



HOUSE OF KEYS OFFICIAL REPORT

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PROCEEDINGS

DAALTYN

HANSARD

Douglas, Tuesday, 7th December 2021

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Present:

In the Keys:

The Speaker (Hon. J P Watterson) (Rushen);
The Chief Minister (Hon. A L Cannan) (Ayre and Michael);
Mr J R Moorhouse and Mr T S Glover (Arbory, Castletown and Malew);
Mr T D Johnston (Ayre and Michael);
Mrs C A Corlett and Mr C C Thomas (Douglas Central);
Ms J L Faragher and Hon. C L Barber (Douglas East);
Hon. D J Ashford MBE and Mr J C Wannenburgh (Douglas North);
Mrs S L Maltby and Mrs C S B Christian (Douglas South);
Mrs D H P Caine and Mr A J Smith (Garff);
Hon. K A Lord-Brennan and Hon. T M Crookall (Glenfaba and Peel);
Hon. J P Poole-Wilson and Mr S G Peters (Middle);
Mr R E Callister and Hon. J M Edge (Onchan);
Hon. L L Hooper and Hon. A J Allinson (Ramsey);
Dr M E K Haywood (Rushen)
with Mr J D C King, Secretary of the House.

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House of Keys

The House met at 10.37 a.m.

[MR SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

The Speaker: Moghrey mie, Hon. Members.

Members: Good Morning, Mr Speaker.

5

The Speaker: I would ask you to be seated. I ask those that wish to join us for the Lord's Prayer.

PRAYERS

Mr Speaker

Questions for Oral Answer

INFRASTRUCTURE

1.1. Flights to and from Ireland – Steps to ensure

The Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew (Mr Moorhouse) to ask the Minister for Infrastructure:

What steps he is taking to ensure regular flights to and from the Republic of Ireland?

The Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Members.

We turn to our Questions for Oral Answer, and Question 1, I call on the Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse.

10

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like to ask the Minister for Infrastructure what steps he is taking to ensure regular flights to and from the Republic of Ireland?

15

The Speaker: I call on the Minister for Infrastructure to reply.

The Minister for Infrastructure (Mr Crookall): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Department is currently holding commercial discussions with Emerald Airlines to re-establish routes to and from the Republic of Ireland.

20

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you, Minister, for that brief Answer.

In July, the former Minister suggested that updates on the route would be available from September 2021. Has any progress been made with regard to that?

25 In terms of Emerald Airlines, they do appear to have made an announcement in August when they said they would be commencing flights in January 2023. Does that potentially include flights to the Isle of Man?

Thank you.

30 **The Speaker:** Minister to reply.

The Minister: Mr Speaker, I missed the first comment that the Hon. Member made there, but all I can say at this moment in time is that discussions are ongoing and we are hopeful that an announcement will be made fairly shortly.

35

The Speaker: Further supplementary, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you, Minister.

40 Historically, the route has been important in terms of attracting key workers. Over the last 20 months, as the number of flights to Ireland have gone down and disappeared in terms of the south of Ireland, there have been huge challenges in actually retaining the existing key workers from that location, but also attracting new ones. Is that something that the Department are considering?

45 Also, in terms of flights to the US, that is the perfect gateway to America and a lot of people actually look at that now. Are those two things being considered by the Department?

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

50 **The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

In answer to the last part first, the Department fully understands that that link to America is important. Whether it is the perfect gateway, I am not sure about that. Some would say yes, some would say no, but it is an important gateway and we understand that. Besides ourselves, DfE are also working on this issue, working with airlines, and we are looking to increase the airlines that serve the Island to and from Manchester, Dublin, Liverpool. I think it is Steer, the company that are working on behalf of DfE ... is working to increase those.

55 Absolutely, we understand that if we have got those important links there with regard to key workers, it makes a huge difference and we are working on that proviso, Mr Speaker.

Thank you.

60

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Thomas.

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

65 When the other place has considered it, it has always been decided that the Department of Infrastructure is very involved and it is very important that they are involved in managing and planning routes alongside the Department for Enterprise. Does the Minister agree with me that a very important job for the incoming Airport Director will be to get hold of this because the Irish community now and in the future in our Island is very important to this Island, firstly? And secondly, obviously Dublin is a gateway not only to America but also to the European Union.

70

A Member: Hear, hear.

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

The Minister: I totally agree with the Hon. Member, Mr Speaker. Yes, absolutely.

**1.2. Safe and dignified Ronaldsway embarkation and disembarkation –
Independent checks**

The Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew (Mr Moorhouse) to ask the Minister for Infrastructure:

What independent checks there are to ensure that those embarking and disembarking at Ronaldsway do so in a safe and dignified manner?

75 **The Speaker:** We turn to Question 2.

I call on Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

80 I would ask the Minister for Infrastructure what independent checks there are to ensure that those embarking and disembarking at Ronaldsway do so in a safe and dignified manner?

The Speaker: I call on the Minister for Infrastructure to reply.

85 **The Minister for Infrastructure (Mr Crookall):** Mr Speaker, presently there are no independent checks carried out to ensure that passengers embarking and disembarking at Ronaldsway ... but regular audits and training are conducted to ensure that any help is done in a safe and dignified manner.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Moorhouse.

90

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

95 In the last six months is the – thank you for the Answer. In the last six months, is the Minister aware of how many people have been moved onto and off a plane on a wheelchair down the steps of an aircraft? And then how many occasions in the last six months have the automated devices to raise people onto and from planes being out of action and how many flights have been affected by that?

Thank you.

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

100

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

105 Four hundred and thirty-three passengers have been assisted since 28th June 2021 using the automatic chair. The vehicle you are referring to was taken out of service in June 2021 because it had reached the end of its serviceable life. The replacement vehicle was identified at the same time but it has been delayed in being delivered to the Island because of the supply chain issues caused by the pandemic. Customers travelling on easyJet flights with reduced mobility unable to climb the stairs are affected by its temporary non-availability, but an alternative safe method of assisting passengers onto and off the aircraft is being used via a specialist chair, which climbs the steps. Work is currently underway with the supplier to the replacement vehicle, which I am told is now due in January 2022.

110

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Supplementary, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you, Minister.

115 Over the last 12 months, how many trips or slips have been recorded whilst carrying out this manoeuvre on the aircraft's steps? And has the Department received any correspondence about the issue relating to wheelchair users assessing and being taken off planes? And in terms of the replacement, whilst the current offering might be safe, it does leave people actually exposed to the elements for up to five minutes which can be a real potential problem given the conditions that we have this morning.

120 Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

125 **The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Over the last 12 months, we have had no recorded slips with people getting on and off the aircraft. Every element of the aircraft's operation is subject to appropriate risk assessments and this includes the procedures used by the handling agents to assist customers with reduced mobility onto and off the aircraft. These procedures are subject to continual assessment and review and regular refresher training is provided to all the staff who use this equipment on a daily basis.

130

1.3. Summer 2022 bus timetables – Review and consultation plans

The Hon. Member for Douglas North (Mr Wannenburgh) to ask the Minister for Infrastructure:

What plans he has to review and consult on the summer 2022 bus timetables?

The Speaker: We turn to Question 3, I call on the Hon. Member for Douglas North, Mr Wannenburgh.

135 **Mr Wannenburgh:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Could the Minister for Infrastructure tell us what plans he has to review and consult on the summer 2022 bus timetables?

The Speaker: I call on the Minister for Infrastructure to reply.

140

The Minister for Infrastructure (Mr Crookall): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

It is envisaged that the main change to the summer 2022 bus timetable will be as a result of the reopening of Pulrose Bridge and a few minor changes Island-wide. It is anticipated, subject to the budget allocation, that the seasonal services will run on their normal dates, and it is fully hoped to do a full review of the Island's bus service next year, ready for the 2023 services.

145

Thank you.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Wannenburgh.

150 **Mr Wannenburgh:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Could the Minister confirm that there will be no timetable changes planned to the Willaston estate and that the bus routes will continue to serve the estate through the estate?

Thank you.

155 **The Speaker:** Minister.

The Minister: I can confirm that there are no changes planned at all for Willaston, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Callister.

160 **Mr Callister:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the Minister for his statement this morning.
Can I ask the Minister to give reassurance to this House that a full public consultation will be
made available for when the next full timetable is put in place? Because I know third-sector
charities have been asking and engaging with your Department about making sure there are bus
stops in the right places, but every time they have engaged they have said too late, the plans have
165 already gone through, and it is too late for them to engage.
Can we get a reassurance from the Minister that the next full bus timetable is fully reviewed
and out for public consultation?
Thank you, Mr Speaker.

170 **The Speaker:** Minister to reply.

The Minister: Mr Speaker, as I have just said, I am absolutely adamant that a full review will
take place, but that will be for the 2023 bus timetable. The next one is due to go to the RTLC very
shortly, because we have given two to three months' notice. (**Mr Callister:** Public consultation?)
175 But there will absolutely be a full consultation to all and sundry across the Island, Mr Speaker.

CHIEF MINISTER

1.4. Holiday hunger – Mitigating over Christmas

The Hon. Member for Garff (Mrs Caine) to ask the Chief Minister:

What support is planned to mitigate the impact of holiday hunger during the school Christmas holidays?

The Speaker: Question 4, I call on the Hon. Member for Garff, Mrs Caine.

Mrs Caine: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

180 Can I ask the Chief Minister what support is planned to mitigate the impact of holiday hunger
during the school Christmas holidays?

The Speaker: I call on the Chief Minister to reply.

185 **The Chief Minister (Mr Cannan):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the Hon. Member for her
Question.

