TYNWALD COURT
OFFICIAL REPORT

RECORTYS OIKOIL
QUAIYL TINVAAL

PROCEEDINGS

DAALTYN

(HANSARD)

Douglas, Tuesday, 21st July 2026

All published Official Reports can be found on the Tynwald website:

www.tynwald.org.im/business/hansard

Supplementary material provided subsequent to a sitting is also published to the website as a Hansard Appendix. Reports, maps and other documents referred to in the course of debates may be consulted on application to the Clerk of Tynwald's Office.

Volume 143, No. 23

ISSN 1742-2256

Published by the Office of the Clerk of Tynwald, Legislative Buildings,
Finch Road, Douglas, Isle of Man, IM1 3PW. © High Court of Tynwald, 2026

Present:

The President of Tynwald (Hon. J P Watterson)

In the Council:
The Lord Bishop of Sodor and Man (The Rt Rev. P Hillas),
The Attorney General (Mr W H Wannenburgh),
Mrs T M August-Phillips, Mr G R Clueit, Mr P H Craine, Mrs D Kelsey,
Mrs D K Kinnish, Mr R J Mercer, Mrs K Morphet, Mr P H Reid
with Ms J Corkish, Deputy Clerk of Tynwald.

In the Keys:
The Deputy Speaker (Mrs C A Corlett) (Douglas Central);
The Chief Minister (Hon. A L Cannan) (Ayre and Michael);
Mr J R Moorhouse and Mr T S Glover (Arbory, Castletown and Malew);
Hon. T D Johnston (Ayre and Michael);
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 Hon. C S B Christian (Douglas South);
Hon. D H P Caine and Mr A J Smith (Garff);
Ms K A Lord-Brennan and Hon. T M Crookall (Glenfaba and Peel);
Mr S G Peters (Middle);
Mr R E Callister and Ms J M Edge (Onchan);
Mr L L Hooper and Dr A J Allinson (Ramsey);
Dr M E K Haywood (Rushen)
with Mr J D C King, Clerk of Tynwald.

Business transacted

Leave of absence granted....2177
Congratulations to Mr Ashford and his partner on the birth of their son....2177
Happy birthday to Mr Mercer....2178
Order of the Day....2178
1. Election of the President of Tynwald in accordance with the Constitution Act 1990....2178
Statement by the President....2180
The Court adjourned at 10.16 a.m. and resumed its sitting at 10.17 a.m....2182
Welcome to the Lieutenant Governor....2182
Procedural – Rearrangement of Order Paper....2182
Bills for signature....2183
Papers laid before the Court....2183
Questions....2189
1. Migration – Question withdrawn....2189
2. Onshore windfarm planning application – Island Plan Final Programme Report non-inclusion; funding; financial compliance; final cost....2189
3. Government employees receiving relocation packages in last three years – Number of recipients leaving within three years of payment....2192
4. Online gambling sector Bloomberg Businessweek article – CoMin consideration....2194
5. Major employer of record providers – Supported territory recognition....2196
6. Manannan evening sailing 26th October 2025 – Question withdrawn....2198
7. Treasury's Public Audit Reform Report – Auditor General or PAC involvement....2198
8. Visas – Question withdrawn....2200
9. National Sports Centre tiles – Progress in last three months....2200
10. Arbory School drop-off and collection arrangements – Proposed improvements' implementation....2203
11. New Castle Rushen High School – Progress since 8th December 2025....2204
12. Potential easyJet sale – Implications....2208
13. Ramsey and District Cottage Hospital services – Reinstatement progress; public meeting organisation; timescales and next steps....2210
14. Waiting lists – Actions to cut in last six months; areas now of concern....2213
15. Respite care – Available provision and support....2218
16. Revised Sea Services Agreement – Progress made....2222
17. Territorial sea planning legislation – Number of officers working on....2224
18. Ramsey pedestrian environment – Improvements since 2019 audits....2225
19. Hillsborough law – Equivalent legislation plans....2226
20. Onshore windfarm – Progress since 19th May 2026....2228

21. Report of the Select Committee on the Role of the Legislature in the Budget Process – CoMin's collective responsibility re recommendations 2231

22-23. July 2026 Royal visit – Cost 2232

24. Arbory Street and Malew Street resurfacing – Plan progress in last six months 2234

25. Disc parking system – Review progress 2236

Order of the Day 2239

5.&6. Lower Douglas Bus and Passenger Facilities; Department of Health and Social Care – Governance Review – Progress Report – Motions deferred to after lunch 2239

7. Douglas Bay Horse Tramway – Continuation of Funding – Motion carried 2239

26. Education Act 2001 – Education (Student Awards) (Amendment) Regulations 2026 approved 2243

8. Climate Change Transformation Programme – Annual Progress Report 2025-2026 – Debate commenced 2247

The Court adjourned at 1 p.m. and resumed its sitting at 2.31 p.m. 2249

Climate Change Transformation Programme – Annual Progress Report 2025-2026 – Debate concluded – Report received 2249

5. Lower Douglas Bus and Passenger Facilities – Statement by Minister for Infrastructure 2256

6. Department of Health and Social Care Governance Review Progress Report – Statement by Minister for Health and Social Care 2260

9. Economic Policy Review Committee – Second Report for the Session 2025-26: The Department for Enterprise and the Executive Agencies – Debate commenced 2268

The Court adjourned at 4.24 p.m. and resumed its sitting at 4.55 p.m. 2278

Economic Policy Review Committee – Second Report for the Session 2025-26: The Department for Enterprise and the Executive Agencies – Debate concluded – Report received and recommendations as amended approved 2279

10. Standing Orders Committee of Tynwald – Second Report for the Session 2025-26: Attendance of the Attorney General – Motion carried 2289

Procedural – Addition to Bills for signature – Nicotine Products Bill 2026 2292

11. Select Committee of Tynwald on Poverty (2021) – First Report for the Session 2025-26 – Child Poverty: Education and Health Solutions – Report received and recommendations as amended approved 2293

12. Select Committee of Tynwald on Whistleblowing Policy Implementation Report 2025-26 – Debate commenced 2305

Procedural – Suspend Standing Orders to extend sitting to eight o'clock – Motion lost 2314

The Court adjourned at 6.53 p.m.+ 2315

Tynwald

The Court met at 10 a.m.

[MR DEPUTY PRESIDENT in the Chair]

The Deputy Clerk: Hon. Members, please be upstanding for the Deputy President of Tynwald.

The Deputy President (Mr Speaker): Moghrey mie, good morning, Hon. Members.

Members: Moghrey mie, Mr Deputy President.

The Deputy President: I call on the Lord Bishop to lead us in prayer.

PRAYERS
The Lord Bishop

Leave of absence granted

The Deputy President: Hon. Members, I can advise that leave of absence has been given to Mr Ashford on a rolling basis for the sitting to attend when he can; Mr Crookall for tomorrow morning; Dr Haywood for a short time later this morning, Mrs Poole-Wilson for all of today and tomorrow and Mr Thomas for all of today. Leave has been given to Mrs Caine to be absent from the Chamber from tomorrow onwards and to participate remotely tomorrow afternoon and evening and on Thursday morning.

Congratulations to Mr Ashford and his partner on the birth of their son

The Deputy President: Hon. Members, let's start on a high note, and I am sure the whole Court will join me in congratulating Mr Ashford and his partner, Kathryn, on the birth of their son, Jasper, yesterday morning. (**Members:** Hear, hear.) I understand that all three are doing reasonably well. (Laughter)

Happy birthday to Mr Mercer

The Deputy President: I am sure the Court would also like to join me in wishing happy birthday to Mr Mercer as well.

Members: Hear, hear.

Order of the Day

1. Election of the President of Tynwald in accordance with the Constitution Act 1990

The Deputy President: We come to Item 1 on our Order Paper, Election of the President, and in accordance with Standing Order 9.1(1A), I call on His Majesty's Attorney General to serve as Acting President.

The sitting will be suspended briefly to enable the Acting President to take the Chair, and I just make the point that the microphones will remain live during this short suspension.

Thank you.

The Attorney General took the Chair as Acting President.

The Acting President (The Attorney General): Hon. Members, the procedure for the election of a President of Tynwald is governed by the Constitution Act 1990 and Standing Order 5.3. This Standing Order lays down the familiar procedure for electing Members to committees of Tynwald, and the Constitution Act 1990 adds the further requirement that there must be a ballot, even if there is only one candidate.

In that ballot you will be expected to vote for one, and only one, candidate. To be elected, a candidate needs the support of a majority of Members present and voting. The Constitution Act provides three categories who are eligible to be elected as President of Tynwald. Firstly, a Member of the Keys; secondly, an elected Member of the Legislative Council; and finally, the immediately retired President, which I am assured is not relevant today.

In a moment I will call for nominations. Once a candidate has been nominated, I will seek a seconder for that nomination before seeking any further nominations. When there are no more nominations, I shall direct the Clerk of Tynwald to read out the list of candidates and run the ballot.

Hon. Members, I now call for nominations.

Mrs Barber.

Mrs Barber: Thank you, Mr Attorney.

I wish to propose Mr Speaker, Juan Watterson, for the presidency of Tynwald.

Five years ago, Mr Speaker set out an ambitious vision for the future role of President, including increasing youth and wider public engagement, a focus on a progressive parliamentary setting and a commitment to increasing diversity and accessibility within this Hon. Court. All areas where he has commenced work while in his current role, but there is more to do.

In fact, it was celebrated by our outgoing President, the Hon. Laurence Skelly, only last week as we sat with Junior Tynwald, that Mr Speaker is a demonstration of someone who has gone from being awarded Best Contributor at Junior Tynwald to being an MHK, a Minister, a Committee member, Committee Chair, the Speaker, and now standing to secure your vote as President.

Junior Tynwald has been strongly supported by Mr Speaker, and is a fantastic initiative that lets our young people lead the way on many vital policy initiatives. Sometimes I feel if only we listened a little more.

Mr Speaker has also supported many parliamentary initiatives, including enjoying the benefit of our membership of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and ensuring that as an Island we are well represented, sharing our knowledge and also hosting many parliamentarians and officers from Commonwealth countries to learn and improve together; something that I know we have all experienced the benefit of.

He continues to contribute significantly and positively to the work of the CPA, bringing together different views to allow mutual learning opportunities to be developed and best practice to be pursued. There are undoubtedly other strings Mr Speaker could ably add to his bow, but he has made clear his intention to remain parliamentary in his focus and his desire to serve the oldest continuous parliament in the world as its President.

I have absolutely no doubt of his ability to do this responsibly, fairly and with the integrity and enthusiasm the role deserves. Mr Attorney, I commend Mr Speaker as candidate for the role of President of Tynwald.

The Acting President: Thank you.

Mrs Corlett.

Mrs Corlett: Thank you, Mr Attorney.

I beg to second the nomination of Mr Speaker, Juan Watterson, for the office of President of Tynwald.

Throughout his public service, Mr Watterson has demonstrated dedication to parliamentary democracy, a commitment to public engagement, and a deep respect for the traditions of this Hon. Court. As has been said, he has served our Island in a number of roles and has constantly sought to strengthen the work and the reputation of Tynwald, both at home and through his contributions to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) His support for initiatives such as Junior Tynwald, and encouraging wider participation in our democracy reflect a vision that is both respectful to our heritage and mindful of our future.

Mr Attorney, I second with confidence that Mr Watterson will uphold the dignity, traditions and responsibilities of the presidency of Tynwald.

Thank you.

The Acting President: Thank you, Hon. Members.

Are there any further nominations?

Ms Edge: Mr Attorney, could I do a point of order, please?

The Acting President: Thank you.

Ms Edge: I just want to make the point that later on in the Order Paper, at Item 14, there are possible changes to the role, and I hope that whoever does sit in our chair in that hon. place as President accepts that this is on the Order Paper, and it could change the functionality of the President's role if that is a successful motion and changes are voted to make those changes.

I just want to make a point of order that whoever possibly is going to sit in that chair – I do not know if there are any other nominations, I have not even been aware of who the nominations were until now – but I think it is really important that there is an Item on the Order Paper, Item 14, that Members will be voting on later in this sitting.

The Acting President: Thank you.

Last call, any further nominations? I call upon the learned Clerk please then to run the ballot. Hon. Members, the single candidate standing for election is Mr Juan Watterson, and your duty now is to vote either in favour or against.

A ballot took place and electronic voting resulted as follows:

Vote Results
Mr Watterson 28

FOR	**AGAINST**
Dr Allinson	Ms Edge
Mr Ashford	Mr Cannan
Mrs August-Phillips	
Mrs Barber	
Mrs Caine	
Mr Callister	
Ms Christian	
Mr Clueit	
Mrs Corlett	
Mr Craine	
Mr Crookall	
Ms Faragher	
Mr Glover	
Dr Haywood	
Mr Hooper	
Mr Johnston	
Mrs Kelsey	
Mrs Kinnish	
Lord Bishop	
Mrs Maltby	
Mr Mercer	
Mr Moorhouse	
Mrs Morphet	
Mr Peters	
Mr Reid	
Mr Smith	
Mr Speaker	
Mr Wannenburgh	

The Acting President: The result of the ballot, Hon. Members, as we can see, is that Mr Speaker has received 28 votes, there are 3 spoilt papers. Accordingly, I declare that Mr Watterson has been elected President of Tynwald to hold office until the day of the first ordinary sitting of Tynwald in July 2031. On behalf of the Court, I congratulate the successful candidate. (**Members:** Hear, hear!)

I invite Mr Watterson to address the Court.

Statement by the President

The President: Mr Acting President and Hon. Members, it is strange to think that after almost 20 years this will be the last time that I am able to speak my mind from a seat in the House of Keys.

I am very grateful to the mover and seconder for their kind words and to this Hon. Court for the confidence that is shown in me today. I would like to particularly thank the constituents of

Rushen who, for the last four terms, have given me their overwhelming mandate in this place, who have brought me their issues and allowed me to help them with solutions, and I will genuinely miss that.

It is a particular honour to preside over the world's oldest continuous parliament, the land of my birth. I will do my best to be fair, patient, even-handed, to respect the rights of all Members and to ensure that debate remains robust without ceasing to be courteous. The strength of this assembly lies in the fact that Members bring different views, different experiences and different interpretations to the issues before us.

I am also grateful to my family and friends for their support. No one undertakes public office entirely alone and those who keep us grounded, encouraged and occasionally corrected deserve more thanks than they usually receive. To that end, I would like to acknowledge in the Public Gallery my parents, my wife, my children and my niece. They say that behind every successful man there is an equally surprised woman and I am sure that there are four pretty surprised women looking down on me from the Gallery this morning. (**Mr Wannenburgh:** Hear, hear.) (Laughter)

Above all, I take this office in the spirit of service to the Court and wider Manx public. I will endeavour to uphold the traditions of Tynwald, to work constructively with both Branches and to do all that I can to ensure that our proceedings are conducted with fairness and good humour. Well, my definition of good humour, anyway.

I cannot promise perfection, but I will promise diligence, impartiality and a sincere wish to do the job well.

Thank you, Mr Acting President; thank you, Hon. Members.

Members: Hear, hear. (Applause)

The President: Is there a recount? (Interjections)

The Acting President: Mr Chief Minister, I understand there is a point of order.

The Chief Minister (Mr Cannan): Sorry, sir, I just wanted to raise a point of clarification and order, please. Clearly, I do not want to predetermine who voted which way, but I am conscious that Members in here pressed a button against the proposal. The reflection is that papers were spoiled, it does not actually reflect the votes that took place in the Chamber. I am just seeking clarification as to what has actually happened here for transparency because the indications are that spoiled papers were presented.

I am not suggesting that there were no spoiled papers but I am also suggesting there were votes that were against the proposal and they are not properly reflected. I am just querying how that is being properly reflected in the presentation that we have received of the actual voting. From a public transparency perspective it looks like Members spoilt their papers rather than voting. So I am seeking clarification on exactly what has just happened (**Ms Edge:** Hear, hear.) in terms of how this is being presented and the numbers for or against the proposal that has been put before us.

Several Members: Hear, hear.

The Clerk: Mr Acting President, the screen in the Chamber says there are 28 people who voted in favour and 3 spoilt papers, and it lists the 28 people who voted in favour. In fact, it is impossible to spoil your paper in a ballot with only one candidate, so I think 3 spoilt papers is incorrect. We can work out who the people were who voted against by looking at the 28 and doing a bit of subtraction.

Or, if you prefer we can run the vote again on the assumption that everyone votes the same way. If I set it up as an ordinary vote for or against the proposal then you will get a clearer answer on the screen, which everybody will be able to understand.

Two Members: Hear, hear.

The Acting President: I am afraid, Hon. Members, I have declared the result. There is a single candidate in this case and, as has been amply explained by the Clerk, those who have not voted in favour have voted against, notwithstanding the description that they are spoilt papers. There are, as I understand it, no spoilt papers, 28 in favour, 3 against, and the result has been declared.

Hon. Members, that concludes –

Ms Edge: Mr Attorney, can I just make another point of order then? Can we ensure that the voting record is clear and it does not just say three spoilt papers, that it actually declares who was against?

The Acting President: That will be the case, Ms Edge, thank you.

Hon. Members, that concludes this Item of business. The sitting will now be suspended to allow our new President to take his seat, and a word of caution that the microphones will remain active during this short interlude.

The Court adjourned at 10.16 a.m.
and resumed its sitting at 10.17 a.m.

Mr Watterson took the Chair as President.

[MR PRESIDENT in the Chair]

The President: Thank you, Hon. Members, please be seated.

Welcome to the Lieutenant Governor

The President: Hon. Members, I would like to welcome His Excellency, who is observing our proceedings this morning. I am sure the Court would like to join me in congratulating His Excellency and the whole team at Government House on the visit of His Majesty to the Island last week, including in particular the historic sitting of this Hon. Court, which was a significant historic occasion and most memorable for all of us.

Members: Hear, hear.

Procedural –
Rearrangement of Order Paper

The President: We have a long Order Paper ahead of us. We have one Supplementary Order Paper, which has been issued covering an item of CURA business on it. Can I say that it is going to be a long and warm couple of days, so please feel free to remove jackets, especially for Mr Moorhouse!

Before embarking on the Order Paper proper, I understand that Mrs Caine would like Item 26, Student Awards, to be moved up the Order Paper to ensure that it is taken while she is here today. I suggest that we take it immediately after Item 7, and I invite Mrs Caine to make the case for moving that up the Order Paper.

Mrs Caine: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I would like to ask Hon. Members if they would give the agreement for Item 26 to be moved today, the reason is mainly because of the urgency for my Department to be able to implement, in the hope that the Regulations for Student Awards – the tidy-up housekeeping regulations that are brought before you today are approved. Then it is to assist the Department in operationalising those because, as Members may be aware, people are already applying and it is to get these measures clearly in place.

I should also at this point declare an interest, because my daughter is going to be one of those students applying for the student awards.

The other point is that only today am I able to sit in this Chamber because I have the honour of going to Glasgow to cheer on Team Isle of Man at the Commonwealth Games, and while I will be attending remotely as much as possible there could be connectivity issues. So for those reasons I would ask the Court to agree to move Item 26 after Item 7.

Thank you.

The President: Mrs Maltby.

Mrs Maltby: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I beg to second.

The President: Before we start on the voting, can I ask the Deputy Speaker if she would kindly take her place? (Laughter) There may be work to do, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Does anyone wish to speak on the motion? In which case, the question is that Item 26 be taken immediately after Item 7. All those in favour, please say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

Bills for signature

The President: Item 2 is Bills for signing, and they are listed on the Order Paper. With the consent of the Court, they will be circulated for signing while we proceed with other business. Is the Court content?

Members: Agreed.

Papers laid before the Court

The President: We turn to Item 3, and I call on the Clerk to lay papers.

The Clerk: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane. Ta mee cur roish y Whaiyl ny pabyryn enmyssit ayns ayrn tree jeh'n Chlaare Obbyr.

Thank you, Mr President. I lay before the Court the papers listed at Item 3 on the Order Paper.

