debate later, Economic Development has a role in it. It certainly does.

Something that is fairly, I would not say unorthodox, certainly a controversial policy letter, does have to take into consideration the views of the finance industry, the reputation of Guernsey and obviously tourism. I certainly do not want, through you, sir, to Deputy McKenna, anything that looks like Guernsey being turned into some kind of drug destination. But if there are sensible people who want to quietly do sensible things within the bounds of their own homes without fear of prosecution, I think that is reasonable.

I would also say that, given that we have a medicinal cannabis regime, currently I believe we are getting most of the product via Jersey, I think that is correct, possibly. That is correct so I have got some nods from the floor at the moment. It does not seem unreasonable to me that those who want to do something in the confines of their own home, without going down the route of turning this into a product, which effectively is marketed as the new great thing, a sensible solution is not unreasonable.

So in that regard, I will be voting down 14A – I was never a huge fan of it in the first place – and voting for 14B. Again, I am not going to make a great argument but the only minor criticism I have got, and I believe it is four Members of HSC who want 14B over 14A, still I am getting nods from the corner, so I am still on the right tracks. I am not entirely sure why we need a ... My guess, to be perfectly honest with you, is that of the four, they are all sensible cats, they probably know what regime they want and what it is likely to look like and what that policy letter could look like. They either want the whole Californian model, or they may want the Tenerife model, they may want the Canadian model, they may want the Maltese model. They may want all points in between.

But I do often wonder if we do not go through this process of pretending to have a review, one of which some objectives will be set, and then really the politicians behind it actually know the place they want to be. It might be a slightly more – I do not want to use the word, I will be careful what I

use ... I just wish sometimes we would stop playing this game of pretending we are going to have a review when some of the politicians may know exactly where they want to be today.

So if I do vote for 14B, do not bring back Amsterdam. Do not bring Amsterdam to this Assembly because I will not support it, in any way, shape or form. Whatever the four of HSC want to do, I will support you now but I guarantee I may not support you tomorrow. And on that, sir, that is the end of what I have got to say on the matter but in the main I would thank the Assembly for the three, maybe three-and-a-half, four days of debate. I do think Policy & Resources have done a good job and it is now effectively, depending on how the vote goes today, it is now the whole of the Assembly's Government Work Plan.

Thank you.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Aldwell.

**Deputy Aldwell:** Thank you, sir.

I am going to be speaking on 14A and B, thank you.

Back in May, Deputy Bury gave a statement to the BBC, which made me question how or if we could protect our children by legalising or regulating cannabis. Deputy Bury, Vice-President of HSC, stated on the BBC interview, 'I think the regulated approach actually helps, making sure that children cannot access it like with do with alcohol and tobacco and makes sure the quality of all the chemicals in it are at the right levels.'

The officers, right across Home Affairs and HSC, have written a document on the use of cannabis and its effects. They have gained knowledge from years of experience across their Committees' mandates and other jurisdictions, which was attached to this amendment. It was reported in the *Bailiwick Express* that Deputy Leadbeater was quoted as saying that the document was the biggest crock of nonsense, so I thought I should do my own research.

When my husband and I remodelled our house 10 years ago, we were looking for air source heat pumps and solar panels. I did not go to the producers or the retailers of the product but I knocked on the door at a neighbour's house who lived and worked with the product and had data on its effectiveness for the previous five years, which was invaluable. An honest appraisal knowing they were not trying to sell me a product.

I recall, back in the summer of 2020 on the election trail, I took a route inland from Vazon and I came upon a very nice house where the door was answered by a Scottish gentleman. What he told me I shall relay. The house I had come upon was actually a home for children in care and he was a social worker.

He told me he came from a village outside of Edinburgh and he explained why he moved to Guernsey with his family. He said: 'If you are elected and do only one thing in your time as Deputy, make sure you do not legalise drugs. If you allow drugs on this beautiful Island, it will destroy it, as it has in every small community outside the cities in Scotland. It sucks the lifeblood out of the community, it turns vibrant communities into waste land, it takes away the ambition from our young people and it stops their productivity. Jobs are lost, country lines are formed by gangs and vulnerable children are recruited and exploited and all those who say it will not happen, it most certainly will.'

He explained with a passion why he had come to an Island, because we have a zero tolerance on drugs and his family were safe. He no longer wanted to bring up his family in Scotland. He commented what a wonderful place the Island is and how we should appreciate how safe this Island was from major crime and to count our blessings.

He had seen first-hand, as a social worker, families' lives and children's lives destroyed, working in villages outside Edinburgh. In a new study published on 1st October 2021 in a psychology medicine research, the University of Birmingham's Institute for Mental Health and the Institute of Applied Health Research found a strong link between general practice recorded cannabis use and mental ill health in one of the largest cohorts ever explored.

Using primary data drawn from the medical research database, the researchers found, following the first recorded use of cannabis, patients were three times more likely to develop common mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. In addition, they were almost seven times more likely to develop severe mental health illness such as psychosis or schizophrenia.

The data set included records from 787 GP practices around the UK, gathered over a 23-year period between 1995 and 2018. The researchers were able to include data from 28,000 patients who had a recorded exposure to cannabis. These were matched against 56,000 patients who had not been using cannabis and controlled sex, age, smoking status and other relevant characteristics.

While the link between cannabis use and severe mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and psychosis is well-researched, the association had been less clear between cannabis use as is described in the patient's GP record and other more common types of mental illness such as depression and anxiety.

Sir Robin Murray is an esteemed professor at King's College London. In the early 2000s, Murray contributed to research which illustrated a link between cannabis and mental health in adolescence. He said he was concerned that some liberal-minded parents would rather see their children smoking pot than drinking alcohol, without appreciating the dangers. Other studies have also collaborated this, including one published by a team overseen by Murray in the *Lancet Psychiatry* 2019.

Murray is part of the NHS clinic in England dedicated to cannabis smokers with psychosis. This clinic is based in Maudsley Hospital in South London. Shifts in policy made on cannabis more available in other countries, decriminalisation of cannabis in Portugal in 2001 was followed by a large increase in cannabis-induced psychosis, according to research published in the *International Journal of Methods of Psychiatric Research*.

Murray quoted hospitalisation with diagnosis of psychosis disorders he had seen risen 30-fold from 20 in 2010 to 590 in 2015. The compound THC had risen from 3% to 10% in Europe and northern America. Beatriz Carlini, a research scientist at the University of Washington Addiction Drug and Alcohol Institute, said:

Relaxed rules on cannabis are a psychosis timebomb. What voters had approved a decade ago was not what was being sold on the pharmacy shelves today. We thought we were legalising something and we were legalising something else. In Colorado, public health reports suicide with cannabis in their system for 20-24-year-olds had risen from 18% in 2013 to 35% in 2018. Doubling. Though cannabis is legal for over-21s, cannabis use for 12-year-olds and over is 19.4%. Supporters of the policies pointed to billions of dollars in tax revenue but what we are looking at is a mental health crisis.

Sir Robin Murray stated in one of his lecture podcasts:

We were told back in the day that there was no problem to health with tobacco. It was advertised everywhere for decades and now we are told the same for cannabis. Medical cannabis is good for us. It will cure all ills.