No child should go hungry on our Island at any time of year. Social Security provides benefits
to low-income families all year round in order that they have sufficient funds to feed their family,
and I would strongly urge any concerned families to contact Social Security as soon as possible to
ensure that they are receiving the benefits to which they are entitled.

190 However, Mr Speaker, I must acknowledge that there are potentially extenuating
circumstances this Christmas, such as the rise in fuel costs and the rate of inflation, which are
impacting on the cost of living.

195 I have been in discussions with the Treasury Minister to consider current economic conditions and, as a consequence, I have asked him to consider what further support should be considered for those in receipt of free school meals over the Christmas holidays.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mrs Caine.

200 **Mrs Caine:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I am encouraged to hear the Chief Minister's words this morning, but I would ask him ... I would concur that there are special circumstances this year with many reserves having been used up during the COVID pandemic in particular, pressure of the increase in heating costs as well, and the Chief Minister wants to ensure no child goes hungry and urges them to contact Social Services.

205 Is he aware that 70% of the referrals to the Foodbank in fact come from Government Departments, principally Social Security where they have nothing further to assist families in situations facing decisions over heating or eating, and that the Foodbank is currently expecting a spike but already sees routinely 120 to 140 households that they are assisting? So while a review is welcome, when will the outcome of that review be known? Because although there are positive signs from the Chief Minister in his Island Plan and the Poverty Committee being reconvened, it is just so much talking on paper and words are not helping people. So when can people anticipate that they would be aware what support is going to be needed and for this year in time for Christmas?

210 Thank you, Mr Speaker.

215

The Speaker: Minister.

The Chief Minister: There is no review, Mr Speaker.

220 I quite clearly said in my Answer, I have asked the Treasury Minister to consider what further support should be considered for those in receipt of free school meals over the Christmas holidays. I trust the Treasury Minister will be considering that as a matter of importance. I would fully expect him to be able to make any relevant announcements in the next few days.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Thomas.

225

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

230 When the Cold Hunger and Homelessness Action Plan was put in place, the Department of Education, Sport and Culture was considering uniforms but was not formally considering holiday clubs, which might well be the preferred solution in most places and might well be the ideal solution here.

235 Can the Chief Minister advise whether or not holiday clubs at Christmas and at the end of August are still being considered by Council of Ministers? And more generally, as COVID started in March 2020, the work of the Social Policy and Children's Committee on holiday hunger was ceased. Has that work ever recommenced and has a report been produced by the Cabinet Office-led group of officials and charities about how to deal with holiday hunger; and, if so, can the Chief Minister commit to circulate that report?

The Speaker: Chief Minister.

240

The Chief Minister: Thanks, Mr Speaker.

As Hon. Members will know, we are in the very heart of putting together our Island Plan, in which this Government will make a number of commitments in terms of what it is setting out to achieve. I am sure that the aspects that the Hon. Member has referred to will be revisited and

refreshed, and we will obviously consider that and outline our plans in terms of dealing with social
245 issues on our Island and what we plan to do to improve the lives of our residents.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Callister.

Mr Callister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

250 I know the Chief Minister, myself and I know the Treasury Minister and a lot of other Members
have actually taken the time to go and visit the Foodbank to speak to the excellent work
undertaken by this charity, but does the Chief Minister have any understanding of the themes as
to why people are having to access this? Because I know from my visit a lot of this came down to
the fact that they could not access, or there were significant delays in accessing key benefits.

255 So what reassurance can the Chief Minister give that people who need benefits can access
them quickly, even if that means emergency payments in the meantime of their assessments
being undertaken?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

260 **The Speaker:** Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I am as keen as anybody that Social Security acts as quickly as
possible when they are put in contact with families who are in need.

265 Our commitment is to respond within the framework that is provided within the law, but, as
the Hon. Member knows, there is the ability to issue emergency payments and I very much hope
that officers will be cognisant and aware of that, and in the appropriate circumstances,
Mr Speaker, I am sure that the relevant officers will issue the appropriate payments on an
emergency basis.

270 **Mr Callister:** Thank you.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mrs Caine.

Mrs Caine: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

275 The Chief Minister says that the Social Security operate within the existing framework. Does
he feel that it is the framework that needs to be changed, to be reviewed, to enable us not to get
to a situation where we need to consider holiday hunger, both at summer holidays and Christmas
holidays, and that the level of benefits, actually the benefits, a wholesale review of benefits is
possibly what is needed here, so that people have enough to live on and to feed their families?

280 Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Minister.

285 **The Chief Minister:** I think I have already made some of those commitments in my Chief
Minister's manifesto, and I expect that to be reflected in the Island Plan.

290 But I must emphasise, Mr Speaker, that the response to the Hon. Member's question really is
something that we were considering in terms of the whole impact on the economy of the current
economic situation and also there are extenuating circumstances. We know, for example, that gas
prices have risen by 27.5%. We know that inflation is almost at 5%, or has been at 5% certainly,
and is close to that mark at present, and we know that we have already made commitments
around Social Security and winter bonus payments and the increase that we have made there to
protect the most vulnerable.

295 I think so far our response to a perfect storm of economic conditions, which has been further
made problematic, of course, by current COVID response levels and the requirements that have
been put there, which of course may impact on those, particularly in our hospitality industry and

those on zero hours, will be making life difficult for a number of our families. We are very cognisant and conscious of that fact, and that is why I have had those discussions with the Treasury Minister. I know that colleagues on the Economic Recovery Group are also clearly concerned about this issue, and I expect that the Treasury Minister will be responding appropriately in the next few days.

The Speaker: Two final supplementaries.
First, from Mr Thomas.

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I welcome the announcement today by the Chief Minister that he believes there is a review of Social Security benefits going on. So could the Chief Minister circulate further information about that review? Because I put that question straight to officers in the last week and I was told that National Insurance was being reviewed but Social Security benefits were not actually being reviewed. So it would be good to know further information of that review.

The second question is does the Chief Minister agree with me that it is important to welcome the work that the departmental Member and the Minister in Treasury responsible for Social Security seem to be doing to reflect on the nature and the payment of emergency payments and also loans, because I think it is very important seven years on that we review the anti-fraud measures that were reduced around 2014-15 to make sure they are not harming decent people as they try to put a house around them and feed themselves properly so that they can hold down a proper job and have a good life.

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

The Chief Minister: I did not actually say there was a review going on. I said that those commitments will be made in the Island Plan as appropriate. I said they had been mentioned in my Chief Minister manifesto, and I am sure that appropriate commitments would be reflected in our Island Plan, but, as the Hon. Member knows, there is a review of National Insurance that is ongoing.

In terms of the second part of his question, I welcome all elements of enhanced work that is going on to ensure that our commitments to ensuring that the Island reflects across society as being fair and equal, and in terms of looking after those who need a helping hand, and I continue to support that sort of work.

The Speaker: Final supplementary on this Question, Mrs Caine.

Mrs Caine: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I do welcome the comments from the Chief Minister this morning but the final point from me would be to enquire whether the Chief Minister has visited the Foodbank and whether he has asked any of his officers to engage with them? And given the special extenuating circumstances that the Chief Minister referenced in the higher cost of living and inflation, would it be possible for the Government to consider directly supporting the Foodbank given the increased demand on their service in the coming months?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

A Member: That is the reason for it.

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

The Chief Minister: Mr Speaker, I am constantly engaging with charities across the Island on a variety of scenarios.

I think the predominant question is whether we will provide financial support to the Foodbank. We have an existing framework, it is appropriate that our public funds are managed correctly particularly when it comes to either revenue or National Insurance based payments. That is why we have a controlled statutory framework for Social Security to operate on, and I am confident, Mr Speaker, that the Government is reacting appropriately to a number of extenuating circumstances at the moment, including the increased support that is going forward now for winter bonus payments, which will help the most vulnerable with their increased gas and fuel bills. And also now that we have committed this morning in answer to the Hon. Member's Question that the Treasury Minister is currently considering what further support may be now needed and offered to those families whose children particularly are on free school meals.

Thank you.

**1.5. Means testing –
Use in services; aligning with Tynwald-approved principles**

The Hon. Member for Douglas Central (Mr Thomas) to ask the Chief Minister:

Which services are universal and do not require means testing; and what progress has been made in aligning current means testing around the principles Tynwald approved in October 2019?

The Speaker: We turn to Question 5, I call on the Hon. Member for Douglas Central, Mr Thomas.

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like to ask the Chief Minister which services are universal and do not require means testing; and what progress has been made in aligning current means testing around the principles Tynwald approved in October 2019?

The Speaker: I call on the Chief Minister to reply.

The Chief Minister (Mr Cannan): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Means testing is a significant and complex topic that must be carefully considered. The relevance of the principles previously agreed by Tynwald are being considered in light of the objectives within the Island Plan.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Thomas.

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The principles around means testing have been carefully considered since 2014. The high-level principles that were adopted were amended brilliantly by Minister Hooper, to say that certain things should be identified as universally provided and not means tested. What services are provided universally? Surely by now we will have a list of what is provided universally.

And, secondly, any exceptions to the application of the means testing principle are supposed to be proposed to the Council of Ministers through the Social Policy and Children's Committee, which acts as a gatekeeper to exceptions to those principles. Means testing has been done, introduced and also amended during the last 18 months. What exceptions to the principles has Council of Ministers considered and awarded?

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

The Chief Minister: Well, as I have set out to explain, Mr Speaker, it is a significantly complex topic and it needs careful consideration.

390 **The actual motion that was approved said:**

That some services are universal and do not require means testing and that where means testing is undertaken, it should follow the below principles.

And there was no formal identification, as the Hon. Member knows, of which services are universal. As I have said to the Hon. Member, we are going to continue to work on this Government's plan, its Island Plan. That will be debated in this House in January, and I expect within that to reflect some of the elements of the question that he has asked, either reflected in the statements and objectives that are there or reflected in the actual significant policy principles that we will be adopting within that Island Plan.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Thomas.