Items subject to motion that have had four weeks on the Register of Business

Item for affirmative resolution

Animal Health Act 1996
Trade in Animals and Related Products (Amendment) Order 2026 [SD 2026/0065] [MEMO]

Items for approval

Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1974
Health and Safety (General Duties of Self-Employed Persons) (Prescribed Undertakings) Regulations 2026 [SD 2026/0072] [MEMO]
Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (Application to the Territorial Sea) Order 2026 [SD 2026/0095] [MEMO]
Diving at Work Regulations 2026 [SD 2026/0096] [MEMO]

Health and Safety at Work Etc. Act 1977
Health and Safety at Work (Amendment) Order 2026 [SD 2026/0094] [MEMO]

Education Act 2001
Education (Student Awards) (Amendment) Regulations 2026 [SD 2026/0116] [MEMO]

Climate Change Act 2021
Climate Change (Single Use Vaping Products) Regulations 2026 [SD 2026/0103] [MEMO]
Climate Change (Energy Act 2004) (Application) Order 2026 [SD 2026/0144] [MEMO]

European Union and Trade Act 2019
Veterinary Medicines (Application) Regulations 2026 [SD 2026/0107] [MEMO]
European Union and Trade Act 2019 (Amendments) (DEFA) (Miscellaneous) (No. 2) Regulations 2026 [SD 2026/0142] [MEMO]

Global Minimum Tax (Pillar Two) Order 2024
Global Minimum Tax (Pillar Two) (Amendment) Order 2026 [SD 2026/0127] [MEMO]

Income Tax Act 1970
Income Tax (Crypto-Asset Reporting) (Amendment) Regulations 2026 [SD 2026/0128] [MEMO]

Regulation of Surveillance etc. Act 2006
Regulations of Surveillance (Prescription of Offices, Ranks and Positions) (Amendment) Order 2026 [SD 2026/0112] [MEMO]

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 2001
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 2001 (Exceptions) (Amendment) Order 2026 [SD 2026/0130] [MEMO]

Financial Provisions and Currency Act 2011
Life Insurance Business Scheme 2026 [SD 2026/0139] [MEMO]
Heat Wise Home Scheme 2026 [SD 2026/0082] [MEMO]

Liquor Licensing and Public Entertainments Act 2021

Liquor Licensing and Public Entertainments (Amendment) Regulations 2026 [SD 2026/0141] [MEMO]

Payment of Members' Expenses Act 1989
Statutory Boards (Annual Sums) (Amendment) Order 2026 [SD 2026/0126] [MEMO]
Statutory Boards (Annual Sums) (No. 2) Order 2026 [SD 2026/0137] [MEMO]

Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2011
Shared Equity Purchase Assistance (First Home Choice) (Amendment) Scheme 2026 [SD 2026/0073] [MEMO]
Shared Equity Purchase Assistance (First Home Fixed) (Amendment) Scheme 2026 [SD 2026/0075] [MEMO]

Hydrocarbon Oil Duties Act 1986
Hydrocarbon Oil Duties Act 1986 (Amendment) Order 2026 [SD 2026/0134] [MEMO]

Reports

Isle of Man Constabulary – Chief Constable's Annual Report 2025-2026 [GD 2026/0010]

Climate Change Transformation Programme – Annual Progress Report 2025-2026 [GD 2026/0054]

Criminal Justice Board Annual Report 2024-2026 [GD 2026/0074a]

Department of Home Affairs – Criminal Justice Strategy Refresh 2026-2036 [GD 2026/0075]

Our Island Plan: Final Programme Report – 2021-2026 [GD 2026/0066]

Annual Report: Isle of Man Government Efficiencies and Change Programme – April 2025 - March 2026 [GD 2026/0067]

Standing Orders Committee of Tynwald – Second Report for the Session 2025-26 – Attendance of the Attorney General [PP 2026/0120]

Petition of Vanessa Naude and 1,968 others presented by John Wannenburgh [PP 2026/0118]

Items subject to motion that have not had four weeks on the Register of Business

Items for approval

Local Government Act 1985
Northern Civic Amenity Joint Board Order 2026 [SD 2026/0136] [MEMO]

Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976
Public Sector Housing (General Needs) (Allocation) (Amendment) Policy 2026 [SD 2026/0120] [MEMO]

Items not subject to motion

Documents subject to negative resolution

Wildlife Act 1990

Wildlife Act 1990 (Variation of Schedules) (Animals Which Are Protected) Order 2026 [SD 2026/0129] [MEMO]

Bank (Recovery and Resolution) Act 2020

Bank (Recovery and Resolution) Administrative Levy Order 2026 [SD 2026/0132] [MEMO]

Value Added Tax Act 1996

Value Added Tax (Reduced Rate) (Hospitality and Tourism) Order 2026 [SD 2026/0133] [MEMO]

Interpretation Act 2015

Passport Fees (Amendment) Order 2026 [SD 2026/0121] [MEMO]

Immigration Act 2014

Immigration (Fees) (No. 2) (Amendment) Order 2026 [SD 2026/0122] [MEMO]
Immigration (Fees) (No.2) (Amendment) Regulations 2026 [SD 2026/0123] [MEMO]
Nationality (Fees) (Amendment) Order 2026 [SD 2026/0124] [MEMO]
Nationality (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations 2026 [SD 2026/0125] [MEMO]

Airports and Civil Aviation Act 1987

Civil Aviation (Restriction of Flying) (World Downhill Skateboarding Championships) Regulations 2026 [SD 2026/0152] [MEMO]

Document subject to disapproval resolution

Immigration Act 1971

Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules (No.4) 2026 [SD 2026/0118] [MEMO]

Documents subject to laying only

Trade in Animals and Related Products Order 2020

Trade in Animals and Related Products Declaration of Special Measures: Lumpy Skin Disease France [GC 2026/0017]
Trade in Animals and Related Products Declaration of Special Measures: Lumpy Skin Disease Italy [GC 2026/0018]
Trade in Animals and Related Products Declaration of Special Measures: Lumpy Skin Disease Spain [GC 2026/0019]

Agricultural Marketing (No. 2) Act 1948

Milk Prices (Amendment) (No. 2) Order 2026 [SD 2026/0135] [MEMO]

Reports

Housing and Communities Board – Update on the Homelessness Pathway [GD 2026/0068]

Isle of Man Meat Company Limited – Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 [GD 2026/0056]

Manx Utilities – Annual Report 2024/5 [GD 2026/0048]

Manx Cable Company Limited – Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 [GD 2026/0049]

e-llan Communications Limited – Annual Report and Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 [GD 2026/0050]

Department of Education, Sport and Culture – Progress against Children's Champion Report 2023/24 – Recommendation No. 6 [GD 2026/0062]

Police Complaints Commissioner Annual Report 2026 [GD 2026/0072]

Department of Home Affairs – Policing Plan 2026-27 [GD 2026/0065]

Community Safety Partnership Annual Report 2025 [GD 2026/0076]

Criminal Justice Strategy Review Report 2025 [GD 2026/0077a]

Treasury – Financial Provisions and Currency Act 2011 Annual Report to 31st May 2026 [GD 2026/0055]

Department of Infrastructure – Report to Tynwald on Lower Douglas Bus and Passenger Facilities – June 2026 [GD 2026/0069]

Treasury – Public Sector Housing Income Thresholds January 2026 – Amended June 2026 [GD 2026/0082]

Isle of Man Information Commissioner Annual Report 2025/26 [GD 2026/0035]

Council of Ministers – Update to the Constitutional and Legal Affairs and Justice Committee – First Report for the Session 2024-25 – Adverse Possession [GD 2026/0080]

Treasury – Public Audit Reform [GD 2026/0071]

Treasury – Breathing Space Debt Respite Scheme [GD 2026/0081]

Council of Ministers – Response to the Economic Policy Review Committee Second Report for the Session 2025-26 – The Department for Enterprise and the Executive Agencies [GD 2026/0078]

Department of Health and Social Care – Governance Review – Progress Report [GD 2026/0083]

Report of the Public Services Commission for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 [GD 2026/0070]

Council of Ministers – Response to Report of the Select Committee on Whistleblowing Policy Implementation – Report for the Session 2025–26 [GD 2026/0079]

Council of Ministers – Response to the Select Committee of Tynwald on Poverty (2021)'s First Report for the Session 2025-26 Child Poverty: Education and Health Solutions [GD 2026/0061]

Department of Health and Social Care – Draft Code of Practice – Capacity Act 2023 [GD 2026/0084]

Department of Infrastructure – Report on the Accounts of Local Authorities, Burial Authorities, Joint Boards and Committees [GD 2026/0064]

Tynwald Commissioner for Administration Report on Case [TCA 2025/0006]

Tynwald Commissioner for Administration Report on Case [TCA 2026/0009]

Statement of the Tynwald Commissioner for Administration on [TCA 2026/0022] – (Decision not to investigate)

Tynwald Auditor General – Changes to the inspection arrangements for local government bodies [TAG 2026/0001]

Tynwald Auditor General – Responding to Whistleblowing [TAG 2026/0002]

Tynwald Commissioner for Administration Report on Case [TCA 2025/0006] – Appendices A-H [PP 2026/0109]

Tynwald Auditor General – Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2026 [PP 2026/0135]

Standing Orders of the House of Keys – Revised Edition – June 2026 [PP 2026/0100]

Constitutional and Legal Affairs and Justice Committee – First Report for the Session 2025-26: The Ministerial System of Government [PP 2026/0114]

Standing Committee of Tynwald on Public Accounts – Third Report for the Session 2025-26 – Tynwald Policy Decisions 2024-25 [PP 2026/0129]

Social Affairs Policy Review Committee – First Report for the Session 2025-26 – Suicide [PP 2026/0133]

Public Petition of Ian Strafford presented by Andrew Smith [PP 2026/0119]

Public Petition of Georgina O'Sullivan presented by Julie Edge [PP 2026/0127]

255

Questions

1. Migration –
Question withdrawn

The President: We turn then to Item 4, Questions, and Mr Moorhouse has decided not to ask Question 1.

MANX UTILITIES AUTHORITY

2. Onshore windfarm planning application –
Island Plan Final Programme Report non-inclusion; funding; financial compliance; final cost

The Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Glover, to ask the Chair of the Manx Utilities Authority:

> Why a planning application for the onshore windfarm was not submitted in June as anticipated in the Island Plan Final Programme Report [GD 2026/0066]; how much further project development funding has been approved; whether this is financially compliant; and what the projected final cost is.

The President: We turn then to Question 2. I call on the Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Glover

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I seek to ask the Chair of the Manx Utilities Authority, why a planning application for the onshore windfarm was not submitted in June as anticipated in the Our Island Plan: Final Programme Report [GD 2026/0066]; how much further project development funding has been approved; whether this is financially compliant; and what the projected final cost is.

Gura mie eu.

The President: I call on the Chair of the Manx Utilities Authority to reply.

The Chair of the Manx Utilities Authority (Mr Wannenburgh): Thank you, Mr President; and I thank the Hon. Member for his Question and his continued interest.

The Our Island Plan: Final Programme Report identified June 2026 as the anticipated date for submission of a planning application for the proposed Cair Vie onshore windfarm project. That date was an estimate based on the information available at that time.

As we know, as the project has progressed, additional environmental, ecological and technical assessment work has been required and, consequently, we have needed to validate the outcomes. This has created additional work and extended the time necessary for the preparation and finalisation of the supporting planning documentation. The application was therefore not in a position to be submitted by the indicative date in June.

Focus remains on completing the necessary work in preparing a robust, evidence-based planning application. The proposed Cair Vie windfarm project therefore remains at a pre-application stage.

Given the House of Keys will shortly be dissolved ahead of the general election, it is also appropriate that the parliamentary transition is entirely respected and that newly elected

Members will have the opportunity to engage with the proposed project through the established statutory and democratic processes.

In relation to funding, development funding has previously been approved to support feasibility work, environmental surveys, technical assessments and preparation of the planning application. Any expenditure incurred to date has been within the approved funding and governance arrangements, and is therefore financially compliant.

As regards the projected final cost, no final investment decision has been taken. Any updated cost estimate would form part of the business case and approval processes following completion of the development and planning stages.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu.

I am just going to refer the Chair to the freedom of information request that has been circulated amongst all Members, and in the latter part of that it does say there was concern that there were a number of papers each quoting different costs ranging between £40 million and £46.5 million, and also the SACIC Committee advised that they had little option but to support the request for a further £485,155.08 – little option but to support the request because some of the money had already been spent. However, the matter should be reported as a financial irregularity.

Can the Chair confirm that SACIC has reported Manx Utilities for suspected financial irregularity?

The President: Chairman, to reply.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr President.

I am glad the Member has referenced that freedom of information. I would regard that as good news. The detailed questions on the Items which he has mentioned must be referred to the Treasury Department. The good news, of course, within that FOI is that the positive payback period was referenced, which the Hon. Member has failed to mention, so I will mention it here today.

Thank you.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

Is the Chair able to give us an indication of how long the new Members will have to discuss and consider the proposals? Does that mean that the planning application date is now shifting forward to November at the earliest? Because we cannot actually be expected to discuss it and have an opinion if the planning application is in place.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Chairman to reply.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr President.

The new Members will take the time they take, but it is very much business as usual as far as the application process goes and it will be submitted when it is finalised. That is not at the moment, but it is imminent.

Thank you.

The President: Dr Allinson.

Dr Allinson: Thank you very much, Mr President; and I would like to thank the Hon. Chair of the Manx Utilities for his Answer today.

Referring again to the freedom of information request, in terms of the overall costs would he agree with me that the overall costs were described as being highly pessimistic because it is not possible to refine the cost down to a more realistic project until a manufacturer is appointed, and that will only happen after planning?

Thank you.

The President: Chairman to reply.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr President.

What I will say is that I have laboured that point on many occasions in this Chamber, and I thank the Hon. Member for bringing it up.

Thank you.

The President: Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

Can the Chair confirm that he is aware that there was an intention to report a financial irregularity? Surely, as Chair, he should be aware if such a move is being made against his organisation.

The President: Chairman to reply.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr President.

I note from the Hon. Member's questioning that he is somewhat demob happy. Can I assure him I share in his happiness for his imminent departure? I have nothing further to add.

Thank you. (Laughter)

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

I am really grateful that the Board have met with me and my colleague many times over the past few months to actually look at the proposal and consider what was coming. Since early spring, there has been a level of confidence about the documentation they had on the table. Given the latest update, is the Chair suggesting that the whole process is now having to be reassessed and looked at? It does seem to be a massive change in terms of what was said in the boardroom and what we are hearing today.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Chairman to reply.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr President.

I do not recognise that set of circumstances that the Hon. Member references. I am sorry, I do not.

Thank you.

The President: Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I am disappointed with the Chair's tone. He may not be the only one departing (**A Member:** Oh!) come September, so I will put that in there.

I have repeatedly brought up concerns for the residents of Earystane and Scard, and this state of flux that they are in is causing huge anxiety. (**Mr Moorhouse:** Hear, hear.) We also have the Infrastructure Minister saying that the Balthane bypass, which is an integral route that the equipment for the turbines will be going through, (**The Chair:** I disagree.) is not being done until 2027-28. Can the Chair provide some reassurance and certainty for the residents in the immediate area who are incredibly affected by this whole process?

The President: Chairman to reply.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Of course I have referenced the anxiety by those people surrounding Earystane on many occasions, and the two MHKs from that area have made it very clear that that is the case, and I acknowledge that is the case.

I have acknowledged in this Court that we will do a further engagement workshop with those constituents at an appropriate time, so I take on board his comments. I know that it is a matter of anxiety for a lot of people, and for that reason we will submit the application when it is absolutely ready and not before, because we want the case to be as strong as possible, whether it is for or against.

I have also said in this Court that if it is against, that I will not support. I have said that. On the other side, if it does support then I will definitely support.

Thank you very much.

CHIEF MINISTER

3. Government employees receiving relocation packages in last three years – Number of recipients leaving within three years of payment

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

In each of the last three years how many people employed by the Government, who received a relocation package, have left within three years of the payment being made.

The President: We turn to Question 3. I call on the Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

I would like to ask the Chief Minister, in each of the last three years how many people employed by the Government, who received a relocation package, have left within three years of the payment being made?

Thank you, Mr President.

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

The Chief Minister: Mr President, there are many specialist services administered across Government, and on occasion there is a need to recruit specialist candidates from elsewhere in order to meet the skills need of the organisation. Of course, every effort is always made to recruit from the existing Manx workforce.

A relocation package is typically offered when an employer wants to attract a candidate who would need to move home to take up the role on the Isle of Man. Its purpose is to remove some of the financial and practical barriers associated with relocating for work. Relocation packages

are typically offered for roles which are difficult to recruit to on the Island or where specialist skills, knowledge or experience are required.

Mr President, between July 2023 and June 2026, 364 people started employment with Government and were paid some form of relocation package; of those individuals, 49 have since left the organisation.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President; and thank you, Minister, for the partial Answer.

Is he able to give us any other data in terms of the figures for the amount of money that has been returned over the period, and what was the total expected to be returned? Finally, was any legal action actually taken in terms of people who were expected to make the repayments who did not?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister: Mr President, £2,164,986 was the total amount paid for 364 relocation packages in that period July 2023 to June 2026. I make that an average of £5,947 per relocation. Of the 49 that have left, £46,643 has been repaid to date. The various public sector relocation schemes include a repayment provision to protect public funds where an employee leaves employment before completing the requisite level of service. The amount to be refunded is directly proportional to the number of months of uncompleted service, and that is the breakdown that I have in front of me.

The President: Mr Callister.

Mr Callister: Thank you, Mr President.

I thank the Chief Minister for the information this morning. In respect of the 49 people that have left the Island after securing employment here, can I ask the Chief Minister if there is an exit interview with these people who come here for genuine reasons, work in sectors that we desperately need, but then have to leave? Because I am aware just in this last week that two people are having to leave the Isle of Man, not because they do not love the Isle of Man, not because they do not love the jobs they are in, but because they cannot find long-standing accommodation.

Will the Minister commit that if people are coming here, that there is an exit interview in order to capture this data?

The President: Ard-shirveishagh to reply.

The Chief Minister: Thank you; and I thank the Chair of the Public Service Commission for that question.

One would hope, of course, that as Chair of the Public Service Commission, this is one of the very core factors that he would be interested in, in terms of retention of staff on the Island. My understanding is, and he would know more than I, there is a process to be followed in terms of exit interviews. I am sure that data is consolidated from those exit interviews.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

Is the Chief Minister able to give us any indication whether any legal action has been taken against the people who have not been repaying the expected amount? In terms of the figures

given this morning, they are quite concerning in terms of out of 364, 49 have returned. Is this something that has reached the Council of Minister's desk, and if so, has any decision been made on how this could actually be tackled going forward?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister: I do not have that absolute level of analysis. It is not something that has been brought to the attention of the Council of Ministers, but I am sure it is on the scope of both the Operational Performance and Change Board, and certainly should be on the scope of the Public Services Commission as well.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President; and thank you, Chief Minister.

Is the Chief Minister able to get us the figures on the main reasons why people are not remaining on the Island and what is being done to actually tackle these and distribute that to Members in the future? I am not sure whether he will have it this morning, but if he does not, could that be made available?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister: I would be happy to circulate any relevant data, and I will see what is available, Mr President, and seek to circulate that.

4. Online gambling sector Bloomberg Businessweek article – CoMin consideration

The Hon. Member for Douglas East, Ms Faragher, to ask the Chief Minister:

> Whether the Council of Ministers has considered the Bloomberg Businessweek article published on 11th June 2026 concerning the Island's online gambling sector; and if so, what reviews or other actions have been undertaken or are planned in response.

The President: We turn to Question 4. I call on the Hon. Member for Douglas East, Ms Faragher.

Ms Faragher: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I would like to ask the Chief Minister, whether the Council of Ministers has considered the Bloomberg Businessweek article published on 11th June 2026 concerning the Island's online gambling sector; and if so, what reviews or other actions have been undertaken or are planned in response?

The President: Chief Minister to reply.

The Chief Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

The Council of Ministers considers a wide range of matters as part of its weekly meeting and routinely receives information and discusses matters of national and international relevance as part of its ongoing business. Proceedings of the Council of Ministers are and remain highly

confidential. However, in the interests of transparency and openness, I can confirm the Bloomberg Businessweek article is not the subject to formal consideration by the Council of Ministers following its publication.

Hon. Members will of course be aware there is a large and complex criminal investigation that is currently taking place.

Thank you.

The President: Ms Faragher.

Ms Faragher: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane; as gura mie eu, Ard-shirveishagh. Thank you, Chief Minister, for that response.

I would like to ask the Chief Minister whether he can confirm whether either himself or the Council of Ministers has considered commissioning an independent inquiry into the Government's own role, including the effectiveness of regulation, supervision and decision-making, rather than focusing solely on the actions of private companies?

Thank you.

The President: Chief Minister to reply.

The Chief Minister: The point I am sure is one of interest to a number of people, however that has not been formally considered by the Council of Ministers. As I said, there is a large and complex criminal investigation that is currently taking place. The current view is that that needs to run its course so that facts can come out in a public arena via whatever judicial process takes place. I am sure that at some point there will be interest in further establishing what the Government's processes were in terms of the overall case.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

Given the importance of this sector, has any response been considered to provide a level of balance in terms of counteracting what is a very powerful report?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister: This matter has been going on now for over two years. I think the Isle of Man can be proud of its criminal response once it had been made aware of the full scale of what had been going on.

Mr President, this is a matter currently, as far as I know, in the courts or certainly subject to significant criminal proceedings. I am not about to say something this morning that will in any way jeopardise that.

The President: Ms Faragher.

Ms Faragher: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The Chief Minister has obviously referenced criminal investigations, and criminal investigations will concern potential offences, but an independent inquiry would look at Government policy regulation and oversight. Does the Chief Minister agree that an independent inquiry therefore into the actions of Government could proceed quite easily alongside these investigations? If he does not agree, what exactly, in his view, is it that is preventing that?

Thank you.

The President: Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister: A criminal investigation, that is what is preventing it.

The President: Final supplementary, Ms Faragher.

Ms Faragher: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

There is absolutely nothing preventing an investigation into Government policy regulation and oversight proceeding alongside a criminal investigation. If the Chief Minister will not establish such an inquiry now, can he explain what specific trigger or threshold would be needed to be reached before Government accepts that an independent examination of its own actions is necessary?

Thank you.

The President: Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister: It does not have to be an independent. It quite easily could be something that is commissioned by a Tynwald Court. The Hon. Member has had two years to potentially bring forward a proposal to Tynwald Court. (Interjection)

The President: Order, order. Chief Minister, you have the floor.

The Chief Minister: The Hon. Member has had two years to bring forward a proposal to set up a Select Committee, for example, to look into these matters, if she so wanted. It is ridiculous to think that a Chief Minister or a Council of Ministers is going to start a national inquiry six or seven days before effectively the end of this Government and we move into an election period.

I would say to the Hon. Member that I am not suggesting that something is not suitable. That could take a number of forms, but I am clear that there is a significant criminal investigation that has been taking place, and one needs to see the outcome of that, I would suggest, and that is my view, before any further formal inquiry is established.

5. Major employer of record providers – Supported territory recognition

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

What action is being taken to ensure that the Island is recognised as a supported territory by major employer of record providers.

The President: We turn to Question 5. I call on the Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

I would like to ask the Chief Minister, what action is being taken to ensure the Island is recognised as a supported territory by major employer of record providers?

Thank you.

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

The Chief Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

An employer of record is a third-party organisation that legally employs workers on behalf of another company, managing payroll, taxes, benefits and compliance, while the company itself directs the employee's day-to-day work. These services are already available in the Island. The question is therefore not whether the Island is able to support these providers, but to what extent. Which global providers choose to include the Isle of Man within their service offering?

What I can tell the Hon. Court is that the Department for Enterprise has been recently engaging with a number of major employer of record providers to ensure they have a clear understanding of the Isle of Man's position and to explore opportunities for broader coverage.

Ultimately, Mr President, of course, decisions on whether to operate in a particular jurisdiction are commercial ones for individual providers, but the Department for Enterprise continues to monitor the position regarding employer of record services on the Island going forward and seek to do what it can to ensure that those services remain and, ultimately, we can attract further opportunities where appropriate.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President; and thank you, Minister, for that update.

In terms of the current provision, some small providers do cover the Island, but the issue is in terms of the major players. It is positive that the Department for Enterprise are actually looking at this at the moment, but is the Chief Minister able to really give this an extra push in terms of trying to get a breakthrough with the biggest providers in this area, because those are the ones that could have a massive impact on the local economy?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Chief Minister to reply.

The Chief Minister: I am sure the Hon. Member is right, and I am sure the Department for Enterprise are taking the relevant actions in that respect.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President; and thank you, Chief Minister.

If change could be achieved it would produce real advantages. Is the Chief Minister aware that Gibraltar, with a population of only 33,000, is actually listed with the two largest providers, Deel and Remote.com? In terms of what we could do, if we could move forward in this area, we could really have that advantage that many individuals are looking for when they are choosing to relocate.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister: As I said in my Answer, Mr President, the Department has engaged with relevant providers to ensure that the Isle of Man position is understood, and to explore opportunities for wider coverage where there is a clear economic benefit. I respect that the Hon. Member has mentioned two companies in this space, but the Isle of Man is served by a number of employer of record providers and, of course, we cannot always dictate which jurisdiction particular employers choose to use as a commercial destination.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President; and thank you, Chief Minister.

That is true but hopefully we can push in this area and get those biggest ones to actually link in with us.