Murray explained that he envisaged the legalisation would take the problem out of the hands of law enforcement and give the problem squarely in the hands of the mental health hospital services. As a Member of the Children and Young People's Board for the past few months, representing Home Affairs, working with the Children's Law, being given an understanding of the real problems of vulnerable children who go through our tribunal and court system, trying to do all we can to protect these children, especially those with safeguarding issues and in our care, working with teams of people who protect their vulnerable young people along with the third sector, who go into our schools to advise against drugs and alcohol to our students under-25, whose brain development can be severely impaired by drugs and alcohol use.

We also know parental substance use is in itself is identified as one of the factors that increases the vulnerability of a child to abuse and neglect. This is seen locally, where data tells us that the majority of children on the Child Protection Register are so due because of parental substance use. There are concerns by Law Enforcement that the further widening of availability of cannabis on-Island through the decriminalisation or legislation would increase the risk of cannabis because they become more available to acquisition by children and young people.

A research study in New Zealand has shown that cannabis' negative effects on attention, memory and learning can last for days or weeks after the acute effect of drugs wear off, depending on the person's history with the drugs. Consequently, someone who smokes cannabis daily may be functioning at a reduced intellectual level most of the time.

Considerable evidence suggests that students who smoke cannabis have poorer educational outcomes than the non-smoking peers. For example, a review in 48 relevant studies found cannabis use to be associated with reduced educational attainment. A recent analysis use of data from three studies in Australia and New Zealand, found that adolescents who use cannabis regularly were significantly less likely than the non-using peers to finish high school or attain a degree. They also had much higher chance of developing dependence upon other drugs and attempting suicide.

Nora Volkow, Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, United States Federal Government:

Changes in cannabis policies across states legalising cannabis for medical or recreational use suggest that cannabis is gaining greater acceptance in our society. Thus it is particularly important for people to understand what is known about the adverse health effects because cannabis impairs short-term memory and judgement, distorts perception. It can impair performance in school or at work and make it dangerous to drive. It also affects the brain systems that are still maturing through young childhood so regular use by teens may have negative and lasting effects on cognitive development, putting them at a competitive disadvantage and possibly interfering with their wellbeing in other ways. Also, contrary to popular belief, cannabis can be addictive and in use during adolescence may ... other forms of problems use ... addiction more likely.

Horatio Clare wrote a book about his experiences and he wrote a piece for *The Times*:

There is a dirty, deadly and open secret about cannabis, in writing about a breakdown where cannabis was key, a desperate story is almost always told by distraught parents. My child had a breakdown due to cannabis. He is sectioned and now on medication. What can we do? Thousands of sufferers and their families will be unsurprised by Sir Robin Murray's assertion that cannabis causes catastrophic mental distress. As a culture, we knew it for decades. I knew it even when I played roulette with it. Over the course of two months I rose through hypermania to mania, to full-blown delusion. I held wildly fanatical beliefs about conspiracies, worldwide peace and aliens. I drove my car off the road. I was sectioned and detained in a psychiatric hospital in West Yorkshire. There was one occasion where every man on our ward raised a voice in agreement, when someone said, 'Cannabis messed me up.' You do not know the chamber is loaded for your child until they pull the trigger.

My research does not give me confidence that we can protect our children from harm by legalising and regulating cannabis.

Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Meerveld.

**Deputy Meerveld:** Thank you, sir.

The Government Work Plan is a vast improvement on what we had last term and I think it is improving with each annual iteration and I think it will continue to improve. So I am very happy with the process and I will be supporting the vast majority of Propositions. I will not be supporting Proposition 18, which was inserted by Amendment 11, for the reasons I gave in debate.

But I would ask that under 18C, the arithmetic hierarchal scoring system be brought back to this Assembly before it is implemented for us to scrutinise and discuss because, having been the managing director/CEO of investment research companies in America and Asia, I know how statistics can be manipulated or can give false results, depending on how they are applied and I would certainly want this Assembly to agree the methodology being applied to this survey of Members, particularly as it is then going to be published and put in the public domain and potentially influence our prioritisation of projects. So I will just say that. I will not be voting for 18 but I do hope that 18C, that arithmetic hierarchal scoring system needs to be approved by this Assembly before it is implemented.

And then we come onto the other one I am having difficulty with, Proposition 14. I regret the way it has been formatted because it is going to force me to vote against A and support B. People may be surprised that I am doing that. Let me just explain my background and my approach to this.

3390 At 14, my peer group started smoking and tried to pressure me to smoke. But being analytical even at that age, I looked at it and thought, well, if I try cigarettes, what is the best thing that can happen? I do not like them and do not want to smoke them again. What is the worst thing that could happen? I like them, get addicted, waste a lot of money and damage my health. That philosophy, so I have never ever in my life tried a cigarette, cigar or a vape or anything like that.

3395 Equally with drugs. I have gone out and done some incredible things in my life, including nearly getting myself killed on more occasions than I can remember but I never saw the point in drugs, even though I have lived in environments awash with them. I lived in Thailand for several years. Both my sons were born there, where drugs could be bought from the corner shop. I never bothered trying them because I had always wanted to get the best out of life. I did not see any point in distorting it. I also was wary of the health implications.

3400 So I am not one who wants to try drugs, ever have wanted to try drugs and so have been passing that message on to my children. But the fact is that drugs are in our environment. They are not going away. The regulatory environment has not stopped it. We do have people who are raising this as an issue and I believe this is a conversation we need to have. Like Deputy Inder, I am never  
3405 ever going to support the idea of Guernsey becoming a new Amsterdam. But I do have concerns, I would like to see decriminalisation of small quantities because I also do not want to see one of my sons caught with a spliff in their pocket and having a criminal record.

I know that Home have assured us that nobody is being put into prison for holding small amounts. But it is not just going to prison. Having a criminal record for a drugs conviction can affect  
3410 your ability to travel internationally, your future employment prospects, university prospects, etc. It can have a life-changing impact and –

I will give way to Deputy Prow.

**Deputy Prow:** I thank Deputy Meerveld for giving way.

3415 I just think I should make it clear now, on the back of what Deputy Meerveld has said, in the Government Work Plan there is already in progress, between Home Affairs and Health & Social Care, a comprehensive study and review about the alternative punitive arrangements, which relate to the interaction between the criminal justice system and health.

3420 That is already in progress. That is yet to report. It is yet to report but it is being discussed in Committee. It is absolutely supported by the Committee *for* Home Affairs and the issue that Deputy Meerveld raises is already under consideration. What 14B is, is another matter altogether. It is about legalisation. I hope, when I speak in debate, I can perhaps clear that up.

3425 What I am saying in response to what Deputy Meerveld is saying here is that the alternatives about proposals about people with the possession of small amounts of drugs and diverting them away from the criminal justice system is work in train and supported by the Committee *for* Home Affairs.

Thank you, sir, and I thank Deputy Meerveld for giving way.

3430 **Deputy Meerveld:** I am very glad to hear that indeed because that is what I believe is the critical piece of work. But I think the broader conversation about legalisation, as I say, I am not going to support turning Guernsey into a new Amsterdam, but I am inclined to support Proposition B to have that explored and that conversation held.

3435 Also, I am disappointed by the way 14 is formatted because, to me, 'Vote for A, COVID-related regulations to deal with a future pandemic or only in the event that Proposition 14A is not approved, then look at 14B' that is a rather blatant attempt to bury the second piece of work. I would have thought it was a much more open approach if 14A had just been 14 and 14B had become effectively Proposition 15 or a separate Proposition. Because then the States could have made a clear directive on both.