400 **Mr Thomas:** Thank you.

One of the principles approved in Tynwald was that there would be an annual update on the level of progress towards the components of the policy components. When does the Chief Minister expect we will have the first annual update on the careful consideration of the means testing principles?

405

The Speaker: Chief Minister to reply.

The Chief Minister: I do not have an answer to that question, Mr Speaker, but I am sure that the first step would be to approve the Island Plan and as soon as we have that approved then the rest of the Government's reporting requirements, I am sure, will fall into alignment pretty rapidly.

410

INFRASTRUCTURE

1.6. Balthane roundabout – Progress

The Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew (Mr Moorhouse) to ask the Minister for Infrastructure:

What progress there has been with the Balthane roundabout; and if he will make a statement?

The Speaker: We turn to Question 6. I call on the Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to ask the Minister for Infrastructure what progress there has been with the Balthane roundabout; and if he will make a statement?

415

Thank you.

The Speaker: I call on the Minister for Infrastructure to reply.

The Minister for Infrastructure (Mr Crookall): Mr Speaker, following the public consultation held at the end of August, the Department's officers have reviewed the feedback received and have revisited the earlier proposals for the site. The Department has been in discussions to

420

remove a restrictive land covenant in order to progress an alternative design to which the land owner has agreed.

425 Officers have also been in discussion with other landowners at the proposed junctions and will shortly be meeting with the local authority regarding the site. The Department's design team is preparing indicative design layouts and the Department anticipates being in a position to hold a subsequent public consultation in the next couple of months, following which the Department will submit a planning application.

430 Capital funding has been requested and, if successful, construction is expected in 2023-24.
Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Mr Moorhouse.

435 **Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you, Minister.

Just to go into a little bit more detail on those points in terms of the public consultation, that can occur early next year – that can be confirmed, can it?

In terms of the Treasury funding possibilities, that will appear in the Budget of 2022 in terms of whether it is positive or not; and in terms of the finalised plans to ensure this goes ahead, does
440 that have to go through Planning and is there a time period for that that should take place?

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

445 **The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Yes, it will go to consultation locally down in Ballasalla. The meeting we had lately – and I believe the Hon. Member was there at that meeting ... a budget submission has been made to Treasury this year, so that hopefully – *hopefully* – will get into the book for next year, the year 2023-24 for construction.

1.7. Natural gas exploration and extraction – Licensing arrangements

The Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew (Mr Moorhouse) to ask the Minister for Infrastructure:

What arrangements are in place for licensing the exploration for, and extraction of, natural gas from under the seabed; and if he will make a statement?

450 **The Speaker:** We turn to Question 7, and I call on the Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like to ask the Minister for Infrastructure what arrangements are in place for licensing
455 the exploration for, and extraction of, natural gas from under the seabed; and if he will make a statement?

Thank you.

The Speaker: I call on the Minister for Infrastructure to reply.

460 **The Minister for Infrastructure (Mr Crookall):** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

465 In April 2014, Tynwald approved the Offshore Energy Strategy Report, which included the recommendation that Tynwald supports the development of offshore wind, marine renewables and hydrocarbon energy sources in the Isle of Man's territorial sea in order to produce energy, subject to projects receiving appropriate consents and planning approval.

470 Following from this, under the provisions of the Petroleum Act 1986, a licensing round was opened in September 2017, using the same process developed by the UK Oil and Gas Authority, to enable companies to explore the potential for hydrocarbons and undertake exploratory drilling. In the first steps of this process, the Department awarded the Seaward Production 'Innovate' Licence to Crogga in October 2018, to permit the company to search for hydrocarbons, oil and gas within a defined area of Manx territorial waters, commencing on 1st January 2019. Such licences are divided into three exploration phases: Phase A is geotechnical studies and geophysical reprocessing; Phase B is seismic surveys and acquiring other geophysical data; and Phase C is exploratory drilling.

475 Alongside the award of the licence, the company is also required to secure various consents and permissions for the activities undertaken. For instance, a seismic survey undertaken under Phase B has potential for environmental impact and a permit for such a survey is required to be issued by DEFA.

480 The consenting process for this is administered by the Fisheries Division of DEFA, delegated under the Marine Infrastructure Management Act 2016, and regulated under the Wildlife Act 1990. At the same time as the action required represents activity as defined under the Marine Infrastructure Management Act there will also be a requirement for the developer to apply for consent under that legislation. This will require the applicant to undertake environmental impact assessments and enable a full consideration of all aspects of any proposal for activity ahead of the decision being made.

485 Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Moorhouse.

490 **Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you, Minister, for that Answer.

Is the extension to the licence ready to be put into place and what are the implications for the licence holder and the exploration of this resource? If the Department fails to complete the requirement by the end of this month then potentially the process could end, and some have argued that could potentially be a way for this option to vanish completely.

495 Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

500 **The Minister:** Mr Speaker, the DoI awarded the licence to Crogga in October 2018 to search for oil and gas, beginning on 1st January 2019. The licence commenced at Phase B of the potential three phases within a licence, allowing them three years to complete the seismic survey associated with this phase. This survey will characterise the nature of the potential gas reserve.

505 Should Crogga not complete the seismic survey by 31st December 2021, then the licence will expire. Crogga have asked for an extension until 30th June 2023 to complete the necessary work. Legal advice is that there will be no legal consequences from allowing the licence to expire. Any decision on extension requires the joint agreement of DoI and DEFA. A recommendation on whether to extend will be made by these Ministers shortly.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Ms Faragher.

510 **Ms Faragher:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The UK regulator, the Oil and Gas Authority, has recently released a report which states that decommissioning the UK's oil and gas facilities will cost billions more than previously expected, an estimated total of £60 billion, around half of this cost will be borne by the UK taxpayer.

515 Given the multi-billion burden this industry is placing on taxpayers in other countries, can the Minister give an assurance that there will be discussion around, and indeed an agreement in place, that determines who would pay to decommission the gas extraction equipment as part of the process of all parties deciding whether the project should go ahead?

520 **The Speaker:** We are expanding the subject slightly, but Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I am happy to say that while that is not involved in this phase, that will be part at some stage in the negotiations *if* anything was to go forward from this point on in the new year.

525

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

530 With regard to your previous answer, there was reassurance that a gap in the contracts would not nullify the existing potential but I am concerned that the Ministers may actually take this as an option and we could end up with the possibility that there is no licence in place and nothing going forward. Is that a real possibility?

535 And also, in terms of the simple extension, is that what you are looking at? Are you looking for something in more detail because the answer did suggest you were actually looking at the whole process again rather than just extending what we have on the table?

And finally, if you are actually looking at the wider situation, would this be the perfect opportunity to actually include a licensing agreement to look at the guarantee of a price cap for future prices of fuel from that field that could potentially help local people tremendously.

Thank you.

540

The Speaker: The Question is around arrangements in place for licensing the exploration and extraction and I am conscious that we are potentially getting close to the Minister here prejudging an application. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) I would just caution Members asking questions and Ministers answering them to be aware of that fact.

545 Minister.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank you for the guidance on that.

550 Just with regard to the price cap the Hon. Member mentioned there, yes, at some stage in the future that might come into the negotiations, but certainly we are nowhere near that stage yet, but it would be something to be thought about in the future, for sure.

555 If only everything was as easy as 'yes' or 'no' as to whether we extend this. Negotiations; this has been looked at for weeks. The Member is obviously aware, I think, of what has been going on in the background by his questioning; if not, he is a very clever man and very shrewd. If only it was as easy as 'yes' or 'no' whether to give this extension or not. As I say, it is ongoing discussions between myself and the DEFA Minister, and a decision will have to be made shortly because obviously, as you are well aware, the licence does run out on 31st and we are absolutely aware of that.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Peters ... no? Mr Thomas.

560

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Two technical questions, mindful of what Mr Speaker has said. The first one is can the Minister advise the capacity in which the DEFA Minister and the DoI Minister are involved in this? Is the

565 DoI Minister involved because of the Territorial Seas Committee aspect? And, secondly, is the
DEFA Minister involved for two reasons, firstly, because they are responsible for marine
infrastructure management permissions for the Fisheries Division and secondly, because they are
responsible for energy policy? And if that is the case, is there not an intrinsic conflict of interest
between being responsible for speaking up for the industry through energy policy and protecting
the environment; and does the Minister want to comment on that conflict of interest because I
570 am mindful that energy policy used to be the responsibility of the Department for Enterprise.

The second question is, can the Minister advise in respect of the existing licence, whether or
not it is guaranteed that if gas is found or hydrocarbons are found, that they can be exploited by
the licence holder?

575 **The Speaker:** Minister to reply.

The Minister: Mr Speaker, to take the last part first, there are no guarantees at this stage.
Absolutely no guarantees at this stage. It is purely for seismic surveys, which is what they are
looking for, for the extension they are looking to do. They want to know what is down there and I
580 presume – going by conversations I have had and comments I have had back – an awful lot of
people want to know what is down there to see what the value is and what the potential is for the
Isle of Man, and I totally understand that.

With regard to his first question, DoI's involvement in this, yes, it is because of the territorial
seas and DEFA, obviously, as was mentioned, because of the environment and things. And there
585 was a piece in the middle that I have forgotten, which was ... (**Mr Thomas:** Energy policy.) Yes,
energy policy as well is down to DEFA, yes.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mrs Caine.