Given the Government's stated ambition to grow the Island's population, what assessment has been made of the number of remote workers who are currently residing on the Island? In terms of a growth area, is this something that needs to be really looked at and developed in the coming years?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister: The stated aim of the Government was to grow the working population, and I am very pleased to be able to confirm that the Government has, in fact, achieved that with some significant hard work over the last few years.

In terms of remote workers and the numbers of remote workers, there is clearly a piece of work that is needed. I think the Government probably will be looking to the next census to really get a full accurate picture of who is doing what and who is residing on our Island.

6. Manannan evening sailing 26th October 2025 – Question withdrawn

The President: Question 6 is, again, not to be asked.

TREASURY

7. Treasury's Public Audit Reform Report – Auditor General or PAC involvement

The Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr Hooper, to ask the Minister for the Treasury:

What involvement the Tynwald Auditor General had in the content or preparation of the Treasury's report on Public Audit Reform [GD 2026/0071] and what discussions or meetings Treasury had with the Tynwald Auditor General or Public Accounts Committee about this report prior to publication.

The President: We turn to Question 7. I call on the Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Mr President.

I would like to ask the Minister or Member for Treasury, what involvement the Tynwald Auditor General (TAG) had in the content or preparation of the Treasury's Report on Public Audit Reform and what discussions or meetings Treasury had with the Tynwald Auditor General or Public Accounts Committee about this Report prior to its publication?

The President: I call on Mr Clueit to reply on behalf of the Treasury Minister.

A Member for the Treasury (Mr Clueit): Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I thank the Member for his Question. Before I answer, it might be useful to recall the context that led to this Report's publication. In July 2024, the Tynwald Auditor General laid a report before this Hon. Court reviewing our legislative framework against international standards and

best practices, and making nearly 100 recommendations for legislative change. The Treasury was aware of the report but was not asked to participate in its preparation.

As such, the Report reflects the views of the Tynwald Auditor General, who may not have been aware of the policy context in which the legislative framework he reviewed was originally developed.

In July 2025, the Public Accounts Committee called for the blanket adoption of the Tynwald Auditor General's report. This Hon. Court supported the motion following a very short debate, during which both the current and former Treasury Ministers made contributions. The then Treasury Minister stressed that Tynwald Court should reflect more generally on the Auditor General's role. The current Treasury Minister stated that Tynwald could not bind the legislation and the consideration of the legislation in the Branches.

In November 2025, the Treasury launched a public consultation seeking views on some of the Tynwald Auditor General's recommendations and how they could be implemented most appropriately and proportionately.

In March 2026, the Treasury published the consultation response document, and the Minister made a statement before this Hon. Court, announcing the intention to publish a report in July 2026 to offer an additional perspective on the Tynwald Auditor General's recommendations, informed by the feedback received during the consultation.

The Report laid before this Hon. Court today focuses on the TAG's 2024 constitutional recommendations, raising questions for which Tynwald's direction is required to ensure that clear policy intent and to draft legislation effectively. It was prepared without input from the Tynwald Auditor General or the Public Accounts Committee, as their views had already been published.

As also stated in the Report, since the Tynwald Auditor General's 2024 report, both the Tynwald Auditor General and the Treasury have identified further legislative issues that need to be addressed. The Treasury and the Tynwald Auditor General have already agreed to develop a coherent legislative framework that is fit for purpose.

Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The President: Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Eaghtyrane.

We finally got to an Answer there from the Hon. Member that this was prepared with no input from the Tynwald Auditor General. In their press statement on 2nd July, when the Treasury published this Report, they stated:

> This report reflects a significant body of work undertaken by the Treasury, in collaboration with the Tynwald Auditor General.

Can the Hon. Member for Treasury explain why the press release stated there was collaboration with the Auditor General, as his Answer to this Hon. Court just now has stated that the Report was prepared with no input from the Auditor General?

Mr Clueit: I chair the Audit Consultative Committee in Treasury, of which the Tynwald Auditor General is a member of that Committee. We meet quarterly; in fact, we met last Thursday. There are ongoing discussions between the Tynwald Auditor General and senior officers in Treasury that discuss a wide range of matters. Many of these issues have been discussed at length between Treasury and the Tynwald Auditor General, but we did not consult with them on the wording of this particular Report. But that does not mean that there is no collaboration and work taking place on an ongoing basis between the two.

Gura mie eu.

The President: Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Eaghtyrane.

Does the Member not think that by trying to claim in a press statement that there was collaboration on this Report – not in general but on this Report – when in fact there was no collaboration, does he not think that risks potentially misleading the Manx public into thinking that the Treasury are engaging with qualified professionals in trying to deliver the will of Tynwald Court; recommendations which the Member himself said were supported by Tynwald Court, and actually this muddies the waters somewhat? Does the Hon. Member think that perhaps one of the reasons the public is losing faith and losing trust in Government is because of actions exactly like this?

The President: Member to reply.

Mr Clueit: There is ongoing collaboration. Whether it can be construed as being on the preparation of the Report or not, I leave that to the Members' discretion in terms of how they determine that.

There is ongoing, continuous, and productive communication between the Auditor General and with Tynwald. This Report is the views. In the Tynwald Auditor General's report in 2024, they raised a number of issues in terms of how the Tynwald Auditor General would like to operate. Those raise several constitutional issues that need to be addressed by Tynwald.

In the preparation of the legislation, a full Audit Reform Act, we need Tynwald to state what their will is in terms of what they want to see from the Tynwald Auditor General and how it is to operate. That is the purpose of Treasury's response: to lay before Tynwald, this Court, its views on the previous two reports and to ask Tynwald to make the decisions that are needed to produce effective and proportionate legislation.

Thank you.

8. Visas –
Question withdrawn

The President: I advise that Question 8 is also not to be asked.

EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE

9. National Sports Centre tiles –
Progress in last three months

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

What progress has been made in the last three months with the tiles at the National Sports Centre.

The President: We turn then to Question 9. I call on the Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

I would like to ask the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture, what progress has been made in the last three months with the tiles at the National Sports Centre?

Thank you.

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

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture (Mrs Caine): Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The Department is following the contractual process with a view to resolving this matter as swiftly as possible. I fully understand the frustration felt by Hon. Members and members of the public that the issue remains unresolved. However, the discussions taking place under the terms of the contract are confidential, and I am therefore unable to comment further until that process has concluded.

I remain hopeful that a resolution will be reached in the near future, and when it is appropriate to do so I will ensure that the Department provides a further update to Hon. Members and the public on the progress made.

Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

I would like to thank the Minister for the update she has provided between the questions I have asked over the preceding months. My main concern going forward is, is there a final date in place when other action will be taken or is this a case of she feels that we are nearly there and the solution can be hopefully released in hours rather than weeks and days?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

I am really sorry, it is not possible to provide any timescale at present, but we will update Members and the public as soon as we are able to. Just to say, everything that can be done, we are doing.

Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The President: Ms Edge.

Ms Edge: Thank you, Mr President.

In a news item in June 2025, there was a report carried out – a cost of £13,500 – which gave the Department the answers they were looking for. Can I ask what has been done between June 2025 and now, and why the main contractor has not been called back to fix the tiles? There is a main contractor for that particular thing. It is nothing to do with contractor confidentiality. The main contractor is responsible for ensuring that all subcontractors complete the work appropriately.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

In terms of the amount spent in preparation, the Department has invested just over £50,000 in total via engineers and surveys. As I said, following the due process, I am not in a position to provide any further information.

Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

The Minister has just made reference to the £50,000 cost for engineers and surveys. Is she able to give us the additional cost for legal fees over the total period? In terms of the underlying problem, is it just related to the tiles? In March, she said to resolve the issue that arose with the tiles when they were found to have faults; is it just a tile issue, rather than something beyond that?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

As I said, I cannot provide any further detail at this time.

The President: Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I am slightly confused because on one hand we have had 'cannot provide a timeline or a timeframe', and then on the other hand, in the first Answer, we had to have more details in the near future; so which is it?

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: I am sorry, Mr President, I did not catch what the question was in that.

The President: Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Two conflicting answers here saying you cannot provide a timeframe, yet before you said you would update Members in the near future, so can you define 'near future'?

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President; thank you, Hon. Member.

I said that I am hopeful a resolution will be reached in the near future, and when it is appropriate to do so I will provide the detail to Members and members of the public.

Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The President: Mr Callister.

Mr Callister: Thank you, Mr President.

I hope the Minister can give an honest answer to an honest question today because I have been contacted by a number of groups, and the Minister knows this because I have been in correspondence about this matter in the last week. These are people who are desperately trying to prepare for the Island Games in 2027.

Can the Minister confirm the rumours or the reports that once the repairs are underway the pool will have to close for eight months? I think it is really important that either we dismiss this rumour or the Minister clarifies that the pool will be shut for eight months because people need to prepare for the 2027 Island Games.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President; and I thank the Hon. Member for his queries.

As Hon. Members are aware, six lanes of the pool remain fully open, which enables swimming events and training to continue. There are two lanes with five metres at one end that are cordoned off. In terms of the rest of the Hon. Member's question, I do not have any information about that. As I said, I will update Members as soon as I have information to update about.

10. Arbory School drop-off and collection arrangements – Proposed improvements' implementation

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

How quickly the proposed improvements to the arrangements for the drop-off and collection of children at Arbory School can be implemented.

The President: We turn to Question 10. I call on the Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

I would like to ask the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture, how quickly the proposed improvements to the arrangement for the drop-off and collection of children at Arbory School can be implemented?

Thank you.

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

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture (Mrs Caine): Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I can confirm that the scheme to improve parking provision at Arbory School will be submitted as part of the Department's capital bid for consideration within the 2027-28 Budget Pink Book.

Subject to approval, delivery of the scheme will be dependent on a number of factors: design development, planning approvals, and the completion of the necessary procurement processes. Based on the current programme, works would not be expected to commence until late 2027. The Department has considered the option of seeking project development funding to progress elements of the scheme, including design development.

However, given the current timescales associated with business case submissions and budget planning, the Department considers that progressing the scheme through a full business case submission as part of the 2027-28 Budget Pink Book represents the most appropriate approach.

Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

Later today we are going to have a question on Arbory and Malew Street possibly, and the last update we had on that, the Minister at the time said that when going to Treasury now for funding there is an expectation that a planning application has actually gone through and succeeded. Given that information, that expectation, when will the planning application be submitted, because in the Answer just given by the Minister there was a suggestion that was not going to happen until Treasury had looked at the case?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

As I stated in my Answer, subject to approval, delivery of the scheme will be dependent on a number of factors: the design development, planning approvals, and the completion of the necessary procurement processes. Based on the current programme, works would not be expected to commence until late 2027.

The President: Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

Can the Minister confirm, are the options that are being looked at within the current grounds of the school only?

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I cannot answer that until we have the appropriate approvals to progress the schemes.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

Assuming that additional land is required, is the Minister able to give us an indication of when the landowners will be spoken to, because they are going to have the fundamental role in determining whether or not this is worth taking forward? Given that the negotiations came to such a troublesome end in 2021, is she able to provide any reassurance that a different group of officers may be involved in the discussions, at least in the first instance?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I can assure the Hon. Member that the Department will follow up with relevant parties as appropriate and necessary to progress the scheme. The Department recognises the importance of addressing congestion and safety concerns at the school, and we are committed to progressing a solution.

Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

11. New Castle Rushen High School – Progress since 8th December 2025

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

What progress has been made since 8th December 2025 on plans for a new Castle Rushen High School.

The President: We turn to Question 11. I again call on the Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

I would like to ask the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture, what progress has been made since 8th December 2025 on plans for a new Castle Rushen High School?

Thank you.

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

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture (Mrs Caine): Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I thank the Hon. Member for the Question and this opportunity to give an update. Castle Rushen High School project continues to move through the design and approvals process. Current work is focused on refining the scheme, identifying opportunities to reduce projected costs and ensuring the project is well-positioned for the next stage of development.

The current start of RIBA stage 2, concept design, has now been completed and is being considered. Approvals are required before work can begin on the RIBA stage 3, design development stage, which will take the project into its next phase of detailed design.

The initial principal contractor tender process has concluded. While the project attracted several expressions of interest, no formal tender submissions were received. This has affected the delivery timetable while the Department reviews contractor feedback and works with stakeholders to reprogramme the project.

The Department remains committed to progressing this important social infrastructure project for the south of the Island and looks forward to advancing the stage 3 plans once the current process has concluded.

Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President; and thank you, Minister.

At the start of the year there was a real optimism that things would move forward and there was a real level of clarity in terms of this funding plan would be coming to Tynwald at the moment in July 2026. Given the bumps in the road that we have experienced in the past six months, is there any indication of how quickly we can get back on track and it can come to Tynwald for a vote in terms of funding?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

The Department is not in a position at this stage to provide any further information. The Department, along with the Project Management Unit and Treasury, are continuing to assess the sequencing of the remaining procurement and approval stages to ensure alignment with the RIBA process and the broader contractor market environment.

The President: Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I stated at the time of the last COVID reshuffle that this would be the position we would be in come the end of this administration, and here we are. Can the Minister confirm, is the project board still in existence?

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Yes.

The President: Ms Edge.

Ms Edge: Thank you, Mr President.

Back in November 2025, a number of Members said how wonderful it was, congratulating the Minister on shifting this forward. Our new President stated it is a step change and a foot on the accelerator. Is that still the view in this Hon. Court, that we have had the foot on the accelerator for Castle Rushen High School? We are actually a stage behind it was when I was the former Minister, because you are only at stage 2, concept design. Can the Minister confirm what really has gone wrong?

The President: Minister to reply

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

The 2024 programme was based on a traditional delivery route. The Department adopted a design and build model to improve cost certainty and delivery efficiency, and this required a full reassessment of sequencing, procurement and market engagement.

The President: Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Mr President.

I am pretty sure I heard the Minister say that nobody actually tendered to build a school. That is quite surprising, actually. Can the Minister really just confirm, is this some actual hard evidence now that the failure of our broader capital programme has actually done some really serious damage to our construction sector on the Island? Given that there does not appear to be anybody willing to tender to build this school, what options remain open to the Department? If there are no construction firms out there that are capable or willing to build it for us, what options does she have left?

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

Yes, the Hon. Member is correct. That was the position when we went out for the early stage, but the work continues to progress to the next stage. The Department is taking the contractor feedback in order to inform how we move forward.

Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

A lot of work was done with construction companies prior to the procurement process. In terms of the output there it was disappointing, but have those companies been spoken to again in terms of what the issues were and whether they can be resolved?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

As I said, the project team is continuing to review the contractor feedback and work with stakeholders to reprogramme the project. I was not myself part of the tender, obviously, and I received the information from the team and the various key professionals who have been appointed.

Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The President: Ms Edge, do you have a further supplementary?

Ms Edge: Thank you, Mr President.

The Minister stated that it was not a design and build in 2024. It was a design and build; that was the master plan. So I think the Minister needs to just check that.

But how is the Minister going to progress this forward? Is there an opportunity here to now be looking at this whole project so totally different? Education is changing. Buildings are not as important as they were within the education setting due to massive change. But is the Minister going to look at possibly doing refurbishment and the costs for that? Has that been considered?

The President: Minister to reply. (Interjection)

The Minister: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

As I said, it is a very important infrastructure project for education in the south of the Island. That is not something we have been looking at. The Department, the Project Management Unit and Treasury are continuing to assess the sequencing of the remaining procurement and approval stages to ensure alignment with the RIBA process and the broader contractor market environment, and we are progressing on that basis.

Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The President: Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

Could the Shirveishagh just confirm that the constructor feedback will come from off-Island constructors as opposed to on-Island constructors, because these are specialist school constructors that were being approached on this project?

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

It is my understanding the team are in contact reviewing the contractor feedback from those expressions of interest which did not lead to data coming.

Gura mie eu.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

We are in a very difficult position at the moment and there is a risk that this just goes into a very slow process for many months to come. Is there anything the Minister can do to actually accelerate the process and ensure things do go forward, so the new Minister in the next Government is able to have something on the table; is really shifting forward and going to find a solution to a major problem in the south not only in terms of the current facilities, but also in terms of the number of children who are going to the school currently, but also in the near future? Thank you, Mr President

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The Department is fully aware of the pressures and the condition of the current building, and everybody in the Department, along with colleagues within Treasury and the Project Management Unit, we are all working to progress this as efficiently as is possible.

Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

ENTERPRISE

12. Potential easyJet sale – Implications

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

What the implications for the Island are of the potential sale of easyJet; and whether any talks about those implications have taken place.

The President: We turn to Question 12. I call on the Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I seek to ask the Minister for Enterprise, what the implications for the Island are of a potential sale of easyJet and whether any talks about those implications have taken place?

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

The Minister for Enterprise (Mr Johnston): Thank you, Mr President; and I thank the Hon. Member for his Question.

It would not be appropriate to comment on the proposed acquisition itself as it concerns a potential commercial transaction that has not yet formally finalised or been subject to regulatory approvals.

However, the Isle of Man Government remains committed to maintaining and strengthening the Island's air connectivity, as set out in the Tynwald-approved Strategic Air Services Policy. The Isle of Man Airport maintains ongoing dialogue with easyJet to ensure a strong and constructive relationship, as is the case with all the airline partners. I am assured that the Airport will continue to work closely with them to support existing services and identify opportunities for future growth.

The Department works closely with colleagues at the Airport and other Government stakeholders to ensure that the objectives of the Strategic Air Services Policy continue to be met and identify areas where specific support may be necessary to maintain core routes. The recent announcement of easyJet's new seasonal Geneva service, the airline's first scheduled international route from the Isle of Man, demonstrates the confidence that easyJet has in the Island's market. I understand that early demand has been very encouraging, and we look forward to continuing to build on the partnership in the years ahead.

Thank you.

The President: Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane; I thank the Minister for his reply.

Of course I am aware of the fact that no sale or anything has taken place as yet. I really wanted just to put a marker upon this, that this was something that needed to be watched. Is the Minister aware of some of the concern from travel experts in the industry, particularly if a new owner comes in the first thing they will look at will be routes?

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

I fully concur with the Hon. Member for his concerns. Clearly, we recognise the challenges of connectivity and the importance that we do have a suite of choices when it comes to airlines. Obviously it is really important that we maintain that strong relationship with easyJet. It is our low-cost or volume carrier that we deal with, and clearly we also have a strong relationship with other airlines as well and actively help in that space to ensure that we do maintain that connectivity. I can assure the Hon. Member that there are constant conversations going on and we do have a very close relationship.

Thank you.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

Is the Minister able to give us an indication of what type of discussions are taking place? It was very notable earlier this month that Terry Liddiard, who is one of the most respected specialists in this area, did raise concerns about the potential, given that we have a financial company with very limited expertise in aviation taking over a company that is so important to us? Whether you are looking to actually maximise the value of that company in terms of the sell-off, it is a real risk going forward.

Is it something that has gone down on his Department's risk profile, and is it something that is going to be really considered in the coming hours and days? Because if easyJet were to make a decision not to remain with us, it could have major impacts.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

I cannot comment on the acquisition. These sort of things happen a lot. At the end of the day, the reason I am assuming they are taking over easyJet is because they see it as an attractive business and something for the future. Clearly, there are commercial decisions to be made. Obviously, any conversations there are around airlines, clearly there are individuals on the Island who tend to pick these up and frequent reminders of the challenges. We accept the challenges, and that is why it is really important that we maintain those close working relationships with the airlines, and we will continue to do that.

Thank you.

The President: Mr Callister.

Mr Callister: Thank you, Mr President.

I do thank the DfE Minister for the information this morning, but I will disagree with him because he says we have got a suite of options as an Island. I do not think we do. With so few small-to-medium airlines these days compared to say 20, 30 years ago, is the Minister truly confident that the Isle of Man will have solid links to and from the UK in the future?

The President: Minister to reply.

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

I have got no reason to believe why that should not be the case. Ultimately, these are commercial decisions. My understanding would be that easyJet will continue to service the Isle of Man because it is in their interest to do so. If it is not in their interest to do so, they will make a commercial decision and they may change their mind. It is up to us to make sure we maintain those relationships with the likes of easyJet, ensuring we are also talking to other carriers and other players, which the Airport does regularly, and we will support that.

But ultimately, yes, there is always a challenge. We recognise that. We live on an island, connectivity is a challenge. But it is up to the Government to ensure that we maintain those relationships.

Thank you.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

**13. Ramsey and District Cottage Hospital services –
Reinstatement progress; public meeting organisation; timescales and next steps**

The Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr Hooper, to ask the Minister for Health and Social Care:

What progress has been made reinstating services at Ramsey and District Cottage Hospital; when a public meeting will be organised; what timescales and next steps have been determined for each service; and if she will make a statement.

The President: We turn to Question 13. I call on the Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I would like to ask the Minister for Health and Social Care, what progress has been made reinstating services at Ramsey and District Cottage Hospital; when a public meeting will be organised; what timescales and next steps have been determined for each service; and if she will make a statement?

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

The Minister for Health and Social Care (Ms Christian): Thank you, Mr President.

Yesterday, I circulated a more detailed written statement to Members. Given that the statement is longer than the recommended time for an oral answer, I will just provide a brief summary of the key points for Hon. Members.

Ramsey and District Cottage Hospital remains a vital part of our health and care provision for the north of the Island and work continues to restore and strengthen services on that site. Since the previous update a number of services have already returned to Ramsey, including the minor injuries unit, X-ray, ultrasound, DEXA scanning and a range of outpatient services.

Progress is also being made on the return of additional services. Plans are being developed for a modular dental facility on the hospital site, subject to the necessary approvals. Manx Care has agreed that Martin Ward should return to its original footprint at Ramsey as a refurbished 20-bed rehabilitation and reablement ward, recognising that this is the most appropriate long-term arrangement for patients. Work is also underway to provide a dedicated dermatology facility within the existing hospital estate.

Mr President, in relation to dialysis, the longer-term vision is to improve dialysis services across the Island, including the introduction of home dialysis and increased capacity at Noble's Hospital. But, importantly, at the same time, work is progressing to restore dialysis services in Ramsey as quickly as possible. But what is really also important is that patient engagement now begins to help shape that future of that service.

A public engagement session has been arranged for 6th August, alongside plans for a consultative committee to support ongoing engagement as the longer-term model for health and care services in Ramsey and the north of the Island is developed.

Overall, Mr President, the direction of travel is clear. Ramsey remains a key part of the Island's healthcare network, with services already returning. Further reinstatements bring

actively progressed and a continued commitment to delivering safe, sustainable care closer to home for people living in the north.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Mr President.

I would like to thank the Minister a lot for circulating that very long answer, and I would just be grateful if she could provide some sort of update for the public – maybe on the website, maybe through the press, whatever it is – because there is a lot of concern about some of these services in Ramsey.

One of the questions I have got is in that update that she provided, and also in her remarks just then, what we did not really get were timescales. We got 'as soon as possible', 'as soon as we can', we have 'progress is being made', but we did not get anything that looks or sounds like an timescale.