3440 As I say, unfortunately, to support B, people have to vote down A. There is no other way around it. I will leave it at that. But as I say, I think I have made my position clear. I have never taken drugs. I am going to encourage my children never to take drugs. But the fact is they exist in the community and, again, we talk about addictiveness and the damage it does, look at the damage that cigarettes do and the cost to our health system and to people's lives, and alcohol addiction as well. There are a lot of substances in our society, you know. Look at the arguments to try and tax sugar, the sugar  
3445 intake or salt. There are a lot of things that, unfortunately, as human beings, we get addicted to and consume in excess that have negative impacts. Drugs is just one of them. They are in our Island, they are not going to go away and we need to have a broader conversation about it.

Thank you, sir.

3450 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Bury.

**Deputy Bury:** Thank you, sir.

Firstly, I would like to extend my thanks to Deputy Soulsby for taking some time out of her very busy diary, I think it was last week but we have been in here quite a long time now, so I have lost  
3455 track of time. But she spent that time with me going through the GWP with quite detailed questions that I had and that was really useful to help me understand some of the minutiae and prepare for debate.

There were some discrepancies that I found, or conflicting information, and I am going to just go through a few of those. Not to nit-pick, I absolutely understand that we have exceptionally busy  
3460 and overworked humans working on this so there is inevitably going to be human error but just to clarify them to ensure that when we, hopefully, vote most of this through that those things are clarified.

I found a slight discrepancy around the Nature Commission. It was an area I was very supportive of so when I read in 4.12 that this had been established I was very pleased. However in the Appendix  
3465 3 framework it said that we were 'exploring' a Nature Commission. So I thank Deputy Soulsby for coming back to me confirming this is well underway in terms of a proposed model and was essentially in the middle of a process of tidying up budget bits.

There are also a lot of references to designing and implementing a scheme for the funding of medical treatment for Guernsey and Alderney residents travelling in the UK and this confused me  
3470 because obviously there has been a lot discussed recently about the very welcome reciprocal health agreement, that looks to be on the way, and this very much looked like an overlap to me and I think, if I have understood correctly, Deputy Soulsby confirmed to me that that is a Resolution that remains extant currently but will fall away on the implementation of the reciprocal health agreement.

In Appendix 8, the Funding and Investment Plan, in annex three of that, there are no page  
3475 numbers, unfortunately, but some of the numbers in the tables there do not quite add up. One of those related to the COVID review. It was in the table as 40 but in the total column as 100, We have had it confirmed that it is 40.

And then over the page, the implementation of the Nasen SEND review figure in the total column is 640 less than the figures actually total and that meant that the overall total in the figure for that  
3480 table was incorrect.

And on the next page, the line total for the implementation system, the implementation of a system to reduce backlogs and waiting times in HSC, which, certainly I am very happy to report and I know Deputy McKenna will be pleased to hear, now that we do not have lots of COVID cases and delayed discharges in hospital, that scheme is well underway and having a positive impact on the  
3485 waiting list.

But those figures do not tally correctly and I believe that might be because the total has not taken into account the savings that have been made on that projected figure. So, those were the things that I just wanted to pick out and, as I said, it was not to be picky or nit-pick, it was just obviously, if we are signing it off as it is, it is just recognising that those are incorrect and errors,  
3490 rather than accurate.

But I will move onto the big one, that I expect everyone will expect me to discuss, 14A and B. I agree with Deputy Meerveld – I am doing that a lot recently – it is a real shame that these two have been pitted against each other, sir. They are both important pieces of work and I hope that showcases the amount of important work that HSC has on its plate and all of the important work yet to be done and because the subject of cannabis is clearly quite divisive, it has unfortunately left the Public Health Law review in the shadows somewhat and I am not going to do much to help that, unfortunately.

I am going to refer back to what I said in my speech, in Amendment 10, and try to draw focus onto what the Proposition actually says, and that is to direct HSC to develop a schedule of work and resource requirements necessary to enable the review to take place. The more detailed description of the work, which can be found in Appendix 5, at 1.27, explains this further by saying:

The Committee would then bring forward, through the 2023 GWP Refresh, its recommendation on whether to proceed or not, together with the terms of reference and timeframe for a review, outlining its objectives and benefits and its resourcing requirements for consideration against competing areas of policies by the States.

So, if 14B were approved, it would not direct HSC to begin undertaking an actual review, but to pull together what the review should look like, what it should cover, what questions it would need to answer and what resources would be required to do that. And importantly what its aims should be and, having spoken with our Public Health team, they informed us that they would have capacity to do this scoping early next year.

I think it is important, sir, to just debunk something that Deputy Brouard said yesterday: this does not mean them not working on things such as our screening programmes, because they have identified that they have capacity. It did not say they would have to drop something.

So anyway, having spoken with them, they confirmed that this scoping work would include creating a robust list of the considerations that would need to be included in any review. The type of unintended consequences and, importantly, the different regimes to consider that we would need to look at. And just to Deputy Inder's point, I can confirm to him, he is not in the Chamber but I am sure he is listening intently outside, that, as far as I am concerned, the majority in HSC who favour this piece of work do not have a collective view on a particular regime. It is not a discussion we have had. It really is that we would just like to push this conversation forward.

So it would also need to consider things like stakeholder consultation and what that would look like and a whole other host of suggestions. So, as I said yesterday, one good thing that I took from the report appended to the not-laid amendment was that it had almost begun that work. It asked these sorts of questions, such as what are the health risks, what are the views of Islanders, what are the implications for regarding external obligations, etc.?

This is exactly the type of thing that would need to be included in what would be brought back to the Assembly. So to be clear, the Proposition does not direct the Committee to come back with the answers. It directs the Committee to come back with the questions: the full list of questions that then, if agreed or amended by this Assembly, would be resourced to be answered.

So that in mind, having a wide-ranging conversation about the pros and cons, harms, benefits etc. at this junction is really jumping the gun by quite some way and it is irresponsible to have without having the proper information in front of us and when I discussed this with Deputy Ferbrache at lunch yesterday, I am trying my utmost to model that behaviour but I feel it will be in vain.

But some Members have chosen to put out opinion and information to specifically support their opinion, so then it is inevitable that other Members are going to want to counter that argument with their different opinion. So we find ourselves, unfortunately, having the debate without the scope of work having even been agreed, let alone started and completed. So I am attempting to stay away from it and I will do my best to model that behaviour, although it will not be followed, I imagine.

Leading on from that, I would like to pick up on some of the comments made in the media by Members, which are very much aimed at HSC and I think it is important to dispel those and explain

3540 our thinking on it. The first of the comments that I have picked out and took a little bit of umbrage with was that it was out of leftfield. I do not see how that can be. Many Members will have had this conversation before and part three of the original Resolution, which read:

... to explore the potential for moving from a regime covered by the criminal Law towards a partly or wholly regulated approach to all aspects of drug use ...

3545 – was made last term and it remains extant. So that means it has been on the books for quite some years now and it was reconfirmed by this Assembly as remaining extant, not rescinded. So still to be worked on at some point. That is not out of leftfield.

