THE STATES OF DELIBERATION
of the
ISLAND OF GUERNSEY

5th July, 2023

Proposition No. P.2023/55

Committee for the Environment & Infrastructure

Electricity Strategy for Guernsey

SURSIS

Proposed by: Deputy R C Murray
Seconded by: Deputy S P Haskins

To sursis the propositions until the Meeting of the States of Deliberation to be held on 6th September, 2023.

Rule 4(1) Information

a) The proposition contributes to the States’ objectives and policy plans by seeking to maximise the benefits of the Government Work Plan (“GWP”) by ensuring that debate on and decisions relating to the long-term electricity strategy for Guernsey are appropriately linked and timed with debate on and decisions on the associated competing financial demands and consequences of the components of the GWP.

b) In preparing the proposition there has been no consultation with stakeholders.

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

d) There are no financial implications to the States of carrying the proposal into effect.

Explanatory note

The Electricity Strategy proposals are of significant importance to the Island’s future. If adopted as proposed, the direction of travel for the sourcing, delivery and cost of electricity supply will be established for decades to come. It is therefore essential that the Assembly be as fully informed as they can possibly be about the resource implications that will emanate from any decisions made as a consequence of its debate.
The prioritisation of the availability and deployment of resources for the Government Work Plan (GWP) reset, for the remainder of this term, are due to be discussed on the 18th of July – a matter of days away. That Green Paper debate will enable the entirety of the aspirations, challenges and necessary focus on the immediate and future use of resources to be considered across all of Government. It will certainly inform the subsequent proposals regarding funding options/limitations which will be brought back for the Assembly to decide upon in September.

Debating the Electricity Strategy in advance of the GWP reset (and subsequent Funding & Investment Plan) - engages two significant risks. Firstly, commitments might be made in isolation of full comprehension of the additional implications upon available Government resources to deliver the rest of the requirements subsequently desired by the Assembly to support the GWP reset. Indeed, this is recognised in the Strategy paper on page 57:

‘...The Committee is aware that any funding or backing would need to be considered in line with wider States commitments and, if all capital investment in the Strategy were to be funded through States funding or backing, this may be unaffordable or impact upon the ability to deliver other vital required investment....’

Secondly, whilst the Strategy gives best estimates of the probable cost of various pathways, it currently only identifies possible mechanisms or options by which those costs could be funded but is silent on their affordability or sufficiency. Additionally, there are also further areas of investigation highlighted as being necessary, but which are not costed at all. Nor is it unnoticed that there is no letter of comment from Policy & Resources accompanying the proposals - as would be customary on such a major policy direction.

Furthermore, it is entirely likely that the debate over such a complex and important strategy will not be concluded at one sitting of the Assembly and by embarking upon it at this particular time, risks the debate momentum being interrupted by the summer recess. This has happened before on far-reaching proposals such as was experienced during the debate on Secondary Education earlier this term and is not desirable.

There are many priorities and challenges which the Assembly now has to grapple with and the imminent GWP reset is the unique opportunity to consider them in concert. Ensuring due and proper consideration is given to such a far-reaching matter as the Electricity Strategy is fundamentally important, but within that context – not in isolation or advance of it.

It is therefore the view of the Proposer and Seconder that the timing of this debate be moved until the 6th September meeting in order to do justice to the extensive work undertaken to date evidenced in the Electricity Strategy proposals. Regrettably, (but to further underscore the need to move the timing of the debate), there has been insufficient time to interact with stakeholders in advance of submitting this Sursis.