590 **Mrs Caine:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Can I ask the Minister if he would confirm, he said there would be no legal consequences if the
Departments determined not to extend Phase B of this licence to this company. Also would he
clarify what considerations are taken into account when the two Ministers are determining
whether to extend that licence? Would it be, for instance, a consideration that Shell has pulled
595 out of Cambo in the Shetland Islands. Does he feel that this is signalling a move away from
hydrocarbon extraction as it becomes increasingly uneconomical and renewables a better bet?
But also will he have any consideration as to the Island's requirements to reduce our emissions
and our responsibilities to climate change when determining whether to extend that licence?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

600

The Speaker: The Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Yes, I did say that if we were not to renew the extension there were no legal consequences. I
605 presume if anybody wanted to they could take out a legal petition of doleance against us, but as
far as we know there are no legal consequences for doing so. We are fully entitled to stop that.

The Hon. Member mentioned just because Shell had pulled out, I think it was in the Shetlands,
what sort of signal that is sending out, on the other hand, there are people who are still taking out
contracts and we know that gas is going to be a transition fuel for the next 20-25 years. We know
610 it is going to be around.

We need to know what is best for the Island and what is best for the environment. And I believe
that if we were going to start extracting gas locally that would be better than certainly transporting
it from Norway, from Russia or anywhere else. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) We just do not know what
is down there and they do not know and they want to find out. I think we need to know. Well, I
615 will just wait and see. (**The Speaker:** Yes.)

As far as the Isle of Man emissions are concerned –

The Speaker: Minister, I need to draw your comments back towards *licensing* because if I am going to stop questioners I need to stop answers wandering off the subject as well, if that is okay.

620

The Minister: Okay, Mr Speaker, because the final part was about emissions but I will leave that then because it was not about licensing.

The Speaker: Thank you.

625

Mr Moorhouse, supplementary question.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

In terms of the ongoing licensing discussions, is the existing party with the licence the only one who applied for a licence in the first instance? And is the Minister aware that the British government are actually currently issuing new licences with the aim of improving energy security and the availability of this fuel of transition?

630

Thank you.

The Speaker: Minister.

635

The Minister: Originally, Mr Speaker, there were two applicants and Crogga proved to be the worthwhile one. If the licence was not extended maybe we might go back to that again, go out to the field again and look for expressions of interest, but this is purely about Crogga at the moment.

640

The Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr Thomas.

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The first question is a general question; can the Minister advise that when he talks about gas being a transition fuel until 2041 or 2046 he is not talking about the Isle of Man. No decision has been made as yet in respect of gas on the Isle of Man or has a decision been made on the Isle of Man?

645

And the second, more specific question, with reference to the licences, can the Minister advise why any company would pay to do seismic surveys if they did not expect to be able to exploit any hydrocarbons they discover? Because it seems to me a bit of a strange concept that you pay for something if you were not able to exploit what you might discover in your seismic surveys.

650

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

655

With regard to the date of 2045 with a transition fuel, that is a date that has been bandied around and is generally accepted, I gather ... that is moveable but it is just a date that I have taken as being bandied around and people are working to.

Regarding the licences, sorry, remind me?

660

The Speaker: Mr Thomas.

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Minister made a categorical statement there was no guarantee (**The Minister:** Oh, yes.) that the licence-holder could exploit the gas. I just wanted to see, perhaps it would be helpful to circulate to Members and perhaps the general public, exactly what he meant by 'no guarantee' given that I do not think a seismic survey would be undertaken unless there was a possibility of exploiting what was discovered.

665

The Speaker: Minister.

670 **The Minister:** Mr Speaker, Phase B is purely for the seismic surveys and then Phase C would be testing, but absolutely not at this stage is there any guarantee of drilling. Ask me why? I do not know but that is the way it is and that is what is accepted at the moment.

**1.8. South Quay –
Traffic calming and 20-mph limit**

The Hon. Member for Douglas Central (Mrs Corlett) to ask the Minister for Infrastructure:

What consideration has been given to a 20-mph speed limit, with traffic calming measures, on South Quay?

The Speaker: Question 8, I call on the Hon. Member for Douglas Central, Mrs Corlett.

675 **Mrs Corlett:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.
Could I ask the Minister for Infrastructure what consideration has been given to a 20-mph speed limit with traffic calming measures on South Quay?

The Speaker: I call on the Minister for Infrastructure to reply.

680 **The Minister for Infrastructure (Mr Crookall):** Thank you, Mr Speaker.
The Department has not given any consideration to the implementation of a 20-mph speed limit on South Quay.
Thank you.

685 **The Speaker:** Mrs Corlett.

Mrs Corlett: Thank you, Mr Speaker.
Then could I ask the Minister *would* he give consideration (*Laughter*) to a 20-mph speed limit on South Quay? *So* many complaints with regard to speed. Would it perhaps be better to be proactive rather than reactive on South Quay? It is an area where there is some development taking place and if we are to encourage people to live or to work in this part of town, and it is a nice place to live or to work, then reducing speeding in order to make it safer for motorists or pedestrians can only be a good thing.

695 **The Speaker:** Minister to reply.

The Minister: Mr Speaker, though a small number of resident properties front on to the South Quay, the road cannot be classified as residential in character, fronted as it is by retail units, car parks, light industrial units and a commercial harbourside. South Quay's primary role is to link Douglas Harbour to the wider highway network and as such is one of the few roads on the Island identified as being suitable for articulated vehicles weighing up to 44 tonnes or exceeding 14 metres.

705 **The Speaker:** Supplementary question, Mr Thomas.

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

710 That is a very clear and very helpful answer. Pursuing that line, are there any traffic calming measures that are ever appropriate on a road of which at the end of it is the Douglas coastguard and heavy goods vehicles use it and so on? Are there ever any possibilities for traffic calming in that situation?

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

715 **The Minister:** The implementation of any traffic calming measures would have a detrimental effect on some of the heavy goods vehicles up and down there. So we would have to be very careful at what we looked at doing. The speed limits down there at the moment, the testing that we have done does not show that it is excessive speeds down there. Yes, of course, I absolutely accept there will be one or two cars that go fast. They do on lots of roads; I could name probably
720 a dozen straightaway where that happens. We have not had lots of complaints. We have had the odd complaint, but we have not had that many as the Member makes. I am more than happy to discuss this with the local Members involved in the area and follow up on any ideas, but as a rule it is an industrial area which is heavily used by walkers and people going down there, I take that on board, but we do not have an issue, as far as we are aware, with vehicles speeding down there
725 regularly.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Peters.

Mr Peters: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

730 Does the Infrastructure Minister agree with me that any problems of antisocial driving or speeding on South Quay would be better addressed by a mobile speed camera than by ridiculous traffic calming bumps or bollards?

The Speaker: Minister.

735

The Minister: At the moment, I would say it would be the best way of doing it. It is an enforcement issue, and it is not just South Quay, as I said. There are other places. Indeed, Peel Promenade, Peel Harbour, Castletown, other areas we can name that have this issue and it is an enforcement issue at the moment. It is not *down* to the Police, but with the help of the Police we could maybe sort it a bit.
740

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Thomas.

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

745 I am sure the Minister might need to think whether he can answer this question, if it is *sub judice* or anything like that, but how fast was the vehicle that went into the sea travelling just before it went into the sea and was it going in forward direction or in backward direction?
(*Laughter*)

750 **The Speaker:** I do not expect you to have that information on you, Minister.

The Minister: Mr Speaker, I have no idea what happened the other night down there on South Quay. It has not been made public and as far as I know ... there is a lot of speculation around who did what and how and what went wrong – I have no idea.

EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE

**1.9. Mask-wearing in schools –
DESC policy**

The Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew (Mr Moorhouse) to ask the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

What her Department's policy is on mask-wearing in schools; and if she will make a statement?

755 **The Speaker:** Question 9, I call on the Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

760 I would like to ask the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture what her Department's policy is on mask-wearing in schools, and if she will make a statement?

The Speaker: Now, technology permitting, I turn to the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture to reply.

765 **The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture (Ms Edge):** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Following the measures introduced and announced by the Chief Minister that we would move to the winter level 2, from Tuesday 13th November, staff, all secondary and UCM students and all visitors have been expected to wear face coverings in all of our educational settings unless there is a medical reason why they are unable to do so. This also includes attendance at concerts, prize-givings and after-school events. Primary school students are not expected to wear face coverings, but students in years 5 and 6 are encouraged to do so.

770 All educational settings continue to implement measures to support hands, face, space and fresh air, and all staff, including secondary and UCM students, are encouraged to continue to test for COVID-19 at least twice a week using the free LFD test kits and for 'know before you go' to protect themselves and others. Making our educational settings as safe as possible for our staff and students and maintaining face-to-face learning, both for the immediate and longer term, are still our key priorities. I would like to thank staff, students and their parents for their continued effort and support. Face coverings play an important role in protecting others from any circulating winter illnesses and this approach will be most effective if everybody plays their part.

780 Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you, Minister, for such a clear Answer.

785 What does 'expected' actually mean and how much tolerance is there within the system? What is the uptake of mask-wearing in schools and what updates have the Department received from schools about the challenges and the success of this initiative?

Thank you.

790 **The Speaker:** Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The majority of schools are stating that approximately 100% of staff are wearing face coverings, but the number of students is varying between 20% and 50%.

795 With regard to the hidden disabilities, the Department would be content to support the Disabilities Sunflower scheme that Isle of Man Transport currently support, and we would encourage any students and staff to wear the lanyard.
Thank you, Mr Speaker.

800 **The Speaker:** Further supplementary, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you, Minister.
Has the Department provided any additional support to help with the successful implementation of mask-wearing in schools and are masks freely available for those children from
805 low-income families and those who have not their own mask? Also, how are masks and goggles being dealt with in a science lesson?
Thank you.