The second of those comments was to say that this is being shoehorned in and not respecting the GWP process and I have to disagree with that, sir. This process we are taking is the GWP refresh. 3550 I mentioned this yesterday, so I will not labour the point too much but it is an opportunity to review what was included originally and amend it and HSC have simply taken that opportunity to legitimately ask the States to consider including this piece of work.

And the final comment I want to pick up that was made in the media, sir, is the scaremongering and it has been reiterated today that Guernsey is about to become Amsterdam. I believe this was 3555 meant in the negative. However there are plenty of positives about a bustling city with a plethora of museums and art galleries, a thriving tourist scene and more bikes than you can shake a stick at. But that is actually by the by.

The point I want to make on this is that Amsterdam has a decriminalised market and that is very different to a partly or wholly regulated market, which is what is suggested to be explored in the 3560 extant Resolution that we are working to. A decriminalised market leaves the product, quality, accessibility and financial gains firmly in the hands of criminals and a regulated market allows Government and industry to take control of those things.

But here I find myself doing exactly what I said I was not going to. I really want to focus Members' minds on what they are being asked to vote for in Proposition 14B, which as I have said, is to scope 3565 the work.

And to explain HSC's rationale, which was by a majority, we took the opportunity to suggest this work to be included in the GWP, sir, based on the fact that ultimately the scheduling of controlled drugs sits squarely in its mandate. There is no doubt that if progressed then further down the line this work would be wide-ranging and cross-Committee. Of course it would and HSC is not 3570 attempting to make any bones about that.

However, for the starting point, it makes sense for HSC – I am not going to give way – to be the Committee to bring it forward based on that mandate.

Sir, the amendment that was never laid and even more so the supporting report has propelled the debate far further along than it should be at this stage and, whilst some have suggested that 3575 this matter is not important to the community or only to a vocal minority, I beg to differ. The question on our views on cannabis was included in almost every set of questions that we received during the run up to the election and we have received many contacts from the public on the subject since our term began. So I do not see how anyone can be under any other illusion that there was most definitely an expectation from the community that this matter would be progressed this term and those in the community that expected that were right to because there is an extant Resolution 3580 directing us to do so. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

So in summary on this matter, sir, I would like to say to Members, through you, that this is a conversation that is happening worldwide, with several countries having already made a move to a more liberal approach and many more considering doing so. And even though we here in Guernsey 3585 are small in scale, we should not be small in mindset. If we want to show ourselves as the mature and internationally respected jurisdiction that we are then we should be moving with the times and joining the conversation too. We cannot stick our fingers in our ears, close our eyes and shout, 'La, la, la, la' any longer. Members can rest assured that that is not going to make it go away.

Thank you, sir.

3590 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Prow.

**Deputy Prow:** Thank you, Mr Bailiff.

I would like to speak to several of the Propositions but, sir, I will start with Proposition 14A and 14B. I just really want to bring the Assembly back around to what we are actually discussing here. It is a Government Work Plan. It is about prioritising what we need to be doing. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) It is about precious resources. It is about not being distracted. It is about being disciplined in how we go about our business; not just money, but money is very important, but sharing the very limited resources we have.

Whether it is the resources to do the huge mandate of Health & Social Care or whether it is, in the case of Home Affairs, all the different services of Home Affairs and across all the Committees. It is a Government Work Plan about cross-Committee working. *Cross-Committee working*. This has been endorsed. Deputy Soulsby has said, how can we make an evidence-based decision on something we know little about?

Also an expression about expressing a view that decisions should not be made behind closed doors. So that is what we should have uppermost in our mind. What is the most important work we need to do, setting this out in this plan for 2023 and beyond. That is what I would ask Members to focus their minds on and, in particular, in relation to 14 and 14B.

I listened very carefully to Deputy Bury's speech. She speaks very eloquently, so it is easy to pick up the points. I also listened carefully to what Deputy Cameron had to say. I just want to pick up a point around the idea that 14B relies on a previous decision of the States because what it actually says in 14B, and I appreciate the fact that Deputy Bury has gone into some sort of explanation that 14B actually really means do not worry, we are not going to become the Amsterdam of the British Isles. If that is the quote, she is referring to me, that is the quote that I made, the 'Amsterdam of the British Isles'. That is what I said and it was absolutely specific to 14B.

3615 The actual extant Resolution says:

The Committee for Health & Social Care and the Committee for Home Affairs shall report back to the States with options for alternative and non-punitive approaches to possession and use of small quantities of illegal drugs, including but not limited to cannabis, as soon as the resources are available, as established by the Government Work Plan, which would take into account the need to promote health ...

– Deputy Aldwell made a speech around health concerns –

... wellbeing and safety of people who use drugs and of the wider community too. Any evidence collected, including the commissioned independent report on the review of the interaction of health and justice system in relation to the possession of drugs for personal use ...

3620 Well, I have not heard much about that, sir. I have not really heard much about that. It is a report that came out last term. It was commissioned by the Committee I sat on then, which was Health & Social Care. And sir, it goes on:

The potential for moving from a regime governed by criminal law towards a partly or wholly regulated approach to the aspects of personal use of drugs ...

That is not what 14B says; 14B does not say that:

The results of consultation with the community and key stakeholders in respect of such alternative options.

3625 Sir, what we are being asked to do here is – and I have the report with me that I have referred to, from Professor Sumnall, what we are being asked to do here is – something different, something very different.

To enable the review ...

To be clear, sir, in relation to point one.

3630

To enable the review of the legal status of cannabis to be undertaken.

The first the Committee *for* Home Affairs got wind of this was when we were approached by the BBC to do interviews around something that we had no knowledge was actually taking place and that is my references where this has come from leftfield.

3635 Sir, the position is actually this. I will just refer to the notes that I made on this, sir. Yes, sir. The Government Work Plan position, emphatically agreed by HSC and relayed to Home Affairs was that the project was the non-punitive approaches initiative, which focused on exploring policy options by diversion and deferral. This is some of the things that Deputy Bury is trying to persuade us is what is in section 14B. This is work that is already ongoing. Sir, this project on the non-punitive approaches, was focused on exploring options for diversion and deferral and furthermore it was the  
3640 subject of a joint media release by both the Committee *for* Home Affairs and HSC back in March. It clearly stated, and I quote:

Decriminalisation and/or legalisation of illegal drugs are not under consideration as part of this project.

So some of the thrust that Deputy Bury is talking about is and it is in the Work Plan.

3645 So, sir, this is why there is angst between HSC and Home Affairs. Without consultation with Home Affairs, by a majority, HSC has managed, at the eleventh hour, to slip in to an updated Plan a Proposition which is completely un-scoped or costed and which would kickstart the process of changing the legal status of cannabis.

3650 The Resolution does not talk about the legal status of cannabis. It is talking about our Drug Strategy in the round. And I have said that basically we had to tease out, through a series of correspondence with both Health & Social Care, and P&R, to tease out what this was all about. This is making policy, keeping people in the dark. This is not cross-Committee working. This is not what the Government Work Plan is about. So, sir, that puts us in a very bad place.

3655 I would like to, because it is part of the original policy, I would like to talk about Professor Sumnall's report. If you bear with me, I will just see where it is in my notes, sir. Yes, sir. Professor Sumnall, in the report, what he does is he does not make any recommendations at all. What he does is he makes concluding remarks and these concluding remarks outline a number of alternatives, which include doing nothing, Police-led diversionary measures, alternative punitive approaches and the option is already contained within the Government Plan and supported by both HSC and Home, and decriminalisation of drug possession.