Some of the services that are of particular concern are, for example, the renal service and the dentistry service. The dentistry service, I understand, it is Treasury red tape that is causing issues in respect of the reinstatement of dentistry.

If the Minister has any actual timescales as to when these services will be back up and running, that would be very much appreciated.

The President Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

I also want to thank the Hon. Member for his commitment in this area, and I do appreciate these questions when they come because they do give me an opportunity to be able to update Hon. Members and obviously members of the public in a more reliable way. But he has been instrumental in keeping the pressure on, and that has absolutely been really crucial to this, both for myself and I know for both the Members of Ramsey and other Members of the north.

With regard to the fuller question, just in terms of the answer, yes, we will absolutely update the website. We are a little bit beholden to Government Technology Services (GTS), I did explain that in the last meeting that we had, but we absolutely are pushing forward with GTS to get those updates done in a timely process.

With regard to timescales, if I had been able to give you a timescale today, I absolutely would have, but I do understand that that is the frustration. The reason being is, again, we are beholden to other areas, so it would be the DoI, etc., so we are literally at the cusp of being able to give Hon. Members and give the public those more confirmed dates. It is just the timing of that.

Also, it is really important, and the Hon. Member will agree, that we speak to the patients first to be able to do that, rather than announce something here today, and I certainly would not want to do that. Patients must come first, and I would really like Manx Care to have that opportunity to discuss that with dental patients, with renal patients, and that is really important. I do understand totally that it would have been great if we had been able to do that today, but it does not mean that we are not absolutely putting the pressure on and trying to move this forward as quickly as possible.

We are having, virtually every two weeks, meetings and we do invite the Hon. Members, and we will continue to do so over this period. As I said, the engagement meeting on 6th August will also be very helpful for residents in the north.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Dr Allinson.

Dr Allinson: Thank you very much, Mr President.

I would like to thank the Minister for her commitment to the facilities in the north, which serve not just the people of the north but people of the whole Island. That is extremely important, particularly at a time when Noble's Hospital can be under pressure. This is quite a useful safety valve.

I would also thank her for setting up the Health Services Consultative Committee, and certainly the meeting we had recently with the interim CEO of Manx Care. I thought he brought a very new perspective to some of these, and very much a clinical perspective.

Would she agree with me that the modular unit that has arrived this weekend at Ramsey is very much a temporary structure, and so really we need to press ahead with long-term solutions for permanent replacements to some of the facilities there that are now no longer fit for purpose?

Thank you.

The President: Minister, to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

I totally agree with the Hon. Member that having a provision in the north and also elsewhere on the Island gives resilience to our healthcare system on the Island. He is absolutely right. It is not just for people of the north, but it does help support other care elsewhere and obviously takes the pressure off our already very busy Noble's Hospital. So I totally agree with that.

In regards to the modular unit, yes, it has arrived on Island, as the last update that I had, and obviously there is now work working with people cleaning, DoI, making sure we will obviously bring in the dental service to look and view that modular unit and check that everything is in progress, and then hopefully we will be able to give that date.

But he is right, it is not a long-term provision. It is certainly a very good clinical provision. I just want to give that reassurance. This is not what has been perhaps described … I will not say the words because it upsets me to say the words that some people have used. This is a modular unit that is a clinical-level modular unit. That is really important that people understand. It will suffice for a good 18 months, if not longer.

However, the Consultative Committee, as the Hon. Member mentioned, is what is really crucial about this, bringing the opinions and views of the people of the north and wider of the Island to discuss the longer-term plans and what provision we should be providing in the north.

There is a report on that. The building does need a lot of work, and that piece of work must be done by this next administration. I would absolutely encourage that. Anybody coming into this next administration must take that and deliver on that for the people of the Island, to give that resilience. It is so important.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Mr President.

I am really glad that the Minister has focused some of her remarks on patients accessing these services. I appreciate there is a bit of a difficulty here in trying to communicate with Members, with the public and with patients, and making sure that it is all done in the right way.

I suppose I am looking for a commitment from the Minister here that when they do eventually have this public meeting in the town, they can talk to everybody about it, but if there are any service changes or service announcements, that those are discussed and communicated to patients first. Ultimately, we have seen this in the past, where patients are finding things out from the media or from the rumour mill, and that really is not an ideal state of affairs.

When these changes are happening, I would just like to make sure that the Department and Manx Care are committed to engaging with those service users as the first port of call. The rest

of us, while we may be very interested and very invested in making sure these services are back up and running, ultimately we are happy to take second place to people who need to use the services.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

The Hon. Member is absolutely correct. I am committed, and I know Manx Care is committed, to speaking to patients first, and committed to those service users. Of course, we will then follow on with updating other representatives, not just in here but also in terms of commissioners.

I will say that sometimes it can be a little bit difficult. The Isle of Man is a really wonderfully close-knit community, and we have workers in the community, etc., so sometimes things can slip through, but we will always take patients and their considerations first. I can give that from myself and from Manx Care, those agreements.

Thank you, Mr President.

14. Waiting lists –
Actions to cut in last six months; areas now of concern

The Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse, to ask the Minister for Health and Social Care:

What actions have been taken to cut waiting lists in the last six months, and which areas are now of concern.

The President: We will move on to Question 14. I call on the Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

I would like to ask the Minister for Health and Social Care, what actions have been taken to cut waiting lists in the last six months, and which areas are now a concern?

Thank you.

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

The Minister for Health and Social Care (Ms Christian): Thank you, Mr President.

I also circulated a longer Answer, so I will do the same and just provide a key summary for today.

Reducing waiting times remains a key priority for both the Department and Manx Care. Over the past six months, there has been a particular focus on improving how appointments and waiting lists are managed, alongside increasing clinical capacity in areas where this is possible.

One of the most significant improvements has been the establishment of a clinic utilisation function within the patient information centre, which is helping to maximise the use of available appointments and reduce non-attendance rates. This has reduced did-not-attend rates from 11.4% to 6%, creating the equivalent of around 770 additional appointments each month.

Additional clinicians have also been appointed in a number of specialities, including gastroenterology, orthopaedics and urogynaecology, resulting in meaningful reductions in waiting lists within those services.

A major focus over the coming months will be the rollout of a comprehensive clinical validation programme. This consultant-led review ensures patients on waiting lists still require an appointment and remain on the most appropriate pathway. Early validation work has already resulted in 43% of reviewed patients being discharged from waiting lists because they no longer require hospital treatment. Following the confirmation of funding, this programme will now be expanded across all hospital services.

Mr President, there remain areas of concern. Diagnostic services continue to experience pressures, and a number of specialities remain under particular scrutiny, including ENT, ophthalmology, gynaecology, general surgery, dermatology, oral surgery and cardiology. In many of these areas, additional clinicians have been recruited, or further capacity is being commissioned to help address waiting times.

Alongside these measures, Manx Care has established a hospital-wide patient access improvement programme to strengthen referral pathways, standardising waiting list management and helping to ensure patients are seen by the right clinicians as early as possible.

In summary, Mr President, while waiting lists remain one of the most significant challenges facing our healthcare system, concrete actions are being taken to improve access to services. Additional capacity is being introduced, waiting list validation is being expanded, and system-wide improvements are being implemented to ensure patients receive the care they need as quickly as possible.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President; and thank you, Minister, for today's Answer and yesterday's Answer.

Given the challenge that the Minister identified in the whole Answer, but also especially in the final sentence, can the Minister explain why there is no reference to the costs of the waiting list in the financial recovery plan? Has she any concerns about our waiting lists compared with the ones in England? Does she believe that one way forward will be for Manx Care to give one of its directors responsibility specifically for waiting lists?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

Those are excellent questions. It is not currently possible to have accurate costs of our waiting lists as we do not yet have activity-based costing. The current structure of the ledger adds further challenge to doing so. A manual costing of the waiting list is possible using the NHS and national tariffs as a proxy, but this is a resource-heavy exercise and will not necessarily affect the cost of delivery on the Island. Therefore, costs calculated in this way would be treated as indicative only.

The Department also recognises that waiting times and waiting lists remain a significant concern for patients and the public, as I have outlined. Direct comparisons with England should be treated with caution, because Manx Care does not currently use the NHS referral-to-treatment methodology, meaning that figures are not measured on a like-for-like basis. In very broad terms, NHS England reported around 7.28 million incomplete referral-to-treatment pathways in May 2026, equating to approximately 13% of the population. Applying a similar high-level comparison to the Isle of Man would suggest a higher proportion of people are currently waiting for care. However, those figures are indicative only and should not be regarded as direct comparable.

Manx Care is taking action to strengthen waiting list management through its patient access improvement programme and the forthcoming clinical validation exercise, which is expected to significantly reduce the number of patients on the waiting list who no longer require treatment.

The Hon. Member mentioned the waiting list director. The Department keeps governance arrangements under review and is focusing on ensuring the waiting list improvement work is supported by the leadership, expertise and oversight required to deliver sustained reductions in waiting times.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I thank the Minister for circulating well in advance a detailed Answer and providing her Answer today.

The Answers are very clinical-heavy, and I really want to focus on the mental health side of things, where we have a waiting list but there is no mention of that in the answers that have been provided. Can the Minister agree to go away and provide us with details of the mental health waiting list in addition to these clinical waiting lists?

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: The answer is absolutely yes. I can do that, and I can provide that by the end of the week.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Ms Edge.

Ms Edge: Thank you, Mr President.

Could the Minister confirm that there was a huge investment in bringing waiting lists down; I think it was over £18 million? Can the Minister confirm whether any audit has been done as to why we have suddenly got an increase in waiting lists, particularly in ophthalmology, etc.? Has an audit been done to understand that? We were promised, when that funding was authorised in this hon. place, that we would be bringing waiting lists down and that they would not be going back to the levels that they were previously.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Could the Hon. Member confirm whether it is in regard to synaptic investment? She did not explain that.

Thank you, Mr President.

Ms Edge: Yes, it is with regard to ophthalmology and synaptic.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

I totally agree with the Hon. Member that investment was made some two years ago now in synaptic. It is about how modern medicine is certainly delivered on the Island. I have to be slightly careful in my answer to this, because we are talking about clinicians and how these clinicians perform the number of operations per day.

I know that Manx Care is working with those clinicians to try to improve that so that we can reduce in those areas, but it is an ongoing piece of work that Manx Care must do and must complete.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

I would just like to begin by thanking the Minister for being so proactive in this area. I know that a lot of my constituents contact me and also copy her in. She is particularly eager to get involved and push things forward, but there is still a real concern that things are taking so long, even in areas like cataracts, where it is a relatively cheap, quick procedure and the waiting lists are growing quite considerably. A constituent was recently told that it would be another five months until he gets treatment.

Is this something that is being actively looked at and actively considered in terms of how solutions can be found, given the ageing population and the growing number of these problems?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: The Hon. Member is correct. He is really asking when we are going to see changes in the waiting lists, and that is absolutely the Department's challenge to Manx Care and to the Manx Care board.

Manx Care aims to reduce the size of the outpatient waiting list to approximately 11,500 open referrals by March 2027, from 17,833. That was the last point taken in May 2026.

In terms of waiting times, Manx Care aims to ensure that, by March 2027, 95% of patients awaiting an initial consultation-led outpatient appointment have been waiting no longer than 52 weeks, compared to 37.1% in May. That is the goal that they are looking to achieve, and I do hope that they are able to achieve it and that Hon. Members will support them in doing so. This is our healthcare system, and we really need to make sure that people of the Isle of Man can see results exactly like this.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Mr President.

I wonder if the Minister would agree that part of the issue that we are facing is around lack of communication and the difficulty in patients understanding how the waiting list system works. I will give the Minister an example. I was waiting for surgery myself. I spoke to the team at Manx Care Advice and Liaison Service (MCALS) and they advised me that there was a two-year wait for this particular surgery. Fair enough, that is par for the course. I got home and there was an appointment letter waiting for me.

Something inside the system is not effectively communicating with itself, so patients are often not given the right information. That then causes them to get concerned and worried, and then they reach out to Members of the House of Keys or directly to the Health Service to raise these concerns. It must cause people a lot of unnecessary worry.

As part of the work that is being done on improving waiting lists themselves, what plans does the Department have and do Manx Care have to improve the way that they communicate those waiting lists and waiting times to patients who are waiting, and in some cases are waiting for quite a long time, for surgeries?

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

I absolutely hear those stories. He is not the only one. I do believe that the way that we do things digitally needs to improve. The single patient record will encompass part of that and will

improve. But I do have to be very honest that, at the moment, the trajectory is not to start until 2028. That is the current promise and deliverable by this current administration.

I do hear lots of much better stories when patients are accessing the tertiary care providers. The minute they walk out they are getting their emails to reconfirm things, and that is the aim. That is absolutely the goal. I would like to see that happen, but the single patient record and that investment is absolutely crucial to delivering something like this, making sure that our GPs know what is happening with scans, etc., and all of that information, working and digitally working together, absolutely will improve that service. We are behind, and we do need to push forward digitally.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

When I was in DHSC, there was some initial work done in terms of the impact of the waiting list in other areas of patients' lives, their families and society. Is this something that has been ongoing or looked at recently?

There are real impacts in terms of secondary effects in areas like mental health, the impact on A&E and many other areas. If this is something that has not been looked at recently, is it something that the Minister can push forward in the coming days and weeks?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

The Hon. Member is right. There are obviously impacts to their families and society for the wait list. That is not just individually; it absolutely does affect their families as well.

I think, again, the risk there of spending time looking at the impact would be a very resource-heavy exercise. However, it is not something that I understand that Manx Care does not listen to patients. They are absolutely aware.

While a comprehensive monetary assessment has not been undertaken, Mr President, Manx Care has definitely considered the wider impact of long-term waits on patients and the community. Obviously, that is working through the clinical validation business case, which identified a number of expected benefits from reducing the lists. That is what is really important. We can identify those benefits from reducing these lists. That is where we should put our emphasis.

It has also been highlighted wider benefits, such as supporting people to remain in work, maintaining independence and reducing the impact of ill health on families and carers. But absolutely, the Department does recognise that prolonged waits can affect quality of life and may lead to a deterioration of a person's condition while they await treatment. This is one of the reasons why Treasury-approved funding has been secured for a comprehensive clinical validation programme, which will commence shortly.

In addition, patients who are waiting for care are subject to a clinical prioritisation process, and services undertake ongoing reviews where there are concerns that a patient's condition may have changed while waiting.

Thank you, Mr President.

15. Respite care –
Available provision and support

The Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr Hooper, to ask the Minister for Health and Social Care:

What respite care provision is available; what support is available to help pay for it; and if she will make a statement.

The President: We will move on to Question 15. I call on the Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I would like to ask the Minister for Health and Social Care, what respite care provision is available; what support is available to help pay for it; and if she will make a statement?

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

The Minister for Health and Social Care (Ms Christian): Thank you, Mr President; thank you to the Hon. Member for his very good Question.

Respite care on the Isle of Man is delivered through a combination of services provided directly by, or commissioned by, Manx Care, alongside provision from independent and third sector organisations.

As circulated separately to Members, respite support is available across all areas of the Island through a broad range of services, including daytime respite, overnight stays, short-term care in a person's own home, day services, supported employment opportunities, social activities, and community outreach and emergency respite. Together, these services support a wide range of individuals, including older people, people living with dementia, individuals with learning disabilities, people with physical disabilities, children and young people with additional needs, and those requiring palliative or end-of-life care support.

Access to social care services and care and respite services is determined through the needs assessment process set out in the Social Services Act 2011. Financial support is determined through a financial assessment undertaken by Treasury's Social Security Division. This determines, based on the person's level of income, the financial assistance they will receive. For people in receipt of Income Support, there is assistance towards the cost of respite care, including up to four weeks of respite provision each year.

There are also instances where Manx Care will arrange for overnight respite services provided within an individual's own home, or short-break services delivered by Crossroads Care, which offers carers breaks from their caring responsibilities.

Mr President, the Department recognises that respite provision and the associated charging and eligibility arrangements need to remain appropriate and responsive to current need as part of the wider respite gap analysis which is currently underway. The Department is reviewing current provision, demand, unmet need and access arrangements, and this work will inform a commissioning plan and future policy development, including whether existing eligibility and financial support arrangements remain suitable.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Mr President.

I would like to thank the Minister for that Answer. Unfortunately, it did not really answer the Question. Apparently, there are lots of day centres and overnight respite available on the Island.

The reality is that is not the case. For example, I know that the Hospice has recently stopped providing respite services. That is one provider that is definitely out of the window.

I am a little concerned that the Minister seems to think that there is a wide array of different types of respite care support available, but the reality is not that on the ground. The reality is that these services are largely privately funded and privately paid for, so if you cannot afford to pay the respite care, there is not a lot that you can do. There is very little in the way of financial support.

The Minister mentioned financial support. Can she confirm that she was referring to Carer's Allowance and Attendance Allowance? That is what I understand to be the financial support available. There is no financial support to help pay for respite care. There is Carer's Allowance and Attendance Allowance, which have very different purposes.

I would be grateful if the Minister could advise how many respite care beds are available across the Island. If there is so much availability, where is it and how can people access it? Even if you were to Google 'respite care services Isle of Man', there is no Government website that says, 'Here are all the services that are available to you and how you can access them. Please talk to your social worker or nursing and care providers'.

You get all the private providers pop up, but there does not appear to be anywhere where someone who needs respite care can find out how to access it and what support is available, however minimal that support may currently be.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

In terms of a snapshot of recent bed availability, maybe that would help the Hon. Member, perhaps versus service user uptake across adult, learning disability, or older person services. I can give him this information.

From a period of 1st April 2026 to 1st July 2026, learning disability (LD) respite service, as in Hollydene, I will give you June's, there were 270 respite beds and the number of residents was 250. In terms of older person services in Southlands, Cummal Mooar, Dementia Care, Sweetbriar, Reayrt Skyal and Thie Meanagh, just again for June, there were 360 respite beds and the number of residents was 210.

I do agree with the Hon. Member that absolutely something can be done in terms of providing more information. I would say that the Hon. Member was Minister for three and a half years prior to me, and he would have experienced those same issues.

Obviously, the businesses that provide do give information about the care that they have on their own websites, but bringing that information together would be absolutely most useful. I do hope that part of the respite gap, that piece of work that we would look at, we would also look at being able to communicate that better and being able to ultimately give patients a better service, because that is what we are here to do.

Being a politician is about making things easier for the public, so I absolutely agree with the Hon. Member. Do we have enough now? No, we do not. That is absolutely my answer here today. I have not been instrumental in the history of how much of our respite beds have been available. That is why we are doing the respite gap analysis, and that is why we will be bringing forward recommendations as a Department.

Again, I encourage the next administration to deliver on this.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Ms Edge.

Ms Edge: Thank you, Mr President.

Can I just clarify with the Minister, you stated that there are 360 respite beds. Is that respite bed nights? I find it difficult to believe that in a month there are 360 actual beds available for long-term respite, but is it bed nights or is it beds permanent for a period?

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.
I did say bed night availability.

The President: Mrs Morphet.

Mrs Morphet: Thank you, Mr President.
Does the Minister agree that the description she has given is not quite as simple as it may sound of having access being determined by a needs assessment and then a financial assessment? The reality is that a needs assessment will be done, and that will lay on file until a bed is available or agreed by the financial assessment, and the needs assessment does not in any way guarantee access to a service.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.
Absolutely, a needs assessment in individual cases – I do not have them to my hands – but absolutely sometimes in individual cases, when they say that there is a need, sometimes financially that might not be accepted. Obviously, that is Social Security.
If that is something that a future administration wants to bring that side of it into DHSC, I would absolutely welcome that, because things could happen faster and be more in co-ordination.
Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mrs Kinnish.

Mrs Kinnish: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.
The Minister made reference earlier to a review of the unmet need. I work quite closely with the learning disability community and recognise this. You said that that would inform commissioning arrangements. I wonder if there is some form of timeframe in which this will be reported upon to inform future service.
Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President; thank you for the Hon. Member's question.
Absolutely, the Department is looking at a more commissioning model going forward. We will be producing a Mandate for next year. We are still producing the Mandate, but we are looking at changing that and bringing forward a more commissioning model.
It will take some time. We do have to build up the resource within the Department, but this is one of the priorities to be able to say to Manx Care that this is the commissioning model that we require from you for our respite care within the community.
Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Ms Edge.

Ms Edge: Thank you, Mr President.

Mine is similar to the unmet need. With regard to the facilities that you read out, Minister, there were not many there that were suitable for younger people. The majority of them were for the elderly and for respite.

Can the Minister confirm that she will be looking consciously at the disability requirement for individuals that are not necessarily severe disabilities, where they need overnight care and accommodation with lift access and things like that, but we do have a number of people that are needing respite with disabilities that perhaps would not be seen unless they were wearing a lanyard?

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

The Hon. Member is absolutely correct. We will be looking at obviously the unmet need within our children's respite care as well, but just for information, for children and young people with disabilities and complex needs, Manx Care provides overnight short breaks at Ramsey Respite Centre and day provision at the Braddan Hub, supported by a community outreach service which has recently been developed and extended.

Hospice Isle of Man also does through Rebecca House and provides respite for children with life-limiting conditions. Manx Care also has to underwrite the fees as, at the point of admission, the person's financial circumstances are not clear and the assessment has perhaps not been undertaken at that moment.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Mr President.

The Minister is quite right that this is not a new issue. It has been going on for some time. One of the last things I ended up doing before I left the Department was helping publish a Carers Strategy, which was designed to try to start the work of resolving some of these issues. That was back in 2024.

As part of that strategy, the Department and Manx Care were supposed to be developing an appropriate suite of supportive services, reviewing the eligibility criteria for Carer's Allowance, and completing that respite gap analysis.

I am just curious, from the Minister's perspective, what progress has been made on some of those core aims, because I would have thought that two years was easily enough time to deliver on a number of these aims and to be in a position to be able to start implementing some of these recommendations.

The Minister may also be aware of the State of Caring report that is published on the Island by Crossroads. That report is quite difficult reading. It talks about that only roughly 6% of carers feel that there are no barriers to them accessing support, and nearly 40% of carers, the reason they do not access services is because they do not know what services are available.

In the meantime, while the Minister is working on these strategies and gap analysis, can she make a commitment to improve the communication that goes out to people, to carers, (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) so that people are aware of what support may be available to them?

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you.

I will take the last part there in terms of communication. Absolutely. It is part of the governance review, which we will talk a little bit about later on. Communication must be more aligned between the Department and Manx Care. One thing I do think that we need to do is, listening to the patient and our service users, it is really important to be able to inform how we

communicate better. I totally agree with the Hon. Member that we do need to make sure that, the next time that that report is done, we have addressed those areas.

What I would say is, through the implementation of the Carers Strategy, which the Hon. Member mentioned, 2024-34, the Department has secured additional in-home respite provision to support carers on the waiting list and seek support, obviously from Crossroads Care, and this investment is expected to provide up to 100 carers with regular breaks of at least three hours per week, helping to sustain care arrangements and reduce carers' stress and improve wellbeing, which is extremely vitally important.