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

810 **The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.
PPE has been made available in all of our settings and that includes face coverings for those that do not have access to them. We have also put numerous posters in all of our settings to try and encourage students to wear the face coverings and all of our guidance does align with the
815 Government policy.

With regard to science lessons and wearing masks and goggles, obviously, within a science lab, there has always been health and safety criteria in place, and I would expect the science labs to be following cleanliness and cleaning the equipment down following their lessons.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

820 **The Speaker:** Supplementary question, Mr Callister.

Mr Callister: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the Minister for her statement this morning.
Could I just ask the Minister if they have had any correspondence or have written to primary
825 schools with regard to the Department's stance with regard to face masks? I know I raised the question in another place with regard to the message that primary school students were being encouraged or expected to wear face masks. I take comfort from the Minister's statement this morning, but can I ask what correspondence she is having with schools to make sure that message is very clear to schools and to parents?

830 Thank you.

The Speaker: Minister to reply. Minister? Sorry, you will need to unmute. Sorry.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

835 **The Speaker:** Thank you.

The Minister: As I responded in my original Answer, guidance was provided to the schools when the announcement was made on 30th November and I am happy to provide the guidance
840 that has been provided to the schools to all Hon. Members.

The Speaker: Thank you.
Supplementary question, Dr Haywood.

845 **Dr Haywood:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like to ask the Minister who is responsible for producing the health and safety policy statements and risk assessments for each school, whether it is her Department or whether it is devolved to the head teachers? And when were the airborne disease risk assessments last revised? Would she advise revisiting these procedures in light of the current high level of disease transmission that is happening within schools?

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

With regard to written assessments, within all our educational settings, the head teachers are responsible for them, in conjunction with the Department and also the Director of Public Health. When any new changes come to Government policy, these risk assessments should be updated and I will check that that situation has happened. It is up to the individual schools to make sure that their risk assessment policies are up to date.

1.10. Balanced diets – DESC position and guidance

The Hon. Member for Ayre and Michael (Mr Johnston) to ask the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture:

What her Department considers to be a balanced diet; and what guidance is given to schools?

The Speaker: We turn to Question 10, I call on the Hon. Member for Ayre and Michael, Mr Johnston.

Mr Johnston: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Could I ask the Minister for Education what her Department considers to be a balanced diet; and what guidance is given to schools?

The Speaker: I call on the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture to reply.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture (Ms Edge): Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the Hon. Member for the Question that was certainly an area of concern with me in the last administration.

A balanced diet is considered to comprise a wide range of foods, including different fruits, vegetables, grains and pulses and a variety of meats and fish dishes. Primary school meal menus are written following the guidelines from England's school food standards format document, as there are currently no legislated standards on the Island. The menu has two choices each day, which can be accompanied by vegetables, potatoes or salad from the salad bar. In addition, each meal is served with fresh bread and water. The menu has a meat-free day, a vegetarian option every day and a vegan meal once a week. This will encourage children to try new options within their diet. These guidelines are also used in the UK and Scotland as a standard form of menu planning.

Guidance notes are provided to every primary school kitchen to follow regarding recipes, portion sizes and quantities along with cooking instructions and ordering information. In relation to secondary schools, they also follow the guidance set out by England's food standards document, as well as other guidance documents in relation to nutrition, healthy food options are offered daily, however students are allowed to choose what they eat.

Schools do use fresh, sustainable and locally sourced food where possible and advice is regularly sought from the Isle of Man Government's paediatric dieticians and Health Improvement team regarding dietary requirements to include coeliac, diabetic and other specific allergen diets.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

890

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Johnston.

Mr Johnston: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you, Minister, for her Answer.

895

I have received correspondence that some teachers are promoting vegan and vegetarian diets within Island schools in order to apparently help combat climate change. It has also been reported that students of at least two high schools have been encouraged to go meat-free to save the planet. I do not have an issue with personal choice and any individual has a right to decide what they choose to eat. However, can I ask the Minister whether she feels it appropriate for individual teachers to promote their personal dietary choices to students?

900

Thank you.

The Speaker: Okay. We are straying slightly. Minister.

The Minister: Yes, strayed a little bit away, but I am happy to answer.

905

At present there is no DESC Department statutory or advisory curriculum for aspects of healthy eating and diet. However, schools will cover elements in their PSE lessons, science, design and technology on food and nutrition sections, and obviously, in PE, nutrition and exercise.

Schools do design their own curricula programmes to meet the requirements of the Curriculum Order 2011 and within this it states:

(d) all teaching shall promote the personal spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and contribute to their education in the fields of —

(i) health;

910

Examples of resources schools may use include the Food Standards Agency, the NHS Change4Life toolkit and the PSHE Association's resource pack 'Health Education: food choices, physical activity & balanced lifestyles'.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

915

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Could a little bit more detail be provided on the use and promotion of local produce; and can this be increased?

920

Thank you.

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the Hon. Member for his question.

925

With regard to procurement, obviously the Department follows the Government procurement policy with regard to purchase local where possible, and hopefully a review of funding will help support any changes in this area to make sure that sustainable options are utilised.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Dr Haywood.

930

Dr Haywood: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like to thank the Minister for answering a similar Written Question from me back in October, but I would like to ask the Minister if she is aware that the school food standards

935 document that she is referring to treats all primary schoolchildren the same when it is clear that there should be at least a 30% increase in the calorific value of food provided to 10-year-olds compared to that given to five-year-olds? Why is there no apparent adjustment being made in portion sizes in primary school servings? This is leaving our year 5 and 6 pupils often feeling hungry during the afternoon, which will impair their learning.

940 **The Speaker:** Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the Hon. Member for her question.

945 If she has any information with regard to this in specific areas, I would be pleased to take that up. It was a concern for myself in the previous administration and I have been assured that if a child feels like they need to ask for further food or a larger portion that they are free to do so, and obviously the salad bar is freely available as well. But it would be helpful if the Member could forward any information she has on to me.

950 **The Speaker:** Supplementary question, Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Minister for the statement as well.

In that statement, she mentioned 'locally sourced'. Could she define what she means by locally sourced, please?

Thank you.

955

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

960 With regard to 'locally sourced', all of our food produce comes from local providers. Some of our schools do use the local butchers and produce within their local areas, but everything is purchased on Island. As we all know, all of our food sources are not produced on the Island, so there will be elements of food coming in from England, but they are purchased through the local providers.

965 **The Speaker:** Supplementary question, Mr Johnston.

Mr Johnston: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

970 At the recent COP26 meeting in Glasgow, there was much discussion about the importance of sustainability and environmental and climate impact of different foodstuffs. There was a recognition of the importance of reducing food miles, eating more seasonally and promoting more traditional grass-based farming systems like we have on the Isle of Man, producing a carbon footprint 40% below the global average. Could I please ask the Minister to ensure that our students are given the opportunity to hear about this as well as other views so that they can make informed choices over their diets?

975 Thank you.

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the Member for that question.

980 Certainly, I will take that information back to the Department and ask for it to be discussed at the next meetings with the primary and secondary head teachers with regard to their curriculum in this area.

Also, due to the concerns that have been raised today, I will be taking back to the Department that I want to have a full look and review at the school meals provision.

985 **The Speaker:** Thank you.

ENTERPRISE

**1.11. TT 2022 –
Supporting TT Zero race return; reducing carbon footprint**

The Hon. Member for Garff (Mrs Caine) to ask the Minister for Enterprise:

Whether his Department will support the return of a TT Zero race in 2022; and what actions are being considered to reduce the festival's carbon footprint?

The Speaker: Question 11. I call on the Hon. Member for Garff, Mrs Caine.

Mrs Caine: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

990 Could I ask the Minister for Enterprise whether his Department will support the return of a TT Zero race in 2022, and what actions are being considered to reduce the festival's carbon footprint?

The Speaker: I call on the Minister for Enterprise to reply, please.

The Minister for Enterprise (Dr Allinson): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

995 With regard to TT Zero, in 2019 the Department announced that there would be a two-year moratorium for this class due to a number of factors, not least the slow rate of development of clean-emission sports bikes within the motorcycle industry and the low number of participants in the event. In the intervening period, due to the impact of the global pandemic and the two-year hiatus in racing following the 2019 TT, that assessment has not changed and TT Zero is not planned
1000 to return to the schedule in either 2022 or 2023.

The race schedules for both the 2022 and 2023 TT Races were released earlier this year, to allow visitors and race fans enough time to plan their visits to celebrate the return of road racing to our Island.

1005 In relation to the TT Races generally, the focus of my Department is to introduce policy and operating practices that tangibly reduce the carbon footprint ahead of the 2022 event. Although the TT Zero was a forerunner in the field, we are conscious that it still has a negative impact on our carbon footprint and the overall vision of the TT is to be fully sustainable and carbon neutral. The Department can confirm that it is working towards attaining ISO 20121 for the TT, the worldwide standard for sustainable event management systems. The ISO defines sustainability as
1010 'how an organisation continues to run its activities in a commercially successful way whilst contributing towards a stronger and more just society and reducing its impact on the environment'.

Thank you.

1015 **The Speaker:** Supplementary question, Mrs Caine.

Mrs Caine: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the Minister for his response.

1020 Just two questions, please. Is he suggesting, then, that the review might lead to a TT Zero sustainable bike race beyond 2023 – so 2024 onwards? Also, in terms of becoming fully sustainable, will that involve offsetting or whatever means?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

1025 **The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the Hon. Member for Garff for her further questions.

In terms of what happens in TT 2024, the Department is certainly looking at other possibilities. Whilst there has been a relatively slow uptake in terms of electric motorbikes, there is increasing emphasis on hydrogen-powered motorbikes using fuel cells. I am aware that Honda have a patent on this already and Segway and Kawasaki have models that are in production for commercial use, so this is certainly something that the Department will be quite keen on working on in the future.