3660 It is abundantly clear that these alternative options are not ones that work together in tandem with each other. It is very clear in Section 11 of this report, that that is not the case. The dictionary definition of 'alternative' says:

Able to be done or used instead of something else.

3665 So the suggestion that a review of the legal state of cannabis remains an extant Resolution is not actually the case. So, sir –

**Deputy Matthews:** Point of correction, sir, if I may.

**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Matthews.

3670

**Deputy Matthews:** Yes, sir.

If I may just clarify, it may help Deputy Prow out. The Sumnall Report compared the approaches to illegal drugs taken by various jurisdictions in the British Isles and across Europe and of course at the time the report was written there were no European jurisdictions, which had taken a legalisation

3675 approach; USA had and Canada had but that was not part of the scope of the Sumnall Report when it was written.

Now the Resolution which Deputy Prow was talking about does mention a legally, fully regulated environment and that is why it was not included in the non-punitive approaches project and fell out of the back of that.

3680 Thank you, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Deputy Prow to continue, please.

**Deputy Prow:** Thank you, sir, and I thank Deputy Matthews for his comment.

3685 But the Professor Sumnall Report, what it actually does is – and there is quite a lot of research in that around looking at what is happening in other jurisdictions and including some European jurisdictions – and that is the evidence upon which the original Resolution that the majority of HSC is relying on.

3690 What I am saying is that Professor Sumnall does not come to any conclusion and certainly what is not in this report in any way, shape or form, is singling out cannabis. He does not do that and there is no recommendation, conclusion or even his concluding remarks, is he suggesting that we should be just singling out one Class B drug, cannabis, and legalising it.

3695 What he is talking about, and it is entitled *Review of the Interaction of Health and Justice System in Relation to Possession of Drugs for Personal Use*. So, sir, just to perhaps bring my comments to a conclusion. I will not repeat the messages in the speeches of Deputy Aldwell – may I say that was in my view an excellent speech, around the changes around psychosis. I am not going to repeat that. They have been very powerfully made.

3700 So, sir, I would just like to bring out some of the points in the report that was presented to the Committee for Home Affairs, and Members have had a chance to read that, and it does tease out the questions. What are the health risks for children and young people? Will we need to strengthen education on the risks of substance use to counteract messages implied by legalisation that cannabis consumption is okay? Would criminal activity associated with illegal drugs increase? What are the implications for Law Enforcement? Does decriminalisation or legalisation of a controlled drug align with the Justice Framework?

3705 What are the interfaces with the cannabis horticultural industry and the existing MOU with the Home Office? What are the implications for the relationships overall with the UK government, other nations and international conventions and treaties? What are the reputational considerations to the States of Guernsey, the finance sector, business, tourism, Locate Guernsey and the Island as a whole? Indeed, what are Islanders' opinions?

3710 Introducing the either/or option into the Government Work Plan has, I am afraid, sparked off a debate, and we have, unlike a requête, it is like sliding a requête into the middle of the Government Work Plan. We have no policy letter, we have no guidance. What we do have is the Professor Sumnall Report, which I do not think very many Members of the Assembly have actually read. But we do not have any guidance, any policy letter, and we are being asked to prioritise that at a time when we have COVID, where we are recovering from COVID, we have got inflation going up to 11%, so we are told, we have got post-Brexit, Moneyval has got a mention.

3715 But, no, what we want to do without any prior policy letter, what we want to do is to go ahead and start scoping and the terms of reference on legalisation of cannabis. This is not even looking at the drug situation in the round and looking at our strategies around tobacco, strategies around alcohol. No, we want to distract what we are doing away from that.

3720 The Government Work Plan policy in Appendix 6 actually outlines Policy & Resources' observations around HSC's submission, which are relevant to this amendment. Section 1.43, referring to the pandemic Resolution, whilst noting HSC's view about urgency, it says:

Nevertheless, the Policy & Resources Committee understands there are risk mitigation benefits in scoping the work to develop new legislation, as a new Law would more easily support activity where use of emergency regulations will not be an option.

3725 That relates to 14A. Sir, how quickly have we forgotten the trauma and the enormous financial burden of the last two years and efforts to cope with an unprecedented global epidemic and the admirable support from Public Health?

Sir, we had a policy letter on that. This was discussed in the States. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) It was a matter of great concern to some Members of this Assembly and it was pursued. But now, 3730 given a choice, we seem to have forgotten all that and that urgency. So we are giving this very strange option to choose between that and scoping a project to legalise cannabis, not around the original premise of looking at non-punitive approaches and diverting people away from the criminal justice system for the possession of small amounts of drugs.

That is where this started, that is what is in the Government Work Plan and that is what we can 3735 do. I would say to Deputy Meerveld, and to Deputy Inder, all those things that they are talking about can be done within the scope of what is already in here without having to go to 14B. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

It is also interesting, what P&R also say at section 1.40, which I think is relevant. It acknowledges Home Affairs' strong and unanimous representations around this Proposition, 14B. They only know 3740 about these objections through the correspondence that we wrote, once this had been a matter, and there was a matter of a leaked letter to the BBC, and we entered into correspondence with HSC and P&R, asking what was going on, basically. That is how they know there are strong and unanimous representations. That is what it refers to. It comments at 1.40:

The States of Guernsey will be stretched to support this additional area of cross-Committee policy development given the other actions set out in the GWP, especially with respect to managing Brexit ...

3745 And I will not go over that again:

Additionally, it has not been identified as a current and pressing matter by any other Committee that would be significantly involved. Furthermore, there are concerns that legalisation will require a regulatory function that will need to be established through legislation, and resourced ...

I completely agree with P&R and I thank them sincerely for this comment but of course wonder in the light of that comment why 14B appears at all and, as it does appear, why we are given an alternative option.

3750 So, sir, as far as this Proposition is concerned, I will be supporting 14A. I listened to the debate at the time and I read the policy letter. I can see a case for that being in the Government Work Plan and I will support it. We have a non-punitive approach, which is already in the Government Work Plan, fully aligned to the Justice Framework. I have already made the point that legislation is not 3755 scoped and I have, in trying to sum up this section, there is a war in Ukraine, there is inflation, a post-Brexit world.

Home Affairs also needs to deliver actions arising from the Justice Framework on Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy. The need to protect and enhance our international standing has never been stronger.

3760 Sir, in my view, and in Deputy Aldwell and Deputy McKenna's speech, 14B will not improve the health and wellbeing of our population. It sends a message to our young people that we are scoping and looking at legalising cannabis. *Legalising* it. That means there will be no legal controls on it. Even a remark was made around its classification. Legalising it, is it going to be downgraded –?

**Deputy Parkinson:** Point of correction, sir.

3765

**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Parkinson.

**Deputy Parkinson:** Deputy Prow cannot say that legalisation would mean that there were no controls over the supply or consumption of cannabis. That would remain to be seen.

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**The Bailiff:** It would, yes.  
Deputy Prow, please.

**Deputy Prow:** Yes, sir, I thank Deputy Parkinson for his point of correction.

3775 I need to explain exactly what I mean. If you legalise cannabis, there will be no criminal sanctions. That is the point that I am making, because it would be legal.