I certainly can look at giving, by the time I go through all the points of the Carer Strategy – we did give an update, and obviously there will be a future update in the Carer Strategy, but if there is anything further that I can ask the Department to update Members on to know what has been achieved, I can certainly get that circulated, Mr President.

The President: I call on the Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Mr President.

I thank the Minister for pointing out what is available, but would she agree that actually most of the people who need it know what is available, but they cannot access it simply because there is not enough of it to meet the need?

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: That is what I have said. We do absolutely recognise that there is not enough for the demand on the Island, and that is absolutely something that we cannot deny. It is an issue, and we do need to resolve that.

Thank you, Mr President.

INFRASTRUCTURE

16. Revised Sea Services Agreement – Progress made

The Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr Hooper, to ask the Minister for Infrastructure:

What progress has been made towards a revised Sea Services Agreement.

The President: Turning to Question 16, I call on the Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I would like to ask the Minister for Infrastructure, what progress has been made towards a revised Sea Services Agreement?

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

The Minister for Infrastructure (Mr Crookall): Thank you, Mr President; I thank the Hon. Member for his Question.

Progress has continued to be made towards a revised Sea Services Agreement through the development of the new sea service freight work. The Department has completed a detailed review of the existing agreement, taking account of the Committee's recommendations and the wider evidence received during that process.

To support this work, two dedicated working groups were established. Group one, led by the Department of Infrastructure, focused on the legal, operational and compliance aspects of the agreement. It has now completed its review. The principal remaining work relates to the socioeconomic annex, and associated supporting material is being developed through group two, led by the Department for Enterprise.

Following the review, it is hoped that the new agreement, with modernised provisions that better accommodate socioeconomic conditions, will be put into place. This structure and approach is intended to provide greater flexibility. These proposed provisions will form an integral part of the overall framework, and it is appropriate that this work is completed before formal discussions commence with the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company regarding any amendments required to the agreement.

It must be stressed, however, that this is an agreement between the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company and Government, and both parties must be agreeable.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Mr President; I would like to thank the Minister very much for that Answer.

The Department has reviewed the agreement and identified where it needs to change. It has split into two groups, one looking at the legal side of things and one looking at the socioeconomic side of things.

Funnily enough, this is exactly the position the Department was in when I left it in January, because those groups were the ones that I helped set up and that I was helping to lead on those conversations with. He is absolutely correct that the DoI work was completed well in time for January Tynwald.

Can the Minister advise, what progress has been made since then? In the last six months, it feels like we are in exactly the same place now that we were in January when I left the Department.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

I am not sure exactly what is left to do for the Department for Enterprise regarding this work. As I said, we have completed our work. As the Hon. Member who has just resumed his seat knows, and has just said, he was in the Department there, and this should have been done last year. It was not completed last year. We are still working on it, but it is an agreement that will have to be agreed with the Steam Packet Company and the Government when it comes forward, so we need to make sure that it is right. Hopefully, we do not spend too much time working with the Steam Packet Company before we get this right and are able to implement it. I take on the Hon. Member's thoughts on this.

The President: Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I think the short answer could have been, not much or none. Can I ask the Minister, because this has been going on now for some time, if he can put a timeframe on how long he thinks this will take before we get talks and agreement between the Department and the Steam Packet?

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: I have no idea on that question, Mr President, but I will endeavour to find out. Obviously, that will depend on how much work is left to be done by the Department for Enterprise and myself, or the Department of Infrastructure, and then the agreements need to be made between the Government and the Steam Packet Company.

The President: Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Mr President.

Can the Minister advise what the cost is to the Department of not having a Sea Services Agreement in place? It is my understanding that the Department is currently bearing the costs for the operation and maintenance of the Ferry Terminal in Liverpool, much of which will hopefully be passed on to the Steam Packet as part of the agreement.

The fact that this has not happened leads me to conclude that these significant costs are being borne by the taxpayer and the DoI at the moment. Can the Minister confirm that that is the case and advise what the amount of that is and how much has been spent?

I would also like to get the Minister's view on whether this money would be recoverable from the Steam Packet when they eventually get round to agreeing on the contract, and if the Minister could confirm whether the shortfall in budget is being paid out of his Department's funds or the Department for Enterprise funds, as it seems to be them holding up progress on this report.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

I obviously do not have those figures with me. With regard to the cost and whether it is recoverable, we will get those and come back to the Hon. Members. I will have them circulated.

I think he mentioned the timeline. Again, I will come back to

3 Hon. Members on those.

17. Territorial sea planning legislation – Number of officers working on

The Hon. Member for Onchan, Ms Edge, to ask the Minister for Infrastructure:

How many officers work on territorial sea planning legislation.

The President: Turning to Question 17, I call on the Hon. Member for Onchan, Ms Edge.

Ms Edge: Thank you, Mr President.

I would like to ask the Minister for Infrastructure, how many officers are currently working on territorial sea planning legislation?

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

The Minister for Infrastructure (Mr Crookall): Thank you, Mr President; I thank the Hon. Member for her Question.

Work relating to the territorial sea consenting regime is not carried out by a stand-alone team within the Department, which is dedicated solely for that purpose. The work forms part of a wider marine work programme, including work to support projects across Government, such

as the marine spatial planning, offshore renewable energy, marine infrastructure consents and the stewardship of the territorial sea via the Territorial Sea Committee.

At present, the Department has two officers who contribute to this work as part of their wider responsibilities. These officers are supported by officers from other Departments and specialist advisers, legal and industry, who will contribute where and when appropriate to ensure that legislative, environmental, planning and operational considerations are properly addressed, alongside the Department's statutory responsibilities.

The precise level of resource varies depending on the particular legislative or policy workstream being progressed at that time, but there are no more than two officers who could work on this.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Ms Edge.

Ms Edge: Thank you, Mr President.

I thank the Minister for that response. Can the Minister confirm that the two officers are permanent employees of the DoI, or does he have contracted employees in there working on territorial seas legislation?

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: I believe one is contracted part-time and the other one is full-time.

18. Ramsey pedestrian environment – Improvements since 2019 audits

The Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr Hooper, to ask the Minister for Infrastructure:

What improvements to the pedestrian environment in Ramsey have been made following the pedestrian environment review system (PERS) audits in 2019; how much has been spent on these improvements; and if he will make a statement.

The President: Turning to Question 18. I call the Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I would like to ask the Minister for Infrastructure, what improvements to the pedestrian environment in Ramsey have been made following the pedestrian environment review system (PERS) audits in 2019; how much has been spent on these improvements, and if he will make a statement?

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

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

The Department does not hold a separate schedule of Ramsey schemes or expenditure that can be directly attributed to the 2019 pedestrian environment review.

The 2019 review was not established as a programme of individual schemes to be delivered, monitored or costed on a recommendation-by-recommendation basis. It provided a baseline assessment of pedestrian conditions across the Island, including Ramsey, and has been used as one of several evidence sources to inform investment priorities, safety outcomes, asset management decisions, accessibility improvements and development-related highway works.

Since 2019, pedestrian improvements in Ramsey have been delivered through wider maintenance, accessibility, safety and capital programmes, but these are not recorded as being PERS audits or schemes. Expenditure is not coded by reference to individual PERS observations or by town. The PERS remains a valuable tool in helping the Department target investments and development-related improvements where it can deliver the greatest benefit for pedestrians.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Mr President.

I am a little bit concerned that the Department has clearly spent a lot of time and money commissioning these reports, but then is not able to track back whether these reports have had any impact on its workflow. There are a lot of references in the Ramsey report to safety issues, lack of pavements or uneven surfaces, ineffective road surfaces and ineffective drainage. There are lots of issues and concerns around pedestrian accessibility on a number of the routes all over town.

I would have expected that, off the back of these reports, the Department would have implemented a number of these, especially the safety-critical measures, that were identified. Can the Minister confirm that somebody in the Department has read the reports that were commissioned and published seven years ago, and off the back of those reports and reading them, the Department then went ahead and did some work on the issues in the report? If he could identify some of that work, that would be very much appreciated.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you.

Obviously, I will have to check back with the officers and check back to see what work has been done in those seven years, but the Hon. Member is quite right, this was done seven years ago, and whether it has been used as or for work purposes, I will have to check, Mr President.

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

19. Hillsborough law – Equivalent legislation plans

The Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Glover, to ask the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

What plans there are to introduce legislation equivalent to the Hillsborough law which has been proposed in the UK.

The President: Turning to Question 19, I call on the Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I seek to ask the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs, what plans there are to introduce legislation equivalent to the Hillsborough Law, which has been proposed and passed in the UK?

The President: I call on the Member for the Department of Justice and Home Affairs, Mr Wannenburgh, to reply.

A Member for Justice and Home Affairs (Mr Wannenburgh): Thank you, Mr President.
I thank the Hon. Member for his question as well.
At the present time, there are no plans to develop a Bill similar to the Public Office (Accountability) Bill currently proceeding through Parliament. I am sure the Hon. Member will also recall that there is a Tynwald declaratory resolution that there should be a statutory offence of misconduct in public office, with work to progress on this to be undertaken in the next administration.
Thank you.

The President: Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.
I thank the Hon. Member for Justice and Home Affairs for that Answer. Rather like the easyJet question earlier, it is really just a line in the sand and to make sure that this landmark piece of legislation that has gone through in the UK is going to be reflected here in the Isle of Man, and that the Department is acutely aware of that, and will be monitoring that going into the next administration.
Gura mie eu.

The President: Member to reply.

Mr Wannenburgh: Thank you, Mr President.
Of course, if I am in the next administration, I will monitor that. I agree that transparency and accountability in public office is vital, but, to my knowledge, the context of the Island is quite different to that of the UK.
Thank you.

The President: Ms Edge.

Ms Edge: Thank you, Mr President.
I wonder if the Member for the Department of Home Affairs can say what his Department has done so far on misfeasance, malfeasance and misconduct in public office, which was approved in here? That is relevant to the Hillsborough Law, and certainly to whistleblowers for anything, not just relevant to the Hillsborough case.

The President: I call on the Member to reply.

Mr Wannenburgh: Thank you, Mr President; I thank the Hon. Member for her question.
At the present time, due to the significant legislative programme in the Department, including modernisation of fire services and fire safety legislation, this legislation is not deemed to be a priority.
The Department has 13 primary Bills for consideration at its latest count for its legislation plan for the next administration to consider, as well as substantial legislation passed already in this administration to implement. The Department has a lean policy and legislation team, and without significant headcount growth, prioritisation of resources will continue to be necessary.
Thank you.

The President: Supplementary, Ms Edge.

Ms Edge: Thank you, Mr President.
The Member should be aware that it was approved that this legislation on misfeasance, malfeasance and misconduct in public office would be brought forward in the legislative

programme in 2026. The Member has just stated that there are 13 items that are the Department's goals. Can he confirm that that is on there? If not, can I please have an update circulated?

The President: I call on the Member to reply.

Mr Wannenburgh: Thank you, Mr President.
It is on there, and I am quite happy to provide the update as well.
Thank you.

The President: Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Mr President.
The Member has said that this is not on the Department's priority list. One of the stipulations inside the Public Accountability Act in the UK is the requirement for public entities to have a code of conduct, and for breaches of this code of conduct to be dealt with under the statute.
That is something that the Department of Infrastructure has placed in the new Local Government Bill, to apply to local authorities. Can the Member advise why the Government's position is that we should have mandatory codes of conduct with penalties for breaking them for local authority members, but not for Government officials and Government Members; why the difference? How come one was a priority for the Government and the other was not?

The President: I call on the Member to reply.

Mr Wannenburgh: Thank you, Mr President.
I am not going to speak on behalf of the Government, but I have noted his comments.
Thank you. (Laughter)

MANX UTILITIES AUTHORITY

20. Onshore windfarm – Progress since 19th May 2026

The Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse, to ask the Chair of the Manx Utilities Authority:

What progress has been made since 19th May 2026 with plans for an onshore windfarm.

The President: Turning to Question 20. I call on the Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.
I would like to ask the Chair of the Manx Utilities Authority, what progress has been made since 19th May 2026 with plans for an onshore windfarm?
Thank you.

The President: I call on the Chair of the Manx Utilities Authority to reply.

The Chair of the Manx Utilities Authority (Mr Wannenburgh): Thank you, Mr President;
I thank the Hon. Member for his Question and continued interest as well.

Since 19th May 2026, work has continued on the proposed Cair Vie windfarm project, with a particular focus on completing the environmental, ecological and technical work required to support a planning application. The supporting planning documentation has also continued to be developed, verified and finalised.

As Manx Utilities has previously advised publicly, the project remains at the pre-application stage, with no planning application as yet being submitted. Work continues to ensure that any application submitted is robust, evidence-based and capable of being properly scrutinised through the statutory planning process.

As stated previously in this sitting, it is important that the parliamentary transition ahead of the general election is respected, that newly elected Members have the opportunity to engage with the proposed Cair Vie windfarm project. No project elements have been approved or procured, no construction commitments have been made and the next key milestone remains the submission of the planning application.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President; and thank you, Chairman.

It is interesting how the Answer did not say that we have gone into reverse, which we appear to have done.

In a recent Written Answer, it states that the proposal will be considered through the statutory planning process as a single planning submission, but have the planners provided any reassurance that they have the capacity to assess such a complex and data-heavy scheme? They are already struggling to do relatively basic work in a timely manner.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Chairman to reply.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr President.

As the Hon. Member is aware, Manx Utilities has undertaken a range of engagement activities during the development of the proposed project. As previously advised, further engagement will take place at the appropriate stage of the process, with residents able to review the planning documentation and participate in consultation through the statutory planning process. Indeed, that is what I said to Mr Glover in the Answer earlier this morning.

Thank you.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

We got our answers the wrong way around there, sir. Do I ask a question now that goes with the previous answer, or do I move on?

In terms of the answer that has just been provided, the Chair has suggested that there has been active consultation with the local residents, but I challenge that in terms of the discussions being minimal and the public meeting being held miles away in Castletown. So, when we get to the next step, will the consultation be with local residents in the local area?

With regard to the planners, have they signalled that they have the capacity to deal with such a data-heavy scheme that is also so incredibly complex?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Chairman to reply.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr President.

I would take issue with the fact that he says it has been minimal. I do not believe it has been. It is because of his concerns and indeed his constituency colleagues' concerns that the MUA has guaranteed that it will hold a further consultation in the area.

Castletown was the closest one we did previously. I am not sure if the Member attended that.

Mr Moorhouse: Yes.

The Chair: Sorry, did you go inside? No.

Several Members: Ooh!

The President: Mr Wannenburgh, answer the question. We are not going to have a back-and-forth.

The Chair: No, indeed not. Thank you. I believe I have answered the question.
Thank you.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

One big concern for me is that, since mid-May, the MUA seemed to have gone into reverse in terms of the confidence it was showing over the environmental impact assessment data that has been collected. One particular concern that has been mentioned several times previously is the risk of flooding.

Does the Chairman feel equally confident, as he has been previously, that the industrialisation of the landscape and the removal of trees will not increase flooding? To provide some reassurance to the local people, is he able to give us an indication about what the water storage tank capacity will be?

Also, have any similar flooding networks been provided elsewhere in the British Isles? If so, can he explain where those are?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Chairman to reply.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr President.

The proposed mitigation measures are being developed and assessed by specialist advisers using established engineering and environmental assessment methodologies. The supporting evidence and assessments will form part of the planning application and will be available for scrutiny through the planning process. That is the right and proper thing to do. Finally, I object to Mr Moorhouse saying that it has gone into reverse; it clearly has not.

Thank you.

CHIEF MINISTER

21. Report of the Select Committee on the Role of the Legislature in the Budget Process – CoMin's collective responsibility re recommendations

The Hon. Member for Rushen, Dr Haywood, to ask the Chief Minister:

How Council of Ministers' collective responsibility was applied to consideration of the recommendations of the Report of the Select Committee of Tynwald on the Role of the Legislature in the Budget Process 2025-26 [PP 2026/0060], as debated in Tynwald on 24th June 2026; and whether Ministers advised the Chief Minister before the debate of their support for some of the recommendations.

The President: Turning to Question 21. I call the Hon. Member for Rushen, Dr Haywood.

Dr Haywood: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I would like to ask the Chief Minister, how Council of Ministers' collective responsibility was applied to consideration of the recommendations of the Report of the Select Committee of Tynwald on the Role of the Legislature in the Budget Process 2025-26, as debated in Tynwald on 24th June 2026, and whether Ministers advised the Chief Minister before the debate of their support for some of the recommendations?

The President: I call the Chief Minister to reply.

The Chief Minister: Mr President, the Council of Ministers operates, as Hon. Members are fully aware, under the principle of collective responsibility, which enables Ministers to express their views frankly and freely during Council deliberations, while maintaining a united position once decisions have been reached.

In considering the recommendations of the Report of the Select Committee on the Role of the Legislature in the Budget Process, the principle of collective responsibility applied in the usual way.

The President: Dr Haywood.

Dr Haywood: Thank you very much.

Is it correct to say, therefore, that the Council of Ministers' preferred course of action was to delay consideration of the recommendations, but when that course was rejected Ministers had no agreed collective position on what should happen next? Because of the 17 proposed amendments that were lost, there were then seven split votes on some of those amendments.

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

The Chief Minister: Mr President, in considering the recommendations, the principle of collective responsibility applied in the usual way.

The President: Dr Haywood.

Dr Haywood: Thank you.

Mr President, would it be fair to say, then, that the Council of Ministers had not prepared any fallback position in the event that Tynwald had rejected their proposed deferrals?

The President: Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

In considering the recommendations, the principle of collective responsibility applied in the usual way.

Dr Haywood: It just did not work, did it?

22-23. July 2026 Royal visit – Cost

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

What the cost was of the royal visit on 14th July 2026.

The Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Glover, to ask the Chief Minister:

What the cost was of the royal visit on 14th July 2026.

The President: Turning to Questions 22 and 23. These have been grouped, so I will first ask the Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse, to read his Question, and then Mr Glover to do likewise.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

I would like to ask the Chief Minister, what the cost was of the royal visit on 14th July 2026.

Thank you.

The President: Now, Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The same question.

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

The Chief Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

I am grateful to the Hon. Members for agreeing to have their question taken together.

I know that many Hon. Members, indeed all Hon. Members, will share my view. It was a great occasion, and it was great to see so many thousands of people gather to welcome the Lord of Mann to the Island last week. There was a great sense of community spirit that arose during the visit, and it was heartening to hear how much His Majesty valued the Isle of Man's environment, cultural heritage and our proud traditions.

The occasion brought together people from all walks of life and celebrated the things that make our Island nation unique. The warm welcome afforded to the Lord of Mann and the pride shown by our communities created lasting memories for thousands of people and marked an occasion of significance in the Island's history.

At this stage, though, it is not possible for me to correctly identify all the costs incurred by Government Departments relating to the event, due to the short period of time that has passed. It will be possible, however, in due course to identify all those costs. Once that has all been processed, Mr President, I will be happy to circulate the information and publish it accordingly.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President; thank you, Chief Minister.

It is disappointing that not even an indication has been provided of the costs, but there you go. In terms of the inevitable costs, that is one thing, but also will the benefits be assessed in terms of the impact on the local economy as part of that calculation?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister: If it is of any help to the Hon. Member, for comparison purposes, the policing costs related to the visit of Her Majesty the Queen in March 2024 were approximately £123,000. I am not sure that you can attach a value to the enjoyment of thousands of people in welcoming the Lord of Mann and the visit of the King to the Island.

Several Members: Hear, hear.

The President: Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu.

I agree entirely with the Chief Minister. It is very difficult to put a value on it. It was great to see the smiles on people's faces, but nevertheless I feel that it should be a matter of public record what the overall cost was, hence the Question.

Can we have the King visit the Island more often? The route from Douglas to the Airport was the smartest I have seen it in many years, and a great positive.

The President: Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister: I am sure there are many people on the Island who would welcome a future visit in the near future from His Majesty the King. Indeed, I have expressed that to His Excellency the Governor.

Several Members: Hear, hear.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

As part of the cost calculations, will any cost and benefit assessment be carried out in terms of the impact on local businesses? Is it not rare to have such an honoured guest visit the Island but not visit a private sector business?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Chief Minister to reply.

The Chief Minister: Mr President, as Hon. Members will know, His Majesty the King has many pressing demands. We should be grateful for the fact that His Majesty found the time to visit the Island. We are very grateful for the time. It would of course have been wonderful to have seen His Majesty here for a longer period of time and for a greater number of people to have been able to welcome him.

The situation, in terms of the visit overall, was a success. Thousands of people clearly expressed great joy. I was delighted to see so many schoolchildren welcoming the King outside Tynwald Court, and I am delighted of course with the pictures and photographs of the events that have taken place, the crowds to welcome the King on to the horse-tram and that very poignant visit with James Fenton, which I am sure Hon. Members will agree was significant.

Several Members: Hear, hear.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

The Chief Minister made reference to the cost of the Queen's visit and said the cost of this visit will be produced at some future moment. Will that be an overall cost, or will there be a breakdown in terms of the cost for security and the cost to areas such as DoI, which did a terrific job in such a limited amount of time?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Chief Minister.

The Chief Minister: As I said in my Answer, Mr President, we will do our best to identify and confirm the costs across the Departments. I will seek to ensure that that is ultimately circulated and properly published.

The President: Mrs Morphet.

Mrs Morphet: Would the Chief Minister join me in thanking the members of the Police, the staff here, the clerks in the Court and everybody who was involved in making it such a special occasion?

Several Members: Hear, hear.

The Chief Minister: Indeed I would, and I thank the Hon. Member for her comments.

INFRASTRUCTURE

24. Arbory Street and Malew Street resurfacing – Plan progress in last six months

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

What progress has been made in the last six months with plans to resurface Arbory Street and Malew Street.

The President: Turning to Question 24. I call on the Hon. Member for Arbory, Castletown and Malew, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

I would like to ask the Minister for Infrastructure, what progress has been made in the last six months with plans to resurface Arbory Street and Malew Street?

Thank you.

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

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

God loves a trier! (Laughter) The Department continues to support the proposed improvements scheme for Arbory Street and Malew Street in Castletown. Planning approval for the scheme was granted on 13th November 2024 and remains in place. During the last six months, the Department has continued to review options for progressing the project. However, no funding has yet been identified to enable the scheme to proceed to detailed design and construction.

A meeting has been scheduled to take place on 3rd August 2026 to discuss the project with Castletown Commissioners. Subject to their continued support, the Department intends to submit a business case seeking the necessary funds to progress it to construction.

If the local authority is not supportive, then the scheme will not be progressed. The Department knows that there are some traders who have not supported the scheme in the past, and it will rely on the local authority to consider all views and the needs of the town before deciding if it supports the scheme progressing.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President; and thank you, Minister.