1030 In terms of offsetting, that is certainly an option and actually was implemented for the 2019 TT when the Department offset a total of 118 tonnes of CO₂, which was the calculation of the release due to the fuel used during the races and qualifying laps.

Standing Orders suspended to take remaining Questions

1035 **The Speaker:** Hon. Members, that completes the hour available for Questions. Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I beg to extend to the end of Questions, please.

1040 **The Speaker:** Thank you. Mr Johnston.

Mr Johnston: I second that.

1045 **The Speaker:** You second that proposal, okay, thank you. I put the question that we continue to the end of the Question Paper, there being six Questions remaining. Those in favour, please say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

1.12. LoveIOM card scheme – Government involvement and support for competitors

The Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew (Mr Moorhouse) to ask the Minister for Enterprise:

What involvement the Government had in the development and launch of the LoveIOM card; what Government support continues to be given and at what budgeted cost; and whether the Government will offer comparable support to the on-Island competitors of businesses registered with the LoveIOM card scheme?

1050 **The Speaker:** We turn, then, to Question 12. I call on the Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like to ask the Minister for Enterprise: what involvement the Government had in the development and launch of the LoveIOM card, what Government support continues to be given and what is the budgeted cost, and whether the Government will offer comparable support to the on-Island competitors of businesses registered with the LoveIOM card scheme?

1055 Thank you.

The Speaker: I call on the Minister for Enterprise to reply.

The Minister for Enterprise (Dr Allinson): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1060 I would like to thank the Hon. Member for his Question. The LoveIOM gift card was developed by the Department for Enterprise at the request of the Economic Recovery Group. The scheme is being run on behalf of the Department by a suitably qualified supplier appointed through an open procurement process.

1065 The idea behind this scheme was to develop a platform that could be scaled up with further public funds to stimulate the local economy from time to time. There is no other comparable card from any on-Island company. The LoveIOM gift card is not a conventional loyalty card but an electronic platform that allows a wide range of parameters to be adjusted on an ongoing basis as the need arises, and money to be physically put on the card either by the card owner, or, importantly, by Government to stimulate a particular outcome or sector.

1070 Gift card purchasers will benefit from incentives for using the card, such as additional credit for purchasing a gift card and cashback if they choose to spend in hospitality at certain times throughout the year. The funding for these incentives is provided by Government through the Economic Recovery Group and adds to what the consumer is spending directly.

1075 The full costs of the scheme were set out in a recent Written Answer, but in terms of the support set aside by Government which will assist businesses registered with the scheme, £50,000 was budgeted for a special Black Friday launch incentive – this was announced when the gift card launched on a pre-sale basis on 26th November; and a further £500,000 has been put aside for a week-night incentive scheme beginning in January, called ‘Why not Weekdays’.

1080 The LoveIOM gift card seeks to encourage Island residents to support Isle of Man businesses, and so Government funding is indirectly provided to businesses that have registered with the scheme. If any businesses have issues registering for the scheme or technology problems accessing the online system, they are asked to contact the Business Agency, who will be able to help find and fund solutions.

1085 As the Hon. Member will be aware, last week over £9 million of further COVID support was announced to help businesses across a range of sectors through the winter period. The LoveIOM card is just one of the methods of support offered as part of a wider winter package of support. Businesses will be able to apply for all or some of the schemes, depending on their situation. The schemes will remain open until March at least, giving businesses plenty of options for support.

1090 I would encourage hospitality businesses to register with LoveIOM in order to benefit from the stimulus funds. However, as the new COVID support package shows, we continue to look at a range of ways to support businesses in the Island.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Moorhouse.

1095 **Mr Moorhouse:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you, Minister, for that detailed Answer.

1100 Could you provide some more detail in terms of the factors that led to the decision to produce such an innovative, enterprising card? Does the Government provide the extra 25% spending power which is currently available on the card, and in terms of the Government, does it make the full contribution of that amount?

Thank you.

The Speaker: I call on the Minister to reply.

1105 **The Minister:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

In terms of the impetus for this card, there was an approach by several large corporate entities on the Island who wanted to reward their employees with a gift card as they normally did, but this

time use one that was available to support the local economy, and the Economic Recovery Group responded to that.

1110 In terms of the opening offer, there is, for a limited period, the ability to have extra funds put on to the card when it is bought, which can add up to £10 if £40 is charged to the card.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Moorhouse.

1115

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you, Minister.

How will the success of this initiative be assessed? And does the Minister have any concerns about the limited range of companies currently participating? Is this something that could open up to include lots of different businesses on Island?

1120

Thank you.

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

1125

This is a trial of a new way of trying to stimulate the local economy on the Isle of Man by putting money into people's pockets to spend locally, but also by trying to influence their behaviours in terms of using the hospitality sector on weekdays. We will be closely monitoring this in terms of the use of the card, but also, more importantly, the feedback from those sectors directly, and then we would hopefully be able to develop this in the future to further emphasise the need for people to shop and buy locally.

1130

Thank you.

The Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr Moorhouse.

1135

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and again, thank you, Minister.

What support is being made available to help those businesses with limited technological infrastructures? And how does the Minister believe the scheme could be extended to different social groupings and different businesses within the Island?

Thank you.

1140

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1145

As I set out in my original Answer, if people are struggling with technology, I would ask them to approach the Business Agency. We already have a range of business adaptation grants which are available, but we will be also offering bespoke support for those who struggle either to get online to access the system or have similar other problems.

In terms of trying to widen the scheme out, as I said, this is a trial scheme. We are looking at the uptake. We are encouraging people to sign up for the scheme and buy the card but also those members in the various sectors to come forward and join the scheme so that we can try to maximise the impact over the next three months.

1150

Thank you.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

**1.13. PCR testing –
Alternative premises**

The Hon. Member for Douglas South (Mrs Christian) to ask the Minister for Health and Social Care:

What alternative premises have been considered for PCR testing?

The Speaker: Question 13, I call on the Hon. Member for Douglas South, Mrs Christian.

1155 **Mrs Christian:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like to ask the Minister for Health and Social Care what alternative premises have been considered for PCR testing?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1160 **The Speaker:** I call on the Minister for Health and Social Care to reply.

The Minister for Health and Social Care (Mr Hooper): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

1165 The Grandstand swabbing centre has been open since mid-March 2020 as the Isle of Man's only fixed location for the taking of COVID-19 swabs for subsequent testing in the microbiology lab in Noble's Hospital. In addition to the fixed swabbing centre at the Grandstand, there is also a very small community swabbing team visiting people who are unable to reach the Grandstand, for example, housebound or nursing home patients.

1170 Manx Care have received notice that the Grandstand swabbing centre needs to relocate by February 2022 as part of the preparations for the TT. Manx Care are currently working with the DoI to identify potential alternative locations.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mrs Christian.

Mrs Christian: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1175 I was pleased to hear that the Minister had visited the testing centre on Friday. The staff there deserve medals for working in the conditions that they are working in right now. I would ask the Minister today if he would visit and possibly experience taking a test himself, as I did last week during the storm, where a poor member of staff was freezing, the heating was not working and barely keeping her footing as she tested me from the side of my car. Does the Minister believe
1180 that these are suitable working conditions for Manx Care staff, especially those performing an essential procedure which is used every day?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

1185 **The Minister:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

1190 The question was around alternative premises, but I am happy to talk a little bit about this. I did go up to the centre on Friday to talk to the staff and find out from them what their experiences were. There are definitely challenges. I think with that location it is inevitable, in terms of the testing mechanism we have, the open tent essentially for drive-through testing, and it is a difficult balance between ensuring the testing is accessible for people and safe for people and the conditions of the staff.

So in short, no, I am quite keen to get them moved, actually, to a better premises. I think they do have heaters installed up there which do occasionally break down, but my understanding is

1195 the DoI have been very good, actually, in supporting the staff up there and making sure those heaters are up and working.

It is worth noting that this is not a new issue. This testing centre has been up and running throughout the pandemic and it is quite a late point in the issue to be raising some of these concerns I think, because the staff are, quite frankly, doing a resilient and amazing job up there. I could not really praise them enough. But there are some issues, no doubt, that I have asked the Department to look into with Manx Care, and I really have asked them to try and expedite the relocation to a better and more appropriate testing facility for next year.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mrs Christian.

1205 **Mrs Christian:** Thank you.

I appreciate the Minister is sympathetic. February is too late. The Isle of Man Government has issued a yellow weather warning today – severe gales. The Government has cancelled the ‘Meet the Ministers’ event today in response to the severe weather conditions. Does the Minister agree with me that if we had a walk-in facility this would allow us to temporarily close our drive-in facilities, as other jurisdictions do to protect their staff and consumers, customers?

Thank you.

The President: Minister to reply.

1215 **The Minister:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

The concept of a walk-in facility, I did actually talk to the staff about this on Friday. In some ways, yes, it would be welcomed, I think, by the staff, but it would expose people to a different level of risk. So in terms of placing people in an indoor facility who may very well be COVID positive, as we know a lot of people are going up to the testing centre, it would involve different levels of mitigation. But actually this is being looked at in terms of what is going to be a suitable premises for testing going forward. We may need this for some time and I think what was always envisaged as a temporary situation that has definitely evolved and grown over the last two years, I am not really convinced that that is the place for us going forward. So all these things are definitely under consideration.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Thomas.

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1230 The question is beginning to be answered, but I was going to ask about walk-in facilities. So as the Minister has discussed with the DoI the specifications for the next facility or facilities, has the option of a walk-in facility been considered? It is becoming more and more obvious to people how many walk-in facilities there are in other parts of the world. So therefore it seems necessary to at least consider having a walk-in facility alongside a drive-in facility, especially as constituent after constituent has talked about £45, £50, £60 taxi fares going through the facility – certainly the Douglas Central MHKs have been involved in a number of those cases.