**Deputy Parkinson:** Point of correction, again, sir.

3780 **The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Parkinson.

**Deputy Parkinson:** It might well be illegal to sell cannabis to people under 18. It might well be illegal to sell cannabis that had too high a THC content. There may be a range of other controls, which could impose legal penalties.

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**The Bailiff:** Deputy Prow to continue, but we are potentially straying into a debate about what might come out rather than what the scope of the work might be.

**Deputy Prow:** Yes, thank you, sir. I heed your advice.

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I think all I would say is this is the problem with 14B. I do not actually know what is meant. Are we talking about legalisation, are we talking about decriminalising it? So 14B will not improve the health and wellbeing of our population or help with it being safe and secure and, importantly, it will be a huge distraction, starting a process where we will be entirely alone in the British Isles.

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It will suck in the precious resources needed elsewhere in Home and across Committees and I urge Members of the Assembly not to vote in favour of 14B. Sir, Deputy Inder asked me, I think, to make some comments around the population immigration management steering committee, which I chair, and a specific question around the timing of when that policy letter will come to the States. The answer to that question is that that steering group next month will be considering the final draft of the policy letter and it will then be a matter to be referred to the Committee *for* Home Affairs and we would hope that the policy letter would be issued shortly.

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What has become absolutely clear out of this debate is the housing emergency and certainly that policy letter will try and pull together all those strands and translate them into what we need to be doing with our population management and immigration regimes.

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In closing, sir, I would again like to thank Deputy Soulsby and all the staff that have been involved in the Government Work Plan. It is a massive piece of work. Certainly we are in a much better place, I think, than we have ever been before, in having a structured plan that we can all work to.

Thank you, sir.

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

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**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Thank you, sir.

Before I forget, I will just do a very brief mention on skills because Deputy Inder mentioned that. Yes, we have been working on that. We had a specific resource, because it was prioritised, allocated from the strategy team, which we are thankful for to Policy & Resources, so work has been progressing. We have an important cross-Committee meeting coming up in a couple of weeks, or August, I do not remember. It is an interesting kind of area of work because we have to put kind of long-term thinking into how we approach skills development in the Island but we were also very conscious, we are very keen to identify actions we can deliver immediately and specifically in this particular term.

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So I think that is where, really, the final stage that the piece of work is. There are lots more actions to properly develop out but we are approaching an important meeting with the Committees and take it from there. A lot of actual delivery will be through the Committee mandates anyway, because

a lot of them are operational. I am also not sure whether it is going to be a policy paper or not. We will wait and see. Judging by how debate is going in this Assembly I am starting to be of the view that some things can be delivered through the mandate of the Committees, maybe with more peace and speed.

I want to briefly talk about the Government Work Plan overall and I will talk about cannabis. I think it is really good to see this evolution of the Plan. I really like that more concrete focus on the top 10. I think that really helps show the community we have a bit more of a focus. I also quite liked how the information was dissected and where Committees and there has been commentary on the Committees' work specifically.

But one thing I did notice, unless I have missed something, is that the narrative on the Policy & Resources Committee itself, I feel, is missing. So I would have actually quite liked to see P&R's perhaps narrative on their own very large scope of work, with some very important areas of mandate that I am sure we all have an interest in but I did not feel there was really enough narrative and information.

I am talking about the O-TON, the P-TON, portfolio management, etc. *Many* areas of mandate of Policy & Resources Committee so I would certainly like to perhaps see more of that going forward. I did want to mention about the Funding and Investment Plan and will have, at some point hopefully, more chance to talk about our finances when we hopefully discuss the accounts. Who knows when that is going to be!

But I am sure you have seen a quite astonishing reversal of our financial situation where, from budgeting a significant deficit we are now turning a very significant surplus and with the addition of investment returns, in just one year our position improved so much that the Funding and Investment Plan does not need to take on the £200 million-plus borrowing that we were just talking about not even 12 months ago.

So I think that is quite an interesting reversal because that is not the first year where, as a Government, we completely missed our Budget. The same happened with our previous Budget and the final performance with accounts and I am sure it happened before. So it kind of speaks to our ability to really properly forecast our positions going forward, given that we also still do not have consolidated financial statements across the whole of the States' portfolio, our liabilities and assets. Frankly, I do not feel we have a proper pulse on long-term forecasting, which in my opinion does raise questions about our ability to forecast the long-term deficit, which obviously affects the tax debate.

So out of this, I guess, reversal, the second time around in our lifetime as politicians, this political term, we have a surplus, we have a very different position to the Budget we basically, and the forecast, we made and approved.

So we have this dichotomy where there is a constant talk about the squeezed public finances but on the other side we have an absolutely booming market. We have the financial services that have never been as busy, we have a booming job market. We have one of the lowest 'unemployments' we have had. I think we have one of the highest rates of population and population growth, certainly over recent timing.

So we are doing extremely well but we are always constantly talking about the squeeze on public finances. Well, I mean, again, the accounts and the continuous over-performance of the economy is just showing actually some quite strong fundamentals as well in our economy. So I am saying there are some really positive messages in terms of where we are and they are fully reflected in the Funding and Investment Plan.

However, the Funding and Investment Plan kind of continues to slightly hide, actually, the reality of the situation. Because the Funding and Investment Plan, we have an ambitious capital programme of about £600 million worth of investment, major and minor capital, which is unprecedented ambition, again, in recent history. So we have about £100 million of money to spend per year.

But we are financing all of that out of our reserves. So the States, through political terms, through stock market funds, etc., has accumulated reasonably high reserves and they are right now over

3875 £700 million. Basically the Government Work Plan, is fully financed through the small surpluses we are going to get, predicted over the next few years, they are quite small. But largely it is still paid from our savings, basically, and reserves that we have.

So we are still a Government who is, right now, eating out of the pockets of the savings and reserves we have accumulated historically and we do not have a long-term resolution of our financial situation going forward. This was reflected, for example, in the downgrading we have had by Standard & Poor, I believe, earlier this year.

3880 So I just think, I hope the Members are not under any illusion that, in order to execute on the ambition of this Government Work Plan, we are effectively eating into the reserves we have accumulated without and running those reserves below what the fiscal policy actually advocates for.

3885 So I do want to talk about cannabis and I think quite a bit has been said by Deputy Bury as well. I am reading the Resolution, which is the 3(iii) basically, which we as Government rescinded a version of it last year but we replaced it with, basically, a like-for-like version, which continued containing, basically, for the Committee *for* Health and Home Affairs to report back and take into account the potential for moving from a regime governed by the criminal law towards a partly or wholly regulatory approach to all aspects of personal drug use.

3890 So in my opinion, this very much does involve looking at the legal status of drugs. I take it that as Deputy Prow said, this does not specifically identify cannabis but I think it is very fair to say that cannabis is the substance that perhaps has the largest drug use in terms of other drugs and focusing on cannabis is important because of the largest implications by it.

3895 So I do still feel, I have got a sense that Deputy Prow was still not clear about what Proposition 14B was setting in motion because he said that in his open letter back, again today, that basically 14B is setting in motion the full review of legalisation of cannabis and quoting Deputy Prow, 'HSC has managed to slip in a proposal which is completely unscoped or costed to begin the process of reviewing the legal status of cannabis.'