Is the Minister able to give us an indication of how big this business case is, please? We were informed in November 2025 that the Department was in the process of producing a business case, so it has been ongoing since November 2025.

I am slightly concerned that this does seem to have remained in the to-do pile, despite the warm and positive words from the Minister. Is there any way to speed this up? I know that he has put a timetable forward in terms of the role of the Commissioners and other things, but how quickly can that business case be completed?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

As the Hon. Member knows, and as I said at the beginning, God loves a trier, but he is not the only one and not the only area on the Island that wants work doing.

I have said that a meeting is coming up with the local authority, which will help progress this scheme going forward. There are lots of things, as the Hon. Member will know from his time in the Department some time ago, but we will deliver this as and when, if it is supported by the local authority and the traders.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President; and thank you, Minister.

Usually, when the Minister makes a reference to a road, he makes reference to the safety critical reports and the issues with it. In terms of these roads, there have been a number of incidents in the last five years where people have fallen and quite seriously damaged themselves. Given that situation, doesn't it add to the significance and the real need to get these issues sorted as quickly as possible?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Yes, I am sure that it does, Mr President, and those incidents that have taken place and where it has taken place, I am sure those faults in the roads will have been sorted at the time, but overall we all know that is why the scheme is ongoing and due to be done at some

stage, and will be done at some stage with the support of the local authority and the local Members, hopefully.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

It is good that the Commissioners have played such an active role, given that on 17th May 2021 the DoI representatives went to the Castletown Commissioner's Office and displayed the proposals and what was going to go into planning.

In terms of that situation, isn't it quite rare for the DoI to actually have a promotion of that type and then leave it for five years before moving things forward?

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: No, I do not think it is, and the Hon. Member is shaking his head down here. The former Minister of the Department and another Member would be shaking his head if he was in the room as well, but it is not.

The Hon. Member has kept the pressure on for the Department to do this, and as and when, as I have said, when we have talked to the local authority over the summer, and things will progress if everybody is supportive.

25. Disc parking system – Review progress

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

What progress has been made on the review of the disc parking system.

The President: Turning to Question 25. I call on the Hon. Member for Douglas Central, Mrs Corlett.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Mr President.

I ask the Minister for Infrastructure, what progress has been made on the review of the disc parking system?

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

The Minister for Infrastructure (Mr Crookall): Thank you very much, Mr President.

The Department has continued its review of resident disc parking policies to ensure that the current system remains fair, effective and fit for purpose in meeting present and future parking demand.

As part of this work, officers have examined the operation of resident disc parking schemes across the Island, with particular attention given to areas experiencing significant pressure on on-street parking capacity, including disc parking zone H in Douglas.

A range of options has been assessed against key objectives, such as fairness for residents, support for local businesses and essential services, ease of enforcement, administrative efficiency and overall value for money. The review is also considering opportunities to modernise the existing arrangements, including the use of digital processes and improved

permit administration, while ensuring that any future system remains clear, proportionate and enforceable.

The Department's next step is to engage with residents and other stakeholders to better understand opinions on evening and weekend parking within residential disc parking zones. This initial engagement will focus on broad policy principles and priority, rather than asking the public to vote on specific measures. The feedback received will help inform the development and assessment of potential options before any recommendations are brought forward.

At this time, the Department's objective is to ensure that the resident parking arrangements are fair, practical and responsive to the needs of the local communities, while supporting the Island's wider transport and development objectives.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: I call on Lhiass-loayreyder, Mrs Corlett, supplementary question.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Mr President.

I do thank the Minister for confirming that this review is actually taking place. It has been promised for some considerable time now. While I absolutely accept that it is not top of the pops on a Government priority list, it is a real top-ranking concern for particularly Douglas residents.

I would ask the Minister: does he understand the frustrations of residents with this? Because it is an all-day, every-day issue for them. I would also ask the Minister, is some consultation going to be carried out once the review is finished?

Thank you.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you very much indeed, Mr President.

The last one first. There will absolutely be some consultation done, and I really do understand the frustrations. It is not just in Douglas; I would say it is Island-wide. We have all heard comments from our constituents since we have been here for the last five years. It is not a great system. It has been built up over the years and it gets altered to try to suit local areas, but it is not an Island-wide system that suits certain places the way it does in other places.

I would just say staffing is an issue in this area for us in the Department, and trying to find officers that will come into the Department and work in this area has been very hard for probably the last at least two, if not three, years for the Department.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you, Mr President.

In the initial Answer, the Minister made reference to digital solutions. Does that involve cameras that could be used to monitor the parking areas? Because there is a really serious issue in terms of some vehicles being parked for a long period of time. I am aware of one particular vehicle that has been parked for several years now, and there appears to be no capacity for DoI to do anything about that.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Again, last point first. If there are vehicles that have been left parked for that long, then please do report it. We have an area in the Department that will deal with that, abandoned vehicles, and we will get that sorted. If we cannot, the Police certainly will.

When it comes to digital solutions, I would imagine, yes, that includes cameras, but also just being able to check on a phone how long they have been there and all sorts of things. It is about time we got into the modern era, if you like.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Mr President.

Could I just ask the Minister, could he leave us with a positive? In the short term, is consideration being given to extending the disc zone residents parking limits to the residential roads, particularly in Douglas, that are not currently zoned? Because this is where the most issues are occurring.

Thank you.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: That is part of the review, Mr President. It is an issue, particularly in Douglas, I would say. I am not too sure about other areas, but particularly in Douglas we know, because there are a lot of people who come into Douglas every day to work and they will find places to park without having to pay. But that is definitely part of the review, Mr President.

The President: Mr Wannenburgh.

Mr Wannenburgh: Thank you, Mr President.

The Minister will be aware that I brought a petition last January to the Court, and the then DoI Minister gave us a commitment to hold a consultation, or, sorry, to hold a review of the parking. Could I ask what progress has been made on that to date?

Thank you.

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: Yes, I believe the Hon. Member has asked a question on this fairly recently, and was told, when we had a policy and strategy meeting in the Department about it, what started off as a small area has grown to the whole Island. But that is being, as I said earlier to the Hon. Member's Question, looked at, but the whole of the Island is now being looked at because it certainly needs a review of the whole Island.

The President: Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Mr President.

My last question to the Minister would be, is there a timescale for this review?

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: There is not, Mr President. As I said, we have a staffing shortage on this, and this has dragged on far too long, as Members will already agree, but if we have not got the staff, we can only do it as fast as we can, as and when we get those staff to do it.

Order of the Day

5.&6. Lower Douglas Bus and Passenger Facilities;
Department of Health and Social Care – Governance Review – Progress Report –
Motions deferred to after lunch

The President: Now, Hon. Members, we turn to Items 5 and 6 on our Order Paper. I just draw Members' attention to Standing Orders in this regard. Standing Order 3.2A talks about statements and says that statements must be circulated to Members by five o'clock the night before the sitting. That timetable has not been reached. I am conscious that these statements have been circulated this morning but, given that Members deserve the right to read them, I will exercise my powers under 3.2A(2A)(b) in order to defer those Items until after lunch, just so that Members have the chance to actually read them. I believe they have been circulated, and we will deal with Items 5 and 6 therefore after lunch.

7. Douglas Bay Horse Tramway –
Continuation of Funding –
Motion carried

The Minister for Infrastructure to move:

That Tynwald approves an amount up to £2,500,000 for the Douglas Bay Horse Tram reinstatement to be funded from a transfer from General Reserves to the Capital Financing Reserve with £500,000 to be held by Treasury in Capital Contingency.

The President: That brings us then to Item 7. I ask the Minister for Infrastructure if he is ready to move Item 7 at this point.

The Minister for Infrastructure (Mr Crookall): Just trying to get the paperwork out of my folder!

The President: I am sure it will be worth the wait, do not worry.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

I was not quite ready for that one, as you will be aware. (**The President:** Apologies.)

Mr President, I rise to bring the motion forward in my name that Tynwald approves an amount of up to £2.5 million for the Douglas Bay Horse Tramway reinstatement to be funded from a transfer from General Reserves to the Capital Financing Reserve, with £500,000 to be held by Treasury in Capital Contingencies.

Mr President, Members of Tynwald, I rise today to ask for Members' support for the proposal before us to complete the Douglas Bay Horse Tramway and finally deliver the scheme that this Court has discussed, debated and invested in over many years. Douglas Bay Horse Tramway is one of the Isle of Man's most recognisable and cherished heritage assets. It is not only an important part of our transport history, but also an internationally significant attraction that contributes to the identity of our Island and supports our visitor economy.

For generations, the Horse Tramway has formed part of the Douglas Promenade experience. Some visitors travel from around the world to see and ride what is recognised as the oldest operating horse-drawn tramway in the world. It is a living piece of Manx heritage that attracts tourists, educates future generations and promotes the Island internationally.

The proposal before Tynwald provides an opportunity to continue the tramway in a manner that preserves its heritage and its contribution to the visitor economy. This proposal has undergone extensive review and scrutiny. Assessments have been undertaken of the engineering requirements, costs, risks and benefits.

My conclusion is that completing the scheme represents a sensible option. To do nothing would not realise the tram's full potential as a visitor attraction. Treasury's concurrence should provide assurance to Members that this is not a vanity project. It is an investment in heritage with the express aim of supporting and sustaining the critical mass of attractions needed for a heritage visitor economy.

This investment sends a positive message about the Isle of Man. It demonstrates that we value our heritage and that we understand the direct and indirect benefits that heritage tourism brings to our Island. The Horse Tramway, Mr President, is an icon of Douglas, a symbol and a source of pride. This project will protect that for future generations.

Mr President, this Court has an opportunity to support tourism through this heritage investment. I therefore ask Members to support this motion, standing in my name.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Now, I just wanted to point out this has not had four weeks on the Register of Business. I was not sure if the Minister was going to speak to that, but he has given his opening remarks. Are Members content to take that at this sitting because it has not had four weeks? (**Members:** Agreed.) If everyone is okay with that, then I will call on the seconder, Ms Faragher.

Ms Faragher: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I am delighted to second this motion. I also promise to be briefer than the journey this paper has taken to reach Tynwald. Members will each reach their own view on the business case, but for me the question is straightforward. We have an internationally recognised heritage asset. We have already committed significant investment. Treasury has now concurred, and we have the opportunity to complete the project properly. Frankly, if we debate this for much longer, we may qualify as part of the heritage attraction ourselves!

Eaghtyrane, ta mee shirrey kied dy pholldal.

The President: Dr Haywood.

Dr Haywood: Thank you, Mr President.

I welcome this motion. I am pleased that funding is finally being brought forward for approval, but it does need to be said that the Department and Treasury have had to be pushed to this point by this Hon. Court.

During my time as Minister, I asked for the plans to be refreshed and re-costed so they could be brought forward for funding approval, but since the start of this administration there have been numerous opportunities for this to be progressed which have not been taken up.

These delays are not in keeping with the clear direction that Tynwald has already given multiple times. This Court is the decision-making body, and when Tynwald expresses a view, Government should do its best to carry that out. If it cannot or will not, then it should be clear with Tynwald and come back to us and explain why. It is not acceptable to allow matters to drift on.

So I absolutely welcome this motion today, but I sincerely hope it marks the end of the uncertainty. There should never need to be another Tynwald vote on this particular matter. (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) Should the funding be approved today, I anticipate work will start immediately to source the remaining materials and to carry out any necessary procurement.

In this, the 150th year of the Douglas Bay Horse Tramway, let this be the legacy that we hand on to the next generation by restoring the extent of the tramway to the Sea Terminal building.

Gura mie eu.

The President: Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Eaghtyrane.

I just have a really straightforward question for the Minister here. I would just like to get confirmation for exactly what it is Tynwald is being asked to approve. The reason I ask that question is because, in addition to the business case that was laid before Tynwald last month, we have also received various drawings and options and plans for passenger facilities around the Sea Terminal area.

It seems a little bit odd, as part of the Horse Tram drawings, to include passenger facilities in those drawings that, according to the statement that the Minister, I am assuming, is going to make later, the information that was circulated shows different drawings, different layouts and different facilities. So I would just like some clarity really on exactly what it is that we are being asked to approve. This £3 million; is it just for the track? Does that include passenger facilities, or are passenger facilities on top of the £3 million expenditure?

Some clarity on exactly what the Minister is asking for would be appreciated.

The President: Ms Edge.

Ms Edge: Thank you, Mr President.

Obviously, I fully support this. Certainly, it was only won by one vote back in 2017 when it came here, and that was myself voting in the wrong direction for DoI at the time, so I was pleased that we got that through at that point in time.

However, with regard to keeping a contingency of £500,000, I am wondering how that figure came about. I am aware that the only mechanical equipment that apparently needs to be purchased is the points system, and therefore the rest of the work is with regard to the laying of the track, etc., but I believe the foundation for the track is already there, underneath the grass. Certainly, there will be engineers today saying, 'No, no, no, we need to give more money out to the construction industry', but I do think a full assessment of that needs to take place.

My other question is, I do believe that we should have a tram track that is an access point to our Island from the Sea Terminal, but we should be looking to the future, not just horse trams. We should be looking to a tramway throughout Douglas Promenade.

Can the Minister confirm that that will be the case, that there could be a modern tram on the track that we currently have? I believe it is the case, but I would like the Minister to confirm that. Certainly, I want everybody to be able to come to the Isle of Man, drive in our Horse Tramway, and not think that they have to go to Disney World to drive a tramway. We need it on the Island. It is our heritage. We need to protect it for all of our future generations.

Every child on the Isle of Man will be able to name a horse that they have been on a horse tram with, and that is really important. It is our culture. It is our heritage. It is a shame that the cost has gone up significantly, but we do need to retain it for future generations, and also that visitor experience, which is significant to our Island.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: I call on the mover to reply.

The Minister: Thank you very much, Mr President.

I thank my hon. seconder, Ms Faragher, who is a Member of the Department, but is absolutely a firm supporter of this.

Dr Haywood, the former Minister, said that this is a decision that Tynwald should absolutely be making and hopefully we never have to make this decision again. We should have made it

some time ago, and she is quite right. Hopefully, we will get the right decision today, and I thank her for her support.

Mr Hooper asked about the drawings. This was queried the other day, and unfortunately, now that we have had the reversal of Item 5 and Item 7, we have not had a chance to discuss that, those points have been clarified, or can be clarified, there is no confusion. They will work with each other, and we are only doing one set of buildings for one that will suit both. (Interjection) The funding will be in the other one, not this one. This is purely for the reinstatement of the tram tracks, and it does not include the shelters.

Ms Edge asked about the contingency in Treasury hanging on to £500,000. That was just an agreement, because all of a sudden we saw the bill jump from £2 million to £3 million, and that was with the contingency put in by Treasury. It was easier if they just look after that. I do not believe that we will need that, and I hope that we will not need that.

She mentioned the foundations in and amongst the costing. There has been a lot of work done underneath where the grass areas are on the promenade now. It will need some foundations to go under there, but there has been a lot of work done there.

The tram tracks, when she says for modern times, I am not sure whether she means the electric trams, because certainly I am assured the electric trams will be able to use the horse tram tracks as and when this is completed, because they are the same width or gauge.

Mr President, I do hope that the Hon. Members can get behind this scheme once and for all, and that we can put that good news out there on the 150th anniversary of this, that we can start this scheme this year, as soon as possible, and get it finished.

Several Members: Hear, hear.

The President: I will give Hon. Members an opportunity to take their seats and I will put the question, Item 7 on the Order Paper. Those in favour, please say aye; against, no.

A division was called for and electronic voting resulted as follows:

In the Keys – Ayes 19, Noes 0

FOR	**AGAINST**
Dr Allinson	None
Mrs Barber	
Mrs Caine	
Mr Callister	
Mr Cannan	
Ms Christian	
Mr Crookall	
The Deputy Speaker	
Ms Edge	
Ms Faragher	
Mr Glover	
Dr Haywood	
Mr Hooper	
Mr Johnston	
Mrs Maltby	
Mr Moorhouse	
Mr Peters	
Mr Smith	
Mr Wannenburgh	

The Deputy Speaker: Mr President, in the Keys, 19 for, none against.

In the Council – Ayes 8, Noes 1

FOR	AGAINST
Mrs August-Phillips	Mr Clueit
Mr Craine	
Mrs Kelsey	
Mrs Kinnish	
The Lord Bishop	
Mr Mercer	
Mrs Morphet	
Mr Reid	

The President: In the Council, 8 for, 1 against. The ayes have it, the ayes have it.

26. Education Act 2001 – Education (Student Awards) (Amendment) Regulations 2026 approved

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture to move:

That the Education (Student Awards) (Amendment) Regulations 2026 [SD 2026/0116] [MEMO] be approved.

The President: In accordance with the Court's earlier decision, we turn next to Item 26, Student Awards. I call on the Minister for Education, Sport and Culture to move.

The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture (Mrs Caine): Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

Thank you, Hon. Members, for letting me move this earlier in the sitting. Just to reference the interest I declared earlier, given that a family member is currently engaged in the student awards applications.

I am rising to move the Education (Student Awards) (Amendment) Regulations 2026 for approval under section 37 of the Education Act 2001. These amending Regulations give effect to the commitment made earlier this year to return with a limited but important package of housekeeping and targeted amendments designed to improve the operation of student awards and to strengthen clarity and consistency.

The proposed amendments cover a number of important areas. Firstly, they close a potential loophole through the insertion of the word 'charitable' in regulation 4 to ensure that students with substantial private trust income do not inappropriately qualify for support.

They also reduce barriers to study by lowering the minimum entry threshold from 80 to 72 Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) points for students who have previously been a looked-after child and for those who have been identified as having caring responsibilities. Often, these students do not have the same opportunities for study time or access to resources because of their life circumstances, and this change is intended to reduce some of the barriers they may face.

The amendments also preserve independent student status so that students defined as independent under the 2019 Regulations will retain that status and continuity is maintained for those who are partway through their studies. In addition, they allow a change in personal circumstances, for example marriage, to be recognised from the start of an academic year rather than only from the start of a course.

The Regulations increase the income threshold for loan repayment so that the point at which a student must begin repaying a tuition fee loan taken from DESC rises from £25,000 to £27,000, aligning the repayment trigger with Isle of Man minimum wage levels. They further provide that

loan apportionment will apply to distance learners, recognising that their course fees are typically lower than standard off-Island university fees. This means that distance learners should receive a proportionate loan so that the overall grant and loan split remains consistent with those studying off-Island, while students who study off-Island will continue to be able to access the full available loan amount where they are eligible.

In relation to tuition fee loan levels, and in recognition of the UK government's policy that tuition fees in England will rise year on year in line with inflation, the amended Regulations allow for increases in the amount of available tuition fee loan so that appropriate financial support remains available.

Finally, in response to comments made by Hon. Members during the debate on Student Award Regulations 2025 in January, I made a commitment to bring forward amending regulations to improve clarity of terminology throughout, and I trust that these proposed amendments do just that.

These amending Regulations will strengthen student awards and aim to remove barriers and provide greater clarity. They are measured and proportionate amendments that continue the Department's commitment to supporting lifelong learning opportunities for all, and I ask this Hon. Court to show your support for them.

Mr President, I beg to move that the Education (Student Awards) (Amendment) Regulations 2026 be approved.

Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The President: Mrs Maltby.

Mrs Maltby: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I beg to second.

The President: Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Eaghtyrane.

I would like to thank the Minister for coming back with what are mainly housekeeping amendments to the Regulations, but I just have one question for the Minister about these. When you look through some of the changes that are being made, can she confirm that these changes will also apply to people who are currently in receipt of things like tuition loans? For example, someone earning £25,000 a year today has to repay some of that loan, but tomorrow, after the threshold increases, will that person then not have to repay because they are not earning enough? I would like some clarity on how existing people will be treated, because the amendments do not appear to introduce any transitional provisions that would treat current students differently to people who are just about to apply for awards under the scheme.

I would also like to clarify whether all the other provisions in here will also now apply to people who are currently in receipt of student loan support. So people who have previously applied, people who are currently in receipt of loans and grants, will these new conditions apply to all of those current students as well, or will they intentionally only apply to students who newly applied for support this financial year?

The President: Dr Haywood.

Dr Haywood: Thank you, Mr President.

Mr President, I just want to bring up something here. I absolutely welcome the moves about changing the UCAS point boundaries for access for care leavers and for those who have previously been looked-after children. That is an important step.

However, they are a group where I would hope that I can get some agreement from the Minister here that they would benefit from additional academic mentoring because that

transition to further education can be challenging for a lot of students. In recognising that, perhaps we can have lower grade boundaries there to allow them to access because of the disrupted learning that they may have had due to their life experiences at that point, I would really like to see the Department making some moves towards supporting them towards success in their academic endeavours.

Thank you.

The President: Ms Edge.

Ms Edge: Thank you, Mr President.

While I support improving access to higher education and the changes for looked-after children and carers, there are a few potentially unintended consequences within these Regulations. I believe the Department has had queries with regard to these.

The first one is will some students will be worse off. The examples that I have had provided to me appear to show that, irrespective of the household income, some students could be £1,025 worse off overall because the increased loan does not fully compensate for the change in support. I would like the Minister to confirm is any student worse off under these new Regulations than under the current arrangements and, if so, by how much?

My second point is with regard to multiple children at university. While I recognise the recognition for families with more than one student in higher education, the protection applied to both tuition fees and maintenance grants, is it for both or is it only for the tuition fee support? It is not clear. The Regulations specifically increase the £112,000 threshold for multiple students, but that sits within the schedule dealing with the tuition fee award. Families need absolute clarity on the whole financial package available to them, not just one element in isolation.

My third point, Mr President, is the foundation years. Can the Minister confirm that a student undertaking a foundation year followed by a three-year degree will receive support for the full course, so the four years? We should not create a situation where a student discovers partway through that funding for their studies is unavailable for their final year.

My fourth question, and final one, Mr President, is are we increasing student debt? The maximum tuition fee loan rises to £3,790 and then £4,050, while the maximum grant stays static at £6,000. What assessment has been made of the additional debt our young people will be carrying?

The question is simple. Has the Department modelled these Regulations, student by student, against the existing scheme? How many will be better off, how many will be worse off, and what is the maximum loss? We should all know these answers before we approve the Regulations.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mrs Morphet.

Mrs Morphet: Thank you, Mr President.

I am just rising really briefly to thank the Minister and the officers in the Department for the time they have spent discussing some of my concerns that I raised during a debate some time ago, and for being willing to look at practical ways to address them. I know that every issue we all raise individually cannot be resolved, but I thank the Department for the efforts they have gone to, to work with these amendments.

The President: I call on the mover to reply.

The Minister: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane; thank you, Hon. Members.

Mr Hooper, on the question of whether the repayment levels apply; yes, the loan repayment threshold will apply to all, regarding the £27,000 income.

I will just respond briefly to the other queries. The points from Dr Haywood about supporting students of particular care experience, that is something we, as the Department, will consider within the policy-making in respect of academic tutoring.