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

1240 **The Minister:** I think the Hon. Member misunderstood my Answer: *Manx Care* are working with the DoI to establish operational alternative locations, as this is very much an operational function of the care system.

In terms of a walk-in facility, I think I need to make it absolutely clear the current facility is not a walk-in facility. The team have had some people turn up on foot, which is always one of those things you envisage people going to drive through not in a car, but that is not appropriate up there. So people are advised to please turn up in a vehicle. It is a drive-through system that has

been set up up there. So that message really should not go out. So in terms of what is the most appropriate thing going forwards, that will be up to Manx Care to determine what is best operationally, not just for their staff, but also for service users.

**1.14. Sexual Assault Referral Centre –
When and where operating**

The Hon. Member for Douglas Central (Mr Thomas) to ask the Minister for Health and Social Care:

From when and where the Sexual Assault Referral Centre will operate?

1250 **The Speaker:** Question 14. I call on the Hon. Member for Douglas Central, Mr Thomas.

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I beg to ask the Minister for Health and Social Care: from when and where the Sexual Assault Referral Centre will operate?

The Speaker: I call on the Minister for Health and Social Care to reply.

1255

The Minister for Health and Social Care (Mr Hooper): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

The Sexual Assault Referral Centre started taking referrals for adults on 1st December 2021. We hope they will be able to start taking referrals for cases of alleged sexual assault in children in the New Year. However, we are awaiting delivery of a vital piece of examination equipment before this can commence.

1260

The interim location is centrally located in Douglas, close to good transport links and available parking. The location will be temporary whilst funding is secured to construct a new, fit-for-purpose Sexual Assault Referral Centre.

1265 **The Speaker:** Supplementary question, Mr Thomas.

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Is it policy not to reveal the location of the temporary facility or the permanent facility? I understand, if it is.

1270

The second point is the Finch Hill GP surgery, which is vacant at the moment, seems to have been identified for at least a year as being a future site. Has that site now been ruled out for the Sexual Assault Referral Centre; and, if so, why?

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

1275

The Minister: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

I think the Hon. Member has hit the nail on the head. It is certainly not my intention to announce the location of a discreet service like this live on Manx Radio. Obviously the location will be a matter of public record; people will be able to find out where it is and access the service with appropriate support from the Constabulary. Along very similar lines, it is not my intention to talk about potential locations for the site either.

1280

ISLAND PLAN DELIVERY COMMITTEE

**1.15. Societal and environment fairness, sustainability and inclusivity –
Measuring delivery**

The Hon. Member for Douglas Central (Mr Thomas) to ask the Chairman of the Island Plan Delivery Committee:

What a fair, inclusive and sustainable society and environment is; and who is responsible for measuring and reporting on the delivery of this vision?

The Speaker: We turn to Question 15. I call on the Hon. Member for Douglas Central, Mr Thomas.

1285 **Mr Thomas:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I beg to ask the Chair of the Island Plan Delivery Committee what a fair, inclusive and sustainable society and environment is, and who is responsible for measuring and reporting on the delivery of this vision?

1290 **The Speaker:** I call on the Chairman of the Island Plan Delivery Committee, the Chief Minister, to reply.

The Chairman of the Island Plan Delivery Committee (Mr Cannan): Mr Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for this Question, which relates to the sustainable core strategic objective that forms part of the vision set out in the draft Island Plan. The reality is that each of the five holistic priorities that are at the heart of the Island Plan and will be our focus over the next five years include aspects of fairness, inclusivity and sustainability.

1295 As Hon. Members would expect, the Island Plan is the overarching vision against which policy in these areas will be developed. Collectively, the actions that are taken by Government in partnership with others will contribute to delivering the objectives as set out in the Plan. These actions will become clearer as the Plan continues to evolve and, importantly, as the details of the departmental plans are finalised and brought to Tynwald for debate in January.

1300 In terms of measuring and reporting on delivery, as set out in the draft Plan, the responsibility for delivery sits with the Government Departments and associated boards and agencies that are tasked with fulfilling the objectives of the Island Plan. Department boards and agencies will be supported by a central programme structure through the Island Plan programme with a Government structure that actively supports delivery of key results. The Island Plan Delivery Committee will have oversight of all Island Plan initiatives with the performance against agreed measures being reported on from Departments and associated boards and agencies through the Island Plan programme.

1305 We also need a set of metrics that sit above the operational delivery progress reports from the individual Departments that can give us a measure of how well we are doing as individuals, as communities and as an Island. Studies from around the world have identified a range of factors that stand out as measures of well-being. Many of these are included in the regular health and lifestyle surveys carried out by the Public Health Directorate and will be part of the evaluation framework for the Island Plan.

1310 For other elements of the Island Plan we will use a recognised measurement known as OKRs – objectives and key results. This is a collaborative way of measuring metrics with clear alignment and engagement. Some initial indicators will be required to capture further measures around poverty, inequalities and environmental quality.

1320 **The Speaker:** Supplementary question, Mr Thomas.

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1325 I am looking forward to learning more about the application of OKRs and the additional metrics in coming weeks. Just very simply, though, will there be a macro-level indicator of the sustainability criteria that have been adopted for the Island Plan, or not?

Secondly, can the Chief Minister describe for me what an inclusive and fair environment might look like, for instance, just by way of example?

1330 **The Speaker:** Chief Minister.

The Chairman: It is the paradox that we have all been looking for, Mr Speaker. I think that the Hon. Member, in writing his Question, sets a theoretical question that has tried to be answered by many in multiple ways. I think, as far as this Government is concerned, we seek to address the challenges that exist in society by identifying those challenges and setting out our goals for improving people's lives where they are affected by those challenges that we have identified.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Thomas.

1340 **Mr Thomas:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, and the Chief Minister for trying to clarify this vision in terms of indicators.

1345 The last three plans, programmes of Government, have all had three strategic objectives and five strategic priorities, and they have all been roughly the same. Can the Chief Minister try to explain to me how the sustainable objective of an inclusive, fair and sustainable society and environment is perhaps different from the inclusive and caring society in an Island of enterprise and opportunity in the last one, or protecting the vulnerable, growing the economy and balancing the budget in the one before that, and perhaps give some flavour of how the top-level vision has changed and whether perhaps the indicators from the last programme for Government can be used again for this strategic objective?

1350

The Speaker: Chief Minister.

The Chairman: Mr Speaker, it is not just about the words; it is about the actions of the Government and the measurements that we associate with those in terms of measuring the actual progress that really matter. They are going to be the fundamental test of whether we succeed in terms of achieving our vision of a secure, vibrant and sustainable Island for the future and achieving the five holistic priorities that we have set out. Those will be the real determinant of how successful this Government is and how successful we are in moving our Island forward to a better place, in line with our visions and the views that many of us have set out in our manifestos, and in terms of moving the Island forward alongside its international commitments as a responsible jurisdiction.

1360

The Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr Thomas.

1365 **Mr Thomas:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

1370 The Chief Minister seems to have just said that if we deliver the actions we have delivered our vision. Very famously, for me, back in 2018 the Scottish Care Inspectorate told us that we delivered the children's Social Services actions, and when we asked them to assess whether we had achieved something they told me – for £4,000, not a lot of money – 'How can we possibly tell you? We have no idea what you were trying to achieve in terms of outcomes from these actions.' Does the Chief Minister agree with me that we need more than just measures of whether we have delivered actions, we need to be clear about what we are trying to achieve before we can actually set down a vision that we are trying to realise?

1375 **The Speaker:** Chief Minister.

The Chairman: I think the Hon. Member is right. That is why, when we come to identify and discuss the Island Plan in January, we will carry with that Island Plan, I hope, a recognised measurement known as objectives and key results, which, as I explained in my Answer, is a collaborative way of measuring metrics with clear alignment and engagement. It is particularly pertinent that we have a clear understanding of what outcomes we are seeking. I think this has been a theme that has plagued Governments constantly over the years in terms of the work they are undertaking – does it have an appropriate outcome that is going to make a real impact on our society?

1380
1385 We need to continue to ask those questions about the work we are undertaking, the relevance of the work we are undertaking and the prioritisation we give to those pieces of work in terms of achieving the overall objectives and vision that we are seeking for this Island.

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

1.16. Legislative programme – Bills in 2021-22 and publishing 2021-26 draft

The Hon. Member for Douglas Central (Mr Thomas) to ask the Chairman of the Council of Ministers' Legislative Committee:

Which Bills will be introduced into the Branches in 2021-22; and when the Council of Ministers will publish its 2021-26 draft legislative programme?

The Speaker: Question 16. Hon. Member for Douglas Central, Mr Thomas.

1390 **Mr Thomas:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I ask the Chair of the Council of Ministers' Legislative Committee: which Bills will be introduced into the Branches in 2021-22 and when the Council of Ministers will publish its 2021-26 draft legislative programme?

1395 **The Speaker:** I call on the Chair of the Council of Ministers' Legislative Committee, Ms Lord-Brennan.

The Chairman of the Council of Ministers' Legislative Committee (Ms Lord-Brennan): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1400 The Government Code states that following a General Election the Council of Ministers agrees a five-year legislative programme, which may be updated during an administration. Committing to a five-year programme for legislation at the beginning of a new administration presents some challenges, given the need for flexibility to adapt to both the shifting priorities and the factors which impact the progress of the Bills within it. In line with the Island Plan, which will be debated
1405 at the January 2022 sitting of Tynwald, it is the intention to provide an overview of the legislative priorities for progression in the short and the long term, which will be informed by Ministers and by Department plans.