3900 We are not reviewing the legal status of cannabis yet. Right, as Deputy Bury said, this is just a very focused effort to identify really just the scope of resource needed to do that. But we are not starting to review the status of cannabis.

3905 Also, I wanted to bring to the Assembly's attention, in terms of the Committee mandates, in 2017, the responsibility for the Bailiwick Drug and Alcohol Strategy was transferred from the Committee *for* Home Affairs to Committee *for* Health, reflecting a growing acceptance that drug policies should be led by the perspective of health outcomes and one of the pillars of the Combined Substance Abuse Strategy that was published last year is the need for the work streams to be evidence-based and continuously monitored. So the Committee *for* Health is very much ... the evidence-based approach is absolutely key to conducting and the reason why they want to do this piece of work.

3910 The reason why we are effectively, inadvertently, debating cannabis today is because, through the amendment that was originally submitted by Deputies Taylor and Mahoney this 11-page report was appended, which contained a lot of attempted evidencing but also effectively making, really showing quite strong opinions about this whole field of work. So I think is inevitable that –

**Deputy Taylor:** Point of correction, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Taylor.

3920 **Deputy Taylor:** The report that was appended to Amendment 10 that was pulled yesterday, was not opinions that were put forward, they were facts that had been collated by members of the Civil Service.

3925 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** So, through that report, we had information collated in support of this amendment and when the amendment was published we immediately received a lot of information and emails from, whether it was from an industry body or whether it was ... you can call them minority groups, I would not call them minority groups, and many Islanders sharing different types of information and actually sharing information with very opposing and different types of view.

Now I have not had the time to go and verify every single source of information used in either the report or evidence provided from elsewhere but that is not the point. The fact is that there remains a completely, in fact, opposite view to that of Deputy Prow, Deputy Taylor and others but, more importantly, there is also an entirely different set of evidence also available, as well as clear evidence of a rapidly changing landscape around the world.

So, as Deputy Prow said, the Sumnall Report ended in 2019, that is three years ago. A lot has changed since then so just the fact that there is existence of very different opinions and opposing evidence is enough for me to say that we must be looking at this issue properly and taking an evidence-based approach and not to be ruled by predetermined, fixed views.

And so I do want them to raise several issues. For example, why should we be supporting Proposition 14B? So, first of all, is this an important enough issue to be looking into? The report points to the findings of the Wellbeing Survey that 11% of Bailiwick residents used cannabis in 2018. That equates to nearly 7,000 people. That is just under the number of people who have voted for either Deputy Taylor or Mahoney.

In fact, through the numerous emails we have received in the past few days, many have noted that they voted for Deputy Taylor because he was open to looking at the evidence and we had candidates who stood specifically on this issue and who polled over 4,500 votes. So this was undeniably an election issue and remains important to many thousands in our community.

So what about cannabis as a substance and its classification as a drug? The simple truth is that humans have used substance since the dawn of times and specifically cannabis has been used as a medicinal herb for thousands of years and, quoting from a report from medicine research, cannabis is thought to be one of the oldest plants cultivated by humans with multiple medicinal uses documented in ancient Egypt texts. We know cannabis was used to treat a wide variety of different indicators including pain, cancer, epilepsy, nausea, etc. This is historically.

It is documented medicinal use in ancient cultures around the world stretching back to over 2,000 years ago and, in Asia, 5,000-10,000 years ago. This is documented evidence. So it is not a new or synthetic drug. A medicinal cannabis market has been one of the biggest boom stories in recent years. The only way the medical cannabis market has opened up is because there has been personal consumption, as a cultivated plant, for thousands of years.

So it is inevitable that some people will use it, you could say, for fun. But the vast evidence we receive is that our community is using it for medicinal purposes and we have received numerous stories from Islanders who share how cannabis has changed their lives or the lives of their families.

Sir, I do want to share one email from a mum, who wrote to all of us, to all Deputies:

I am not a cannabis smoker. I have never been and I never thought that one of my children would have to take cannabis medically for anxiety and depression. My son has always struggled since he was a child. He could never sleep and found school very hard. He is an intelligent boy and sensitive boy in his twenties but anxiety has ruined his life. He could not cope in social situations and he gave up a promising career in the finance industry to become a gardener because the corporate world was too overwhelming. He has been seriously ill at times and there have been mornings where I have not been sure if he would be in his bed and would be found dead. No parent should have to see their child suffer like that. Medication made his depression worse. Since he has been prescribed medicinal cannabis, he has changed completely. It has made my son normal. He can sleep at night and he is the boy he should be. He will sit down and have long conversations with us, where once he would be sitting in his room, often crying for no reason. I truly think it is a miracle plant, which could help so many people who are struggling. My son is lucky he can afford to buy medical cannabis but some people cannot and they are suffering. I do not want to see any more suicides on this Island. It is so damned heart-breaking and nobody is immune to this illness knocking on their door. I never thought it would come to our door. I do not know if this email will do any good but I do not want to say, 'I am sorry, son. I did not stand up and try.' Please look at this carefully and see this from a human point of view.

So if we look at the medicinal market, you may say, well you can buy cannabis with a medical prescription so that is enough. Well many Islanders have written to us to say it is not enough because it is too expensive – £500 average subscription per month. For many who cannot afford a prescription, with the high living costs, this is extremely expensive and all of this money, as Deputy Cameron mentioned, because the biggest clinics are off-Island, is going off-Island.

So what is the elephant in the room? The risks. I do not think anyone wants to say there are not risks. Cannabis does have risks. If you abuse the use of cannabis, in some cases if you have other medical conditions you may be exposed to risk. But there is an increasing body of evidence to show that the risks are limited, they can be managed.

This is all about taking an evidence-based approach where the current way, the prohibitionist way we deal with cannabis is better than an alternative way. So it is not about denying that there is risk but it is really dealing with it on an evidence-based approach.

And there has been, again, evidence provided by different Deputies, and shared. So for example, that in relation to vaping incidents in the US and misleading because they were a result of an illegal Vitamin E additive that was included in illegal cannabis vapes and acquired on the black market. So when we look at evidence this has to be done in a proper manner. We cannot just pick up different articles and just take what they say just as the only piece of evidence available.

Schizophrenia and psychosis. Regarding schizophrenia and psychosis it is generally accepted that adolescents who have a genetic susceptibility are at high risk of developing systems. It is evident that the majority of young cannabis users do not develop psychotic illnesses and those who do must have one or more predisposing factors.

Today medical science lacks sufficient data to make a definitive claim regarding whether smoking cannabis induces psychosis. If you are young, consume a lot of high dose cannabis products every day and possess a genetic predisposition to psychosis then, yes, you are at risk. Numerous studies during the past decade have demonstrated that people who use cannabis and who progress to schizophrenia have a significantly higher familial risk for psychosis.

Deputy Aldwell shared with Deputies, and I think she referred to the same article in her speech as well; there was an article reported in the *Daily Mail* about Professor Sir Robin, an expert in psychosis treatment and research. However, that article focused around the issues of something called skunk. I did not know what it was. It is basically a highly potent and super-strength cannabis, which seems to be dominating the illegal market in the UK. And this is one of the problems. If the market was regulated and legalised, you will be able to protect and control what strength of cannabis you have access to.