Turning to Ms Edge's comments. Firstly, this is not the start of automatic annual increases in student loan exposure for the taxpayer. These amending Regulations are intended to respond to loan increases in the UK tuition fee limit through to the 2027-28 academic year, so that Manx students are not left with an unexpected funding shortfall. Any future change beyond that point would need to be considered separately in light of the tuition fee levels at the time, and that would require a further amendment to the Regulations.

It is important to remember that the Isle of Man Student Award system remains substantially grant-based. At present, the standard tuition fee award of £9,535 consists of the £6,000 grant and the £3,535 loan, so around 63% is grant funded and 37% is loan funded.

In terms of the foundation years, nothing has changed. Specific foundation years do receive funding, but that depends on the course, so individual students would be able to inquire from the Department.

In terms of increasing the loan, to ensure that the Department was able to support students with the tuition fee, the Department needed to increase the loan, and it is the limited fund within the grants.

I would just like to add, the Hon. Member of Council, Mrs Morphet, thank you for all your support and constructive feedback throughout this process. It is very much appreciated, as is the input that we had from the Public Accounts Committee that has informed some of the changes that we have brought through this year.

With that, Mr President, I beg to move.

The President: I put the question that is Item 26 on the Order Paper, the Student Awards. Those in favour, please say aye; against, no.

A division was called for and electronic voting resulted as follows:

In the Keys – Ayes 17, Noes 2

FOR	**AGAINST**
Dr Allinson	Mr Callister
Mrs Barber	Ms Edge
Mrs Caine	
Mr Cannan	
Ms Christian	
Mr Crookall	
The Deputy Speaker	
Ms Faragher	
Mr Glover	
Dr Haywood	
Mr Hooper	
Mr Johnston	
Mrs Maltby	
Mr Moorhouse	
Mr Peters	
Mr Smith	
Mr Wannenburgh	

The Deputy Speaker: Mr President, in the Keys, 17 for, 2 against.

In the Council – Ayes 9, Noes 0

FOR	AGAINST
Mrs August-Phillips	None
Mr Clueit	
Mr Craine	
Mrs Kelsey	
Mrs Kinnish	
The Lord Bishop	
Mr Mercer	
Mrs Morphet	
Mr Reid	

The President: In the Council, 9 for, none against. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

8. Climate Change Transformation Programme – Annual Progress Report 2025-2026 – Debate commenced

The Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture to move:

That the Climate Change Transformation Programme – Annual Progress Report 2025-2026 [GD 2026/0054] be received.

The President: We will move next to Item 8 on our Order Paper, the Climate Change Transformation Programme Annual Progress Report. I call on the Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture to move.

The Minister for Environment, Food and Agriculture (Mrs Barber): Thank you, Mr President.

I stand to move the motion in my name and ask that the Climate Change Annual Progress Report 2025-2026 be received by this Hon. Court.

The Report presented today to Hon. Members provides the statutory update required under the Climate Change Act. The Report covers the period from 1st April 2025 to 31st March 2026 and provides an update on the actions that have been and continue to be delivered across Government and the wider community, while highlighting the challenges and noting that there is still significant work to do.

It presents an honest view on progress, highlighting where this has been made, where delivery remains difficult and where our focus must now be directed to reap the best benefits for not only climate but our Island's people, economy and nature. When many people hear the words 'climate action', they think immediately of emissions targets and reaching net zero. While those things matter and remain important for long-term goals, I would ask Members to focus less on the language of net zero and more on the outcomes we are seeking to achieve for our Island, because the real benefits behind the language are much closer to home.

These actions are about creating more comfortable homes and lower bills, reducing our exposure to volatile international energy markets and creating a more resilient Island economy. They are about protecting our infrastructure, our communities and our natural environment from flood risks, species extinction, wildfires, extreme weather impacts and impact on human health due to exposure to extreme heat or extreme cold, to name but a few. They are about ensuring that future generations inherit an Island that is resilient, prosperous and prepared for the challenges ahead.

In short, climate action is practical action, action focused on helping to make our Island healthier, more affordable and more secure. One of the most significant areas of progress continues to be the support provided directly to households, and around 81% of the Climate Change Fund expenditure to date has been invested in improving energy efficiency in businesses and people's homes and reducing energy costs at a time where the cost of living is causing financial strain to many.

Thousands of households have benefited from this support, through the Green Living Grant and the Energy Efficiency Scheme, and later on today's Order Paper we will have a debate around the Heat Wise Home Scheme.

Looking ahead, with approximately 18 months remaining of the current Climate Change Plan, the priority is delivery; delivering clear, everyday benefits for people of the Isle of Man. The single most important strategic dependency remains electricity decarbonisation. Progress in this area is critical, not only for achieving future emissions reductions, but also for strengthening energy security, improving resilience and reducing exposure to external energy price shocks. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

I would like to thank all those across Government, public bodies, businesses, charities and communities who continue to contribute to this important work.

I beg to move that the Climate Change Annual Progress Report 2025-2026 be received.

The President: Mr Craine.

Mr Craine: Eaghtyrane, I beg to second and reserve my remarks.

Thank you.

The President: Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Mr President.

I would like to thank the Minister more for her remarks than for the Report in front of us because she has hit the nail on the head here. Most of the climate change funding that is being spent is being directed at helping people improve their own homes and it is about saving people money and reducing their energy use more than it is about carbon. The only slight issue is the Report obviously focuses on the carbon outputs rather than on the benefits that people are seeing and feeling every day, and so I would really like to thank the Minister for the statement that she has made.

One thing that is in this Report that comes across very clearly actually is not the funding support that DEFA have provided or the energy efficiency schemes or even the revised heat scheme that is coming through later in this sitting. It is not really the blue carbon, it is not the carbon sinks, it is none of the work that DEFA are doing. The one thing that has jumped out at me about this Report is the lack of progress that has been made elsewhere in Government.

So there is a little line hidden here on page 17 that says, for this year, 2025-2026, projects worth £1.6 million have been approved as part of the climate change funding across Government to help Government reduce its carbon footprint. Those will largely be energy efficiency measures, they will not be carbon capture, they will be about reducing the bill that we are paying to the Chairman of the MUA so he can build many more expensive power generation facilities.

But only £25,000 of that has actually been spent. So, of the £1.6 million that was approved, 1.5% to 1.6% of that budget has been spent delivering improvements across Government. This is something that really does concern me because it picks up on other issues that we have already heard this morning in various areas, and we will no doubt hear again when we talk about other capital projects, is the almost complete failure of Government's capital programme.

Government has not been able to deploy its capital resources in a positive way, in fact it has barely deployed any at all, and in this respect this jumps out again, 1.5% of the budget allocated

to make Government better, to improve the way we use our buildings and our estate, to reduce the Government carbon footprint and to ultimately reduce the energy use, none of that has really gone ahead. Those are big-ticket items that are quite easy wins and there is not really enough of an explanation, and perhaps I would not expect one in this particular Report because this is much more about the carbon savings, but there is not really an explanation as to why Government is finding it so difficult to do some of these things that the public think are relatively straightforward.

Put solar panels on the roofs, those things that, as far as everyone is concerned, should be easily doable. Replace some windows with double glazing, those bits of work are what is really being focused on here, but we seem unable to deliver on it. I do not really expect the Minister to be able to provide a comprehensive answer as to why some of these projects have not proceeded, but I just thought it was worth flagging that there is a lot of really positive stuff in this Report but it is a bit let down then by looking at what Government is doing itself. It seems to me that is where the slowest amount of progress is.

The President: Now, Hon. Members, with it being seconds to one o'clock, we will pause there for lunch and the Court will stand suspended until 2.30 p.m. and when we return the next to speak will be Dr Haywood. Thank you.

The Court adjourned at 1 p.m.
and resumed its sitting at 2.31 p.m.

Climate Change Transformation Programme –
Annual Progress Report 2025-2026 –
Debate concluded –
Report received

The President: Now, we continue with our deliberation of Item 8 and as promised the next one to speak is Dr Haywood.

Dr Haywood: Thank you, Mr President.

I would like to begin by congratulating the Climate Change Transformation Team and all of those involved in producing the Annual Progress Report. It is a substantial piece of work and I think it gives us a transparent assessment of both the progress that has been made and the challenges that are remaining.

There are some genuinely encouraging achievements: the total emissions being lower than the 2018 baseline, building emissions falling by 24%, thousands of households who benefited from the energy efficiency measures, peatland restoration continuing to expand, and important groundwork has been laid for renewable energy, transport decarbonisation and climate adaptation.

What I particularly welcome is the honesty in the Report because it does acknowledge the barriers, including the limited resources and as identified by Mr Hooper, the slow processes and the lack of urgency in some areas of Government. It also identifies sectors that are at risk of missing targets, particularly electricity, transport and business emissions.

This Report has arrived at a time when we are experiencing another period of extreme heat. For many people, climate change can feel like something distant or abstract, but this Report is a reminder that the Isle of Man is already becoming warmer, that recent winters have been wetter – wave your fans – and that climate change is now a present-day risk to our communities, our infrastructure, our economy and our natural environment.

These findings are entirely consistent with the warnings we receive through the National Emergency Briefing on Climate Change that climate impacts are not a problem for future generations alone, but they are something that we must plan for and respond to now.

So while I wish to commend and celebrate the progress that has been made, we need not become complacent at this stage. This Report shows that action works. Energy efficiency reduces emissions and household bills. Peatland restoration projects protect carbon stores and biodiversity. Protecting the deep mud belt preserves carbon in the sea and renewable energy can strengthen resilience and energy security.

The challenge for all of us now is to take that and to build on that momentum and to accelerate the delivery. The climate is not waiting for us, and neither should we wait to take the next steps.

I thank the team for their dedication and professionalism. They take an awful battering on some of the worst examples of social media on this Island, but I do wish to commend this Report to Members, and I encourage Government to match the ambition that is in this Report with the urgency that the evidence now demands.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Next up, Mr Mercer.

Mr Mercer: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I too welcome the Report, and I would like to place on record my thanks to the Climate Change Transformation Team for producing it. It is a candid report and nothing I am going to be saying today should be taken as a criticism of that team working to produce these reports. I am fully supportive of their work.

The Report names several barriers to progress. I am just going to pick two of these. One of those is they refer to staffing and resourcing but the one that really stood out for me was:

> A resistance to change, lack of ambition and urgency across Government.

Some sectors have delivered really well. The building sector has delivered a 24% emissions cut since 2018, that target has been beaten early; £6 million through the Green Living Grant Scheme reaching real households and directly benefiting the people in them with warmer homes. But the Climate Change Transformation Team is not the delivery mechanism for most of this. They report and the Departments deliver and Mr Hooper already covered the 1.6% progress on estate decarbonisation.

The Report identifies that there is a project to define a roadmap for the decarbonisation of the Government's estate and that is complete. The roadmap is complete. Fantastic. It is going to prioritise high emission buildings, identify significant cost savings and aligning with available funding. So quoting straight from the Report:

> … decarbonising healthcare buildings showed a potential saving of £60 million and decarbonising schools showed a potential saving of £22 million.

I know that these are potential savings but if we do not take the time to understand how to make these into actual cashable savings that seems to me to be a very big gap in progress.

There are eight-plus actions reported on in the output here that are parked from limited staffing and resources, yet there is a climate fund available. One of the workstreams talks about cleaner, fairer, more resilient, the just transition, and that is on hold. I cannot really quite understand why something that makes this transition fairer for people has not started at all.

The Report does give us the evidence. What it cannot give us, though, is departmental accountability because the Climate Change Transformation Team does not have the standing to

compel delivery. That is Tynwald's job, I think, not theirs. Every stalled action in this Report has a Department's name behind it, even if the Report does not necessarily print it.

So I would ask Members to read this not as a climate report but actually as a delivery accountability report and to start asking the Departments named in it directly why. It feels like I have stood up and said something similar to this before, so maybe this is my annual plea to departmental members to make sure that your Departments are delivering on the things that are highlighted in this Report, particularly things that are on hold or are stalled through lack of resources.

Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The President: Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I think it has been said already, this is a very honest report. The biggest barriers to achieving our climate goals are not funding technology or public opposition. They are, according to the Report itself, a lack of urgency, a lack of ambition, resistance to change and slow Government processes. Those are the Government's own conclusions.

Yes, emissions are down by 10% since 2018 but the Report acknowledges that much of that reduction reflects higher energy prices, COVID impacts, reduced cattle numbers and even a power station outage. Eaghtyrane, the real test is delivery and that is where the Report becomes far less encouraging.

Electricity is at risk, transport is at risk, business is at risk. Together, these sectors make up most of our emissions. The Active Travel Strategy has not started. Transport delivery plans are not in place. The Report itself suggests that the transport target is unlikely to be achieved. Most revealing of all, the Government, as Mr Hooper said, approved over £1.6 million of decarbonisation projects for its own estate, yet managed to spend only around £25,900 because of implementation difficulties. This is not a funding problem; it is a delivery problem.

The Report shows a Government that is very good at producing strategies, frameworks and consultations but has yet to demonstrate the same ability to turn those plans into action, and if we fail to meet our climate targets the reasons are already written in this Report for everyone to see.

After five years of plans, strategies and roadmaps the question is no longer whether Government understands the problem. The question is whether it can deliver the solution and deliver the correct solution, which the proposed site for the onshore windfarm at Earystane and Scard is certainly not, in my view.

Gura mie eu.

The President: Mr Craine.

Mr Craine: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

It has been interesting to hear some of the responses there. I would like to start really with what this is all about. Fundamentally we can see what is happening to the global climate. If you are not seeing that your eyes are not open. Look at what is happening to sea temperatures, look at what is happening to wildfires in Europe, look at the three heatwaves we have been through or heat domes, as they are calling them now because of the circumstances in which they develop. This is happening. It is happening at greater speed and to a greater extent than scientists thought it would so far. We are at an early stage of a massive transformation here, transforming the way we build, the way we manufacture, the way we drive, the energy we are using, the way we heat our homes and everything. It is an enormous change. We only started on this when the climate emergency in the Isle of Man was announced in 2019, so we are way behind the UK in terms of our starting point.

The movement along this towards a net zero future of 2050, which will be a healthier and less cost-effective and more reliable energy and so on, that move was never going to be linear and we can see the biggest leaps will come when we get through this shift into net zero emissions or total zero emissions from energy from the electricity that we produce. That is going to be hugely important.

Schools were mentioned before in terms of what is happening there. Our schools, when the shift to zero emission electricity, the electricity demand of our schools is greater than the heating oil and gas demand of our schools. Their energy consumption will drop overnight when we reach this, so we are going to have some great shifts in this. The trajectory we are on so far is okay. This is the first of the action plans we are still within. It started out with these 15% emission reductions, which was an optimistic view of where the six sectors they were looking at might go, and in many of those we have exceeded that. In others we have not yet. The big issue at the moment is getting zero emissions from our electricity, and that is crucial. We can see it is underway and on its way there.

I would echo what my colleague in the Legislative Council commented about the barriers to change and the concerning point within the document about the evidence of resentment or resistance to change, lack of ambition in Government Departments. That has to change. There has to be something forward.

On the transport, yes, the transport shift is slow but we are looking now at the figures in there; 1,880 electric vehicles now, 3,338 hybrids. That is a shift. That is a movement and we are seeing that happening. It is a starting point but then internationally there have been concerns about this. There is still a lot of misinformation out there. Twice in the last month when I have been off Island people have told me, 'Well, aren't they phasing out electric cars from 2030?' No, it is the opposite of that. There is a lot of misinformation that is out there, but I think it is a commendable document. It shows we are on our way. It shows we are moving. Yes, we have a lot to do. We knew that. We are never going to be there all in one go. It is a long-term path that we are travelling on. We know we have got to stick to it and we know we will get there in the end.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Ms Edge.

Ms Edge: Thank you, Mr President.

I will try and be brief, to be honest. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) I thank the Minister for bringing this Report but what it acknowledges is the candour about failure and it is not the same as delivery, and the hon. colleague for Arbory, Castletown and Malew said the same. Where is the delivery?

The headline is a 10% reduction in emissions since 2018. Last year we were told 3.8% so all of that looks good, Mr President, until you actually read the Report. The entire improvement for one single year, the Report tells us and in its own words that the biggest driver for that was a 19% fall in electricity emissions, but the reason for that, Mr President, was a major power outage in 2024.

So are we trying to say that we are doing progress but we are not? We had mild weather and we had high energy prices at the same time. The fall that is attributed to agriculture is declining numbers in cattle, and that is what the Report is telling us. So an unplanned outage, a mild winter and a smaller herd are not climate policy. So if we strip them out over the four years of the spending what has it actually achieved? I will not go through them all: £5 million allocated each year to decarbonise the Government estate, £1.6 million has been approved on projects this year, £25,900 was spent, the Clean Living Grant, etc. The Low Carbon Heating Strategy was due to get underway by the end of 2023. This is still promised in the future.

Three of the six sectors are formally at risk. Business emissions did actually rise this year and waste emissions are above the baseline. My constituents in Onchan are facing real pressures –

heating costs, housing costs, health services not supporting them – so when they ask me why are we spending or committing large sums to climate change, it is not improving their lives. The only demonstrable help that has been achieved for actual individuals is free insulation. They are welcome because they do help people cut bills but, Mr President, I would like to ask the Minister for a couple of commitments. Where are the reconciled emissions figures year on year, because the inventory that we have seen each year and the baselines in successive reports are not matching?

I would also like to see an independent value for money, and perhaps the Auditor General could do this, of the Climate Change Fund. What has it actually achieved against the costs for the Manx people when all they are seeing is rising costs? It is going to be really interesting going forward now that the UK are talking about opening up their oil fields and gas fields. The Isle of Man needs to look at the same because what we should be about is driving down cost for our people in here. I am really disappointed today that our hon. colleague for Middle, Mr Peters, in his last sitting, I was hoping I would see it here, some words from him of what is actually happening, but he tells me he is not going to speak today, Mr President. But I think from all of the people in here who have consistently voted against and spoken up about this topic it is Mr Peters and it would be welcome to hear something from him in his very last sitting in our Hon. House! (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: I call on the mover to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

So I will just go through some of the key points that came up. Mr Hooper talked about improving homes and the way that the Report is constructed complies with the Act and I think Mr Hooper spent time in DEFA and is alert to that but I thought it was really important to use my comments, which are not so restricted, and that is what I did to talk about some of the other things that we have been doing.

We are working with partners across Government. There is a significant amount of work both in assisting with business cases and supporting with some of the case studies to get things to where they need to be, but ultimately some of that work does need to happen within other Departments and that is absolutely going to be the case going forward unless you want DEFA to take over the world, which I do not think is a great idea (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) and is not something I am advocating for.

In all seriousness, it is on all of us. We all have the opportunity to sit in Departments, we all have the opportunity to go in and make a difference, and I think it is really important that we rise to that challenge of making this something that everyone considers a priority for the very reasons that I have talked about, that this is not just about emissions. Actually this touches on the lives of people in our communities. This is absolutely related to our energy security, it is absolutely related to shielding from volatile global energy prices, and I think that is really key.

He talked about the work around adaptation, and there are buildings across the Government estate that have been identified. There is a priority list that has been put there as to how that can work but again that challenge sits … ironically the buildings we have within DEFA predominantly are ones that are newer, certainly our headquarters that we share with Education is something that is not going to be top of that list for work that needs doing. We know that there are challenges in terms of displacing staff and the logistics of some of that work, and they are things that we are looking to work through. There is work ongoing in that space but absolutely we need to seek to do that at a quicker pace.

Dr Haywood talked about some of those key examples actually that are in the Report – the peatland restoration, the blue carbon stores protection, energy efficiency schemes, to name just a few of those areas that we have worked in on – and talked about some of that other positive work that is happening within a team that do come under a significant amount of criticism and

challenge. I know absolutely that that does affect them, and they are people who are absolutely committed to doing their work to the highest standard and continue to do that with an ever-decreasing number of people in their teams as we stand.

Mr Mercer described it as a candid report, and I think that is absolutely right. He talked about the roadmap and talked about that funding around energy and buildings. I think one of the most interesting things that strikes me actually is that the vast majority of buildings in the Government estate, the bills go to DoI, so we have ended up with a perverse situation where DoI are invested in getting the cost down but they are not able to make the changes that are needed. DEFA are invested in putting together the plans and the scoping work around that, but we are not able to make those changes and I would suggest that a very quick win perhaps in the beginning of a future administration would be to push back all of the costs of heating buildings to Departments, because never has there been anything more incentivising in terms of making changes than having to pay those bills yourself (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) and I think that would be a really positive move. It is fair to say resources have been challenging and this is something we really must all support.

I thank Mr Glover for describing it as an honest report, and absolutely the real test is delivery and I have touched already a little bit on some of the challenges that exist in that space. I think that it really is and has to be on all of us. I was going to be cheeky. I would thank Mr Glover for not going through every item in it, which I think he did last year, but we are looking at these figures – everyone is grateful, you are right! – (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) we are looking at these figures on a regular basis. When we sit as the Climate Change Transformation Board we are scrutinising this. We can see those areas where there is challenge around action, but we have ended up with this difficulty, as I say, because some of the areas where we need to now commit to delivery are outwith our control, and that is challenging.

Mr Craine talked about the fact that movement will not be linear and of course the key trigger points such as electricity decarbonisation will see a significant drop when we make some of those changes. We are absolutely on a journey and, as Mr Craine rightly says, this is a move to a healthier, safer, and more secure world. I think that is really important to remember as well. This is not just a world with reduced levels of carbon emissions getting to a net zero position. Those words, as much as they are part of what sits within our Act and in our reporting duties, they are not the big drivers that sit against this and they are not the only benefits sitting against this. The key and tangible benefits to the people of our Island are far greater, and it is incumbent on all of us to recognise that.

Ms Edge talked about the fall in electricity emissions, and unquestionably there are some elements that sit alongside that are out of our control such as the power outage she talked about, which has been mentioned. We have also had the work of the Green Living Grant Scheme and Energy Efficiency Scheme, and I am pleased to say that Onchan residents were able to avail of both of those and if the Heat Wise Home Scheme is passed later in this Order Paper they are also involved in that. Actually when you look at the expenditure that sits with the climate change funding, that is the single biggest expense we have by some significant margin and absolutely that is and must be accessible across our Island, regardless of your postcode, but most importantly targeted at achieving a just transition, a fair transition, and that is something that is again called out within our primary legislation as it rightly should be.

In terms of the actual way in which we report, methodologies do change and there have been updates which we have put a narrative against in previous years. All of those are independently audited by Aether and they are displayed on the website in dashboard form, so if there are specific queries that anyone has on a particular point please do get in touch about that and the team would be more than happy to talk through.

So just to close, I think the Report does give us evidence but the impetus and the accountability are absolutely on all of us. Climate change action is on all of us and supporting our Climate Change Transformation Team who absolutely deserve our support is on all of us. I suppose my small plea at the end would be for anyone who finds themselves back in this Hon.