1410 It is recognised that the delivery of a complete legislative framework is an essential element of bringing new and existing Acts fully into effect and that this should not be stymied by the absence of any underpinning regulations. To that end, the Bills within the legislative programme need to be progressed and delivered cognisant of any requirements for secondary legislation.

1415 It is also the case that in the last administration a significant number of enabling Bills were passed that require a significant amount of resourcing and drafting time in terms of secondary legislation to bring them into effect. I think it is clear that the time and work required on those is perhaps also having an impact on the overall legislative programme.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Thomas.

1420 **Mr Thomas:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I welcome that informed and intelligent comment about the need to address Appointed Day Orders and regulations, and perhaps that is affecting the progress of primary Bills.

1425 One Minister has already talked enthusiastically, seemingly, about a Private Member's Bill to do with assisted dying; that is in public. Another Member has talked very enthusiastically about a Private Member's Bill for estate agents, to deal with gazumping. There is obviously work still to do in terms of housing miscellaneous provisions, in terms of taking forward the work that Mr Hooper started, where he announced the final stages of the Bill but that there was still further work needed. Wouldn't it be better to include all of those initiatives inside the Government's legislative programme, so that we do not suck away resources into private Members' initiatives, actually thinking rationally about what we are going to do over the five years to address the real issues in terms of the Manx economy, Manx society and the environment, or any other features that need addressing?

1430

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

1435

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

That is the sort of focus that I would like to see the legislative subcommittee take. It definitely needs more focus, considering some of the current lists and evaluation of primary legislation that I have looked at initially.

1440 I agree that prioritisation is important. I think it does need to be informed by political priorities. Matters to do with Private Members' Bills are a matter for private Members to consider. The point about prioritisation should be that, in evaluating it, it needs to be clear that there are policies in place from Departments on the relevant aspects of Government and also that there are clear drafting instructions. It is not, to my mind, simply a case of saying, 'This piece of legislation has been in the pipeline for a while'; there are other things that need to happen before a piece of legislation is progressed and we do need to be mindful of the overall pressure on resources that that will have.

1445

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1450 **The Speaker:** Supplementary, Mr Thomas.

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1455 Let's use a real example. Does the Minister agree with me that the Assisted Dying Bill is likely to require the Capacity Bill to be in place and is likely to require facilities and training? So, wouldn't it be better to actually schedule that sort of piece of legislation at the right time in the Government's legislative programme and alongside the action to actually put in place that sort of arrangement?

1460 Secondly, does the Minister agree with me that although all of us in this House are fully supportive of the new Government and are working together to put together the best place for the Island Plan, the reality is that by this sitting of the House of Keys in the last administration we had five pieces of legislation in the Legislative Council and House of Keys, and in this administration we do not have any primary Bills taking up legislation time at the moment, so we

are beginning to fall behind already? Perhaps that is because of COVID or something, but that is the sad reality.

1465

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1470

In terms of falling behind, I think it is actually the case that Departments have been working on secondary legislation. It is not as if there has been something that has been ready to be progressed in this place or the other place so far. Now, of course, the appropriate response to take is to look at what does need to be progressed and when.

1475

I have certainly been pushing for things like when the Capacity Bill will be ready to come through. I am not going to presume anything to do with any Private Members' Bills, but absolutely things like the Capacity Bill are incredibly important. We know it is needed. It is being worked on and I will continue to push for those important pieces of legislation to come forward, but they do require work within the Departments and in the drafting team. I am as keen as anybody that we can get on and progress things in terms of primary legislation, but they do have to be ready to come forward. The Capacity Bill is very important.

1480

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Dr Allinson.

Dr Allinson: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1485

Would the Minister agree with me that the ability to bring Private Members' Bills is a parliamentary matter and should not be influenced by Government in any way?

Thank you.

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

1490

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I think I have already said that that is a matter for individual Members. The question here is about the Government programme and I have constrained my answers to that.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1495

The Speaker: Final supplementary, Mr Thomas.

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1500

Does the Minister agree with me that although Private Members' Bills are entirely in the gift of the House of Keys or even the Legislative Council, it is quite important to have substance behind legislation that results from the activity of legislative time; otherwise, we end up with frustrated Ministers who have to go initiating Policy Review Committee investigations about some piece of legislation that is actually on the statute book not being put in place soon enough?

1505

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

The Chairman: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1510

I am not aware of that particular point that has been put forward. I do know, though, and I completely agree that it is important to have substance behind these things. This is why I have said that actually ... what is the status of Bills coming forward. Ministers have been asked if they still want to bring forward some of the things that were on the long list of the previous legislative subcommittee. Also, as part of that, it is clear that before drafting can commence in earnest, in some cases there needs to be policy set and there also need to be clear drafting instructions. Those are the things – without those – that also hold progress back. I am sure that Ministers and

1515 Members would rather see things advanced in that way, to actually progress things in the Branches, rather than resort to scrutiny around why things have or have not happened.
Thank you, Mr Speaker.

INFRASTRUCTURE

1.17. Landlord registration – Voluntary uptake rate and timeline for mandating

The Hon. Member for Ayre and Michael (Mr Johnston) to ask the Minister for Infrastructure:

What the uptake for voluntary landlord registration has been; and what the timeline for mandatory registration is?

The Speaker: We turn to Question 17 and I call on the Hon. Member for Ayre and Michael, Mr Johnston.

1520

Mr Johnston: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Could I ask the Infrastructure Minister what the uptake for voluntary landlord registration has been; and what the timeline for mandatory registration is?

1525

The Speaker: I call on the Minister for Infrastructure to reply.

The Minister for Infrastructure (Mr Crookall): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1530

Since the voluntary scheme was relaunched on 3rd November 2021, the Housing Division has received 42 applications from private-sector landlords. Subject to the Department's legislative plans and the availability of resources at the Attorney General's office, it is anticipated that drafting of regulations may take place in the new year with a public consultation on the draft regulations taking place following this. Tynwald will then review the regulations.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Johnston.

1535

Mr Johnston: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the Minister.

Could I ask the Minister why it was felt necessary to offer voluntary registration to landlords before any of the regulation or minimum standards registration requirement or enforcement provisions have been put in place?

1540

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

1545

The Minister: In March 2021, the Department wrote to all registered landlords advising them of a temporary suspension whilst the Landlord Registration Bill was before the Branches. When the scheme was ready to relaunch, the Department sent an update to all former members of this scheme in August 2021. In September, the Department issued a further update to those former members and invited them to reapply to the relaunched scheme. This letter had the application form and guidance note included.

1550

Since the relaunch, members of the Housing team have had meetings with landlords who may require assistance with application forms or more information. They have also responded to over 100 queries received via the landlord registration email inbox since the relaunch of the scheme.

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1555 Is the Minister able to offer some reassurance to small landlords about the magnitude of the change? I think a lot of them are really quite concerned about what is happening in the lack of clarity and at the same time others are suggesting there are major changes ahead and it is time to be concerned and perhaps get out of the property market. I think the Minister could really calm the waters in this area.

1560 Thank you.

The Speaker: I am conscious about getting into the detail of some legislation that has not yet gone before Tynwald.
Minister.

1565

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I understand exactly where the Member is coming from. We have had quite a few comments and emails and things back to the Department and personally to myself, but obviously that will come with the consultation in the new year, hopefully once the new regulations have been drafted. But we are talking regularly to landlords.

1570

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Johnston.

Mr Johnston: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1575

I have had correspondence from landlords who are quitting the rental market because of the uncertainty created by the lack of clear regulation and what it will entail. I have also received correspondence from tenants who have been given notice by their landlords that, due to the uncertainty, are unwilling to renew tenancy agreements, leaving many people worried about where they are going to live.

1580

Would the Minister agree with me that these are the consequences of a lack of planning, clarity and communication?

A Member: Hear, hear.

1585

The Speaker: Minister to reply.

The Minister: I would agree with the Hon. Member that it absolutely could have been better, but we have, as I said, in the Department spoken to well over a hundred landlords. Some have said they are quitting, some have said they are thinking of quitting. I would absolutely urge them at this time not to do that until we have discussed this with them. I would say *please* wait until we have had ... If you are in any concern at all, come and talk to the Department about it, we are happy to talk about it, rather than just giving your tenants notice to get out and then putting it onto the property market. Please come and talk to us and see what is coming with the consultation; early in the new year, hopefully.

1595

The Speaker: Supplementary question, Mr Thomas.

Mr Thomas: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

1600

Can the Minister advise how many rented properties those 42 voluntarily registered landlords have? Is it smaller people or is it bigger people? Presumably that information is available as part of the voluntary registration process.

Secondly, can the Minister comment on the questions that I get asked, and obviously other people get asked, which is what are the fire regulations for rented houses? You have to indicate whether or not you are in compliance with them, but I get asked what are the fire regulations?

1605 What do I say? Can the Minister also advise what the insulation standards are for all rented properties? I get asked that and I do not really know what to say.

The Speaker: I just tried to discourage Members from going down exactly that path, but Minister. *(Laughter)*

1610

The Minister: Mr Speaker, I am sure there are some qualifying stats that are available from the Fire Brigade of what is required regarding that side of the issue. The Department has 42 people registered so far. I am not aware of how many flats that involves. Yes, I can find that out obviously, but I have not got that to hand. But again going back to what is involved or what will be involved, that will all come out in the regulations in the future and we are happy to discuss that as and when.

1615

The Speaker: Well, that concludes Questions this morning and the business before the House for today. The House is now adjourned until our next scheduled sitting on Tuesday, 14th December in Tynwald Court.

1620

Thank you, Hon. Members.

The House adjourned at 12.12 p.m.