So when we quote evidence, again, we have to refer what this evidence is quoting for. So this is quoting the issues in relation to people smoking very potent cannabis.

The same article Deputy Aldwell quoted went on to say that Sir Robin welcomed London's plans to end prosecution of young people found in possession of cannabis. The policies set to be adopted by the Metropolitan Police would see carriers of the drug offered educational courses on its dangers.

So I want to talk also about alcohol and tobacco. Alcohol, and tobacco, is one of the most widely used substances, which I am sure many Members of this Assembly have tried or used regularly. So what are the alcohol problems, reading from the Combined Substance Abuse Strategy. Harmful alcohol use in Guernsey and Alderney is far more common than that of drugs and tobacco. We have a culture, which normalises regular alcohol consumption, with many people who have risky drinking behaviours not recognising this is a cause for concern.

There is a spectrum of alcohol use, from chronic heavy drinkers to adult drinking at home at harmful and hazardous levels. It is also important that alcohol-related disorder on our streets is more often the result of binge-drinking amongst young people. Alcohol is the causal factor in more than 60 – 60! – medical conditions, including all sorts of cancers, high blood pressure, cirrhosis of the liver, depression and so on. Alcohol misuse is the biggest risk factor for death, ill health and disability among 15-49-year-olds in the UK.

So I just want to read some specific statistics that I managed to obtain from the Health Commission and I thank them for that. So about 27% of people in Guernsey display increasing risk of harmful dependent drinking behaviours; 2.4% of admittances into our A&E department, out of about 16,000, so 2.4% equates to about 400 A&E incidents, are alcohol related.

So in terms of people convicted for alcohol-related, drink driving, I think, ranges in the region 68-100 people per year between 2014-21. And what is the alcohol usage among young people? Sir, in 2019, it averaged for female and male young drinkers at about 25%. The good news, and this has dramatically increased, from 52% of young people in 2007 to 25% in 2019. How many people are receiving treatment? This is local statistics. Three hundred and 29 individuals were in structured treatment. There are probably about 100 people with Alcoholics Anonymous membership.

Alcohol related incidences, in terms of the custody records – so this is really the important statistic – our Bailiwick Law Enforcement, out of a total number of custody records of 1,335 in 2020, 483. So I think that was about 36% – 36% – of all custody records were alcohol-related. So given that more than a third of all Law Enforcement cases are linked to alcohol, would this not be a prime area for action for Home Affairs? Would this not give grounds for serious intervention, criminalisation or prohibition of this substance?

Of course you know the answer. It is not criminalised. It is not illegal. Not only that, but Home Affairs is very happily spending resources collecting duties on tobacco and alcohol and this amounted to £22 million in 2019, representing about half of all the duties collected and rose to £30 million in 2020, representing about 60% of total duties collected, because we were all drinking more during COVID, we stocked up on tobacco and we have been using less fuel.

**Deputy Taylor:** Point of correction, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Taylor.

**Deputy Taylor:** Deputy Kazantseva-Miller has said that Home Affairs are 'happy' to be collecting all these duties that she is referring to. It is not so much that we are happy to be collecting them, it is our mandate to do it and the rates are set by this Government. It is the job. It is not that we are happy to be doing it.

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

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** So if we are taking that approach with alcohol, which is, as I have shown, creating actually very serious consequences at all levels of our community, why are we looking at another substance which has medicinal properties differently?

The other point quoted was about damage to the reputation. Well, just look at some of our closest competitors in the financial markets. Luxembourg have been planning to legalise cannabis since 2018. Malta has legalised cannabis, end of last year. I believe about a third of countries around the world are at different steps in moving in the direction of decriminalisation, legalisation, regulation or they intend to do so. This is where the world is moving to.

At a recent meeting, Deputy Vermeulen questioned, when we talked about Moneyval how inspectors view countries taking approaches in legalisation, decriminalisation of cannabis and the answer he received, which I am sure he was a bit disappointed with, was that they are neutral.

I am sorry, I am finishing. It is a long speech. It is quite late. I am not going to give way, Deputy Prow, I am sorry.

Inspectors will be neutral and what they also said is if the countries are seen focusing too much attention on domestic issues sometimes, at the detriment of actually focusing on international crime that can be an issue. So we do have to look that our current approach is not without consequences and that there is harm caused by our current system.

In the Harry Sumnall Report there were 293 cases that received a custodial component between 2016 and 2019. There are dozens, hundreds of people are affected by the current regime. So what

4070 is the harm that is caused to people involved with cannabis consumption? There is the trauma from the criminalised approach to the individual. There is loss of earnings and effect on employment, impact –

**Deputy Prow:** Point of correction, sir.

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**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Prow.

**Deputy Prow:** Yes, sir, I think Deputy Kazantseva-Miller is misleading the Assembly.

4080 The Harry Sumnall Report refers to all drugs, not just cannabis. And the Harry Sumnall Report is talking about the possession of small amounts of drugs. The majority of people who get custodial sentences have committed drug trafficking offences – that is supply, import and export of controlled drugs.

Thank you, sir.

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**The Bailiff:** Deputy Kazantseva-Miller to continue.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Thank you, sir.

4090 Just going through the long list of harm from the approach we currently have, it is the impact on immediate family members and children, the cost of rehabilitation, the cost of the court system, the cost to the Police, the cost to the Border Agency, cost of the Prison –

**Deputy Taylor:** Point of correction, sir.

**The Bailiff:** Point of correction, Deputy Taylor.

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**Deputy Taylor:** Deputy Kazantseva-Miller is listing the problems that she stated that we are currently facing or we now have, but previously she did highlight that this report was from several years ago and is in fact the findings of the non-punitive approach group that we are no longer acting in the way that is set out in the report that she is now referring to.

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

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** The cost to the economy from lost employment, the health risks from the lack of regulation, the foregoing of tax and revenue from a regulated market and so on.

4105 I did not want this to be about cannabis, this debate, and obviously we have gone to a discussion of cannabis but what I have tried to do is just to highlight the complexity of this area and the factors on both sides of the debate, which are complex and inter-related. It is very important to understand that there is harm being done to our community with the current approach.

4110 The world is moving in this field very rapidly. I have not formed an opinion but having looked into this issue in more detail, off the back of the amendment that was submitted by Deputies Taylor and Mahoney, I cannot see how I can fail to support a move by the Committee that has the mandate to deliver on this policy, together with Home Affairs, to simply look at how to resource this piece of work.

4115 So we are not making a decision about legalising cannabis or which formats, which type of design approach we are going to take. We are not making this decision. We are just being asked the decision to do a narrow piece of work, which the Committee has the resource to do, to understand how to undertake this review.

4120 The decision is not about legalising it. It is not about undertaking a full review. The decision is simply for a short scoping exercise of the work and resources that will be needed to undertake the review. That, on balance, with the information we have right now, the level of importance of this issue to the community, the level of importance the majority of Members of Health place on this

issue, which is within their mandate, I really think it is something that the Assembly should be rallying behind.

4125 I agree that it is a very difficult decision in terms of 14A, 14B. On the balance of evidence information available to me, I will be not supporting 14A but will be supporting 14B and I encourage Members to do so as well.

**The Bailiff:** Well, Members of the States, it has gone 5.30. So the Rules say that we adjourn now until 9.30 tomorrow morning.

*The Assembly adjourned at 5.41 p.m.*