Court in October to consider taking a role, an active role, in Government Departments, an active role in seeking to implement the policies that we so need to be delivered in order to achieve this because there is a role for scrutiny, but there is absolutely an equal, if not more important, role for delivery.

Thank you, Mr President

Several Members: Hear, hear.

Mr President: Now, Hon. Members, we come to voting on this issue, Item 8, Climate Change Transformation Programme. Those in favour please say aye; against, no.

A division was called for and electronic voting resulted as follows:

In the Keys – Ayes 18, Noes 2.

FOR	**AGAINST**
Dr Allinson	Mr Moorhouse
Mr Ashford	Mr Peters
Mrs Barber	
Mrs Caine	
Mr Callister	
Mr Cannan	
Ms Christian	
Mr Crookall	
The Deputy Speaker	
Ms Edge	
Ms Faragher	
Mr Glover	
Dr Haywood	
Mr Hooper	
Mr Johnston	
Mrs Maltby	
Mr Smith	
Mr Wannenburgh	

The Deputy Speaker: Mr President, in the Keys 18 for, 2 against.

In the Council – Ayes 9, Noes 0.

FOR	**AGAINST**
Mrs August-Phillips	None
Mr Clueit	
Mr Craine	
Mrs Kelsey	
Mrs Kinnish	
The Lord Bishop	
Mr Mercer	
Mrs Morphet	
Mr Reid	

The President: In the Council 9 for, none against. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

**5. Lower Douglas Bus and Passenger Facilities –
Statement by Minister for Infrastructure**

[GD 2026/0069] is relevant to this Item.

Mr President: Now, as trailed this morning, we will now go back to statements and Item 5 is the Lower Douglas Bus and Passenger Facilities statement, and I call on the Minister for Infrastructure.

The Minister for Infrastructure (Mr Crookall): Thank you very much, Mr President.

I want to start by apologising for not being on the Order Paper for four weeks and also for the lack of the statement being shared around last night, and that was my fault and I take responsibility for that.

I lay before this Hon. Court the Department of Infrastructure's Report on the provision of interim bus passenger facilities in Lower Douglas. This Report is brought forward in response to the resolutions of Tynwald in July 2023 and July 2024. The original motion asked the Department to submit a report on its plan by the end of December 2023. The subsequent July 2024 motion reaffirmed that the re-establishment of facilities for bus passengers in the Island's capital city is a priority and should not await the completion of the Lord Street site, and asked the Department to submit the plan for debate at the December 2024 sitting of Tynwald.

I recognise that those deadlines were not met. I apologise to Tynwald for the delay in bringing this work back to Hon. Members. This has taken much longer than intended because the Department has to consider a number of operationally complex options, assess for safety and deliverability and take account of uncertain timetables for the Lord Street development and ensure that any proposal brought forward is both affordable and capable of being progressed through the normal financial and statutory approval processes.

I also acknowledge that the July 2024 motion asked for the plan to be brought to Tynwald for debate. The approach before Members today is therefore intended to place the Department's plan on the record, explain the work undertaken and the preferred way forward while making clear this is not a financial motion. The Department will still need to follow the normal financial regulations and budget process for any capital expenditure to be committed.

The Department has taken the direction of Tynwald seriously. We have considered the operational needs of the bus network, the passenger experience, the future role of Lord Street and the need to ensure that the public investment is proportionate, deliverable and represents value for money. The long-term position remains that Lord Street development is expected to provide permanent bus passenger waiting facilities. The developer has a contractual requirement to provide these facilities as part of the scheme and the Department would fit them out and include the facilities identified in the Tynwald motion, however the development is significantly overdue, as we all know. It is not clear when construction will begin, let alone finish, and there is an expectation that completion will still take several years.

The Department cannot rely on that development alone to address the current need for improved passenger facilities and must therefore plan responsibly for the interim period. Members will also recognise that when construction eventually starts at Lord Street, bus operations at the existing locations are likely to be disrupted or stopped. That creates an operational need to identify alternative bus stop locations. However, the purpose of this work is not simply to prepare for Lord Street construction. It is also to respond to the clear view expressed by Tynwald that passenger facilities in Lower Douglas need to be improved in their own right and should not be contingent upon the Lord Street development.

The Department has assessed five options. These were: additional stands at the front of the Sea Terminal car park; additional stands to the rear of the Sea Terminal car park; additional stands and shelters at Victoria Street; shelter improvement at the Bottleneck; and a large waiting room and public facility options at the Bottleneck.

The assessment shows that the Sea Terminal options were not the most appropriate response. They are operationally constrained, raise safety and circulation issues, affect parking and passenger drop-off arrangements and would require materially higher expenditure. The larger Bottleneck waiting room option would provide the greatest level of amenity including toilets, refreshments and driver welfare facilities but at a capital cost which the Department considers disproportionate in the context of an interim requirement and the continuing expectation of permanent facilities at Lord Street. The Department therefore intends to progress a combined package comprising of improved facilities at Victoria Street and shelter improvements at the Bottleneck. In the Department's view this gives the best balance of passenger benefits, deliverability, affordability and network coverage.

I recognise that Members may wish to debate whether this is the right balance, but the Department's assessment is that this is the most proportionate and deliverable route to making visible improvements without waiting for the Lord Street scheme.

The Victoria Street element would provide additional bus stands and shelters in a central and convenient location close to retail and business areas. The Bottleneck element would improve facilities at an existing location close to the Sea Terminal with potential for future use for both bus passengers and, in future, this has obviously been turned round, the transit passengers. Together these proposals will provide improved passenger facilities in Lower Douglas independently of the Lord Street development while also providing five stops that are expected to be required when the bus operations cannot take place at Lord Street. They would therefore meet both the immediate passenger need and the future operational need, and would remain useful after the Lord Street development is completed.

The proposed facilities will include lighting, seating, shelter, wi-fi and real-time passenger information. Each shelter and waiting area will be fitted with display screens showing journey information, including the next services due at what location. In addition, multiple real-time information screens will be installed within the Sea Terminal building to assist visitors and passengers including stop locations and estimated arrival times drawn from the buses' onboard ticketing system.

I want to be clear with Members that this package does not directly provide every facility listed in the original motion at each location. In particular refreshments are not directly provided and Victoria Street does not have toilet facilities included, however facilities are available nearby at the Bottleneck car park and refreshments are available near both locations depending on the time of day. The Department has sought to balance the requirement of the motion with the need for a practical, affordable and deliverable solution. The total estimated capital cost of the combined package including development allowances and contingency is £735,837. This is not a financial motion today. The Department intends to follow the normal financial regulations and seek funding through the 2027-28 Budget process. If funding is approved, the Department will seek to complete the works in that financial year.

The principal risks are also set out in the Report. These include statutory approvals, particularly planning consent in the conservation area, approval of the required capital budget, market conditions affecting cost and lead times and the interface with linked transport initiatives including the horse tram extension. The project would be managed and delivered by the Highway Services Division of the Department of Infrastructure on behalf of Bus Vannin.

In conclusion, Mr President, the Department has listened to the direction of Tynwald and has developed a practical plan to improve passenger facilities in Lower Douglas before the Lord Street development is completed. I again acknowledge that the work has taken longer than Tynwald asked for, and I apologise for that delay. The combined Victoria Street and Bottleneck package is not the most expensive option nor does it seek to create a permanent replacement for Lord Street. It is a proportionate interim scheme that materially improves the passenger experience now, supports operational resilience during future disruption and remains useful beyond the delivery of longer term street facilities. Just to add, Mr President, I was asked at the

weekend by a taxi driver, would this make any difference to the taxis in Victoria Street and the answer to that is no.

Thank you very much, Mr President. I beg to move.

The President: That is the statement, which is now open for questions. The first question, Mr Callister.

Mr Callister: Thank you, Mr President; and I do thank the DoI Minister for the information this afternoon through his statement.

I am happy to support on paper the combined option of 3 and 4, which relates to Victoria Street and the Bottleneck, but I was wondering if the Minister could give a little bit more about how the Department propose to deal with potential flooding issues with the Bottleneck car park, which floods multiple occasions over the years. If he can get a little bit more information on that, that would be helpful.

Thank you.

The President: Minister. Minister.

The Minister: Sorry, Mr President.

I believe that the Hon. Member who has resumed his seat is probably wrong there when it comes to flooding around about the Bottleneck car park there. It is not as bad as he thinks it is. I think further down the prom it is bad but there will be shelters. That is what this is about, shelters are there for the buses and for the trams. If Hon. Members –

Mr Callister: Last year it was floating off down the river.

The President: Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Mr President.

The Minister in his remarks said he recognises that Members may wish to debate whether this is in the right balance. I am just curious as to why he chose to make a statement with his Report instead of actually bringing this for a debate, which is what Tynwald asked for. It was very clear that we expected a debate on the plans. That is what should have been brought back but instead of bringing a debate back the Minister for Infrastructure has made a statement that we actually cannot really talk about, cannot really vote on. It is just the Minister standing up and saying, 'This is what I think we should do.' Great. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) So I would like to know why that is the case.

But also looking through the plans the Minister has shared, these appear to be exactly the same plans that the Department had before I left the Department in January. Why has it taken six months for the Department to produce exactly the same document and bring it here? I know we are quite far away from the Sea Terminal but did he have it hand delivered by some very slow staff members? What is it that has caused six months of delay from January to now when this appears to be the exact same proposal that was being discussed that was prepared in this format six months ago?

The President: Minister.

The Minister: Thank you very much indeed.

I think a lot of this, or some of it, was down to the finessing of it at the end with regard to the trams and the buses working together and getting those decisions coming together. The Hon. Member is shaking his head. We will agree to disagree on that, but officers have been

working this up since and literally it was only in the last few weeks I suppose that they have come to the final decision.

With regard to the statement, that was my decision at this time. I think it was right. We were not in a position, I do not believe, to come forward with a motion, as he said. It was my choice.

The President: Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I have to say I am equally disappointed that this has come back as it has. The Department argues that the Victoria Street and Bottleneck package represents value for money, but value for money is not measured simply by choosing the cheapest option. It is measured by whether they actually deliver what Tynwald asked for and what passengers need. So I would counter that.

I just want to ask why has the Department chosen a two-site arrangement when that risks not providing all that was asked for originally by this Hon. Court, but it also risks adding to passenger confusion rather than creating one, clear, accessible transportation hub.

The President: The Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

I do not think it is adding any confusion to this at all. I think what it is doing – and the cheapest option is a lucky outcome – what it is giving us is a base in Victoria Street where passengers want to get on and off right in the middle of the town, and also because of the services that are provided on the prom also and, again mixing it in with the trams, it will work well there.

I do not see any reason why this is not the best option, given that, as I said right at the beginning in the first paragraph, this is an interim measure, looking out for what comes forward with Lord Street as well. The only things that might be missing, as I also said in the statement, was not being able to buy food in some and the toilets are a bit further away from one of the others but there is quite a saving to what it could have been.

The President: Mr Mercer.

Mr Mercer: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I may have missed it on the various emails with attachments that have been going around on this, but there was a diagram for each of the options except for option 3, so I do not really understand what or how that is going to look in Victoria Street. I just think it would be useful to have even a basic illustrative understanding of that.

The other question I suppose is, do you envisage any issues with the planning process in either of those locations that have been recommended?

The President: Minister.

The Minister: Thank you very much, Mr President.

I apologise – I am just looking there for Victoria Street plans – if they are not on there, and it does not look as though they are. But it basically is just three bus stops will be outside what was the old Lloyds Bank, down on the left-hand side there, with shelters. I will forward that and make sure that everybody has got a copy of that.

The President: A further question, Mr Mercer?

Mr Mercer: Just the second part of my question was, there will be a planning application, I would have thought, for both of these installations?

The Minister: There will indeed, Mr President.

The President: A final question, Mr Mercer.

Mr Mercer: Thank you.
Is there an indicative timescale of this particular promise?

The Minister: Not an indicative one but as soon as possible. This has been around for far too long now, and I am happy to admit that in the first place.

The President: Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Eaghtyrane.
Just in terms of the timescale for delivery on this, obviously Tynwald has approved now extending the horse tram tracks down to the Sea Terminal. These facilities will be used for a mixture of the bus and horse tram passengers in the same location. Is the inevitable delay on this piece of work going to impact on the further delivery of the horse tram extension, because it is in the same area in the same part of Douglas? The reason I ask that question is because at this point in the last administration we had a £750,000 DoI plan to do some work at that end of the Promenade and now, five years later, that is a £2,500,000 plan to do the same thing. My worry is we are in the same boat here, that this has not been approved by Tynwald. A new Government is going to come in. Is this going to happen at the same time as the horse tram extension or is it going to be digging up somewhere that has just been constructed in order to get these things done?

The President: Minister to reply.

The Minister: No, I do not think that is the case, Mr President, and these will work hand in hand with each other to make sure that does not happen.

6. Department of Health and Social Care Governance Review Progress Report – Statement by Minister for Health and Social Care

[GD 2026/0083] is relevant to this Item.

The President: We turn then to Item 6, Department of Health and Social Care Governance Review Progress Report, and I call on the Minister for Health and Social Care.

The Minister for Health and Social Care (Ms Christian): Thank you, Mr President.
Hon. Members, I am standing today laying before Tynwald the Department of Health and Social Care Governance Review Progress Report. The Report provides an update on the work undertaken since Tynwald unanimously supported, in February 2026, that the Department should progress with option 3 of the MIAA Governance Review: strengthening and simplifying the partnership between the DHSC and Manx Care.
The Report is being laid to provide Members with a clear and transparent update on progress, the work now underway, and the next steps the Department will take before returning to Tynwald with refined proposals in December 2026.
I also want to explain why the Department did not return with the final proposals in the June sitting. The February motion asked the Department not only to progress option 3, but to address all of the areas identified, including the underlying governance, financial, strategic, legislative,

cultural and capability issues. During the scoping of the work required it became clear it would not have been possible to bring back partial proposals before those areas had been properly worked through, tested with stakeholders and aligned into a coherent implementation plan.

Members will recall that the MIAA Governance Review identified a number of fundamental issues within the current health and social care system. These included the need for greater clarity of accountability, stronger financial oversight and control, better alignment between strategy and delivery, and more consistent system-wide assurance. The review also made clear that the structural change alone would not resolve these issues. Sustainable improvement depends on stronger partnership working, clearer roles, better information and a culture of openness, trust and shared responsibility.

Since the February sitting, the Department has moved this work from intent into practical delivery. We have a detailed draft implementation plan which has been developed across the nine work strands previously presented in the Department's response to the MIAA report. These cover the development of a long-term health and social care strategy; closer financial planning with Treasury and Manx Care; strengthened partnership arrangements; commissioning; communications; shared services; legislative reform; strengthening DHSC capability and capacity; and future board governance.

Practical progress has already been made and the Financial Recovery Programme is providing a mechanism for stronger financial grip, improved transparency and closer working between Treasury, DHSC and Manx Care. Interim finance leadership arrangements have been put in place for Manx Care while permanent recruitment is progressing. External support has also been secured to review the Department's own structure and capacity, so that the DHSC is properly equipped to fulfil its strategic, commissioning, assurance and system leadership responsibilities.

We have also progressed enabling legislative work through the NHS Reform Bill and have developed interim proposals to strengthen the role of the DHSC board as a whole-system forum for health and social care strategy and direction setting. Those interim arrangements are intended to bring the right voices into the strategic governance of the system, including Public Health and Manx Care leadership, while preserving the distinct statutory roles and responsibilities of DHSC and Manx Care.

However, the Report also makes clear that the Department is not proposing a final Manx Care board model at this stage. That is deliberate and, in my view, responsible. Tynwald specifically asked the Department to prioritise the fundamental issues identified by MIAA and to decouple these from changes to the governance model as far as possible. The Department has therefore focused on progressing practical improvements now, while taking the necessary time to test more complex governance and potential legislative proposals properly before final recommendations are brought forward. This approach will allow the Department to return to Tynwald with meaningful progress across all aspects of the February motion, rather than presenting a response focused only on board structure.

Over the summer, the Department will undertake a structured engagement phase with a large number of those involved in the original MIAA review and with other key stakeholders across the system. This will include workshops, task and finish groups, and other opportunities for engagement. The purpose is to test the draft proposals, strengthen the governance options, identify areas of consensus or concern, and ensure the next phase of reform is realistic, proportionate and deliverable. Given the scale and significance of the changes proposed, the implementation plan requires meaningful consultation with those who will be affected by, and responsible for, delivering the changes before it is presented again to Tynwald. I also recognise that as we reach the end of this administration, there is a small window of opportunity to seek views from current Members, and so, to support meaningful engagement, a workshop has been scheduled for 29th July with current Members to ensure their experience and perspectives can be sought. Hon. Members and Mr President, please would you accept my apologies that this invite was only sent at 3 p.m. today, but I do hope that Hon. Members will be able to attend and give their point of view during that workshop.

Mr President, this is not a pause in progress. It is an important governance step and a practical delivery tool. It will reduce implementation risk by involving those who will be responsible for delivering change, strengthening the evidence base and building confidence in the final proposals. It will also provide an opportunity to address any cultural issues that sit alongside the structural arrangements, including how the DHSC, Manx Care, Public Health, Treasury and wider Government partners work together as one system.

Embedding a culture of openness, constructive challenge and shared ownership will be as important as any structural reform, because lasting improvement will depend on how organisations work together in practice, not only on how responsibilities are described on paper.

I recognise that Members, staff and the public rightly expect to see sustained improvement in the health and social care system. That is precisely why the Department is taking the time needed to ensure the reforms we bring forward are robust, deliverable and capable of lasting improvement, rather than simply changing organisational structures.

The next steps are clear. By the end of July 2026, the Department is working to put in place interim revised governance arrangements within DHSC. Over the summer and early autumn we will continue to develop the implementation plan across all nine work strands, engage with stakeholders, and test options for future Manx Care board and sub-committee arrangements. As part of this, Members of the Department supported by policy officers will also undertake a wider review of the Manx Care Act 2021 over the summer, supported by input also from the Department's legislative officers, to consider whether the legislation as a whole, including its language, duties and provisions, remains clear, coherent and fit for purpose. Alongside that, work will continue on financial recovery, commissioning, shared services, legislative reform and strengthening the Department's own organisational structure. The Department plans to return to Tynwald in December 2026 with refined proposals, feedback from the engagement process, further detail on longer-term governance arrangements and any updated plan. However, it is important to set a review point which will take place at the end of September to assess progress with the engagement programme and determine whether any extension to the engagement period is required.

I would also like to acknowledge Mr Hooper's contribution during the February sitting, when he proposed that the Department should return to Tynwald in December 2026. That proposal recognised the scale and importance of the work required, and I thank Mr Hooper for that constructive contribution. The revised timetable reflects that consideration.

Hon. Members, this programme is intended to strengthen accountability, improve financial oversight, support clearer system leadership, reduce duplication, and create a more consistent and effective partnership between DHSC and Manx Care. While much of this work concerns governance, its purpose is not organisational change for its own sake.

The aim is to ensure that the Island has health and social care arrangements that are clear, sustainable, deliverable and focused on better outcomes for residents.

I would like to thank all those across DHSC, Manx Care, Treasury, Public Health and wider Government, politicians and Department Members who have contributed to this work to date. I also recognise the dedication of staff working across health and social care services, often under significant pressure, while this important reform work continues.

Mr President, I also wish that the Hon. House will consider my apologies also for this statement not being shared sooner. It was shared this morning and it should have been shared at 5 p.m. last night. My sincerest apologies, and I take responsibility for that. I would like to thank everybody, and I look forward to questions.

Thank you very much, Mr President.

Mr President: We turn to questions and first on my list, Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I thank the Shirveishagh for her statement. The Report contains nine workstreams, implementation plans, workshops, engagement programmes, task and finish groups and reviews. Which of these has already produced a measurable improvement in governance, accountability or financial control and what are the measurable outcomes by which the success of this governance programme will be judged?

The President: The Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you.

It is a very good question because absolutely every workstream will have a measurable outcome. I think probably what is important is just if we concentrate, focus, on the actual deliverable in the sense that we want a closer alignment between Manx Care and the Department, and I would say that the steps that have been taken – certainly let us take, for example, the finance area in terms of appointing the new interim Finance Director and working with the Treasury team now or the Treasury Minister and the Treasury CFO in bringing those teams together into one area in the future – will absolutely demonstrate that we will reduce duplication. We will get that one voice, that aligned outcome that we are trying so desperately to seek. So I would say that that will be a perfect example, and then obviously over the coming months we will look at moving that into the comms area and other workstreams.

I wish I did have a list of those measurable outcomes, but that will be provided in the future document that will come back in December.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Mr President.

I think the Minister knows what I am going to ask. In the Report that she has tailed alongside her statement there is a list of dates for when certain engagement activities are going to take place, and she has already mentioned in the statement that she is going to engage with outgoing Tynwald Members very soon. The problem is there is nothing built into that timetable to engage with incoming Tynwald Members, so when you read it through, the intention seems to be to finalise all the work in October to get something ready for a December Tynwald.

There will be a brand new Government in October. There could be an entirely new membership of this Hon. Court and actually they could have very different views to what the current Minister and the current Members feel, so I am just curious as to why they have not built in some time to engage with those new Members and the new Government and the new administration rather than just jumping straight to something that comes to Tynwald Court off the back of what we in here may feel. The views of the next House of Keys, the next Tynwald, may be very different.

The President: The Minister to reply.

The Minister: Thank you.

Again a really excellent point that the Hon. Member has raised. It is the intention of the Department, when that review point happens, that I would expect those recommendations at that point to say that we should be engaging with the new administration, and that would be part of the going forward process. He is right, that should absolutely take part and when we did the presentation the other day that was certainly the feedback. Unfortunately the Report gets laid otherwise we would have made that amendment, but absolutely that is something and that was great feedback for that workshop so we appreciate that.

Thank you, Mr President.

Mr President: Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I am in favour obviously of this option, but I am just trying to drill down into a little bit more of the detail. We are saying DHSC is going to be more involved in operational influence, if I can put it that way, while Manx Care remains responsible for operational delivery. The question is, who is ultimately accountable when things go wrong and what safeguards are going to be in place or are in place to ensure accountability does not become blurred between the Department and Manx Care?

The President: Minister.

The Minister: Thank you.

I think it is blurred right now, if I am absolutely honest with this Hon. Court. I am standing up here today and there have been questions about the operational delivery of Manx Care and, as the Minister, I do feel responsible for that, and anyone standing in my position should feel responsible for that. However, what I would say is I can give you my personal opinion in the sense that operational delivery should firmly sit with Manx Care.

The strategy should sit with the Department of Health and Social Care but Manx Care, Public Health, other stakeholders, frontline workers, should feed into that strategy, and that is where the lines can be blurred, because we should be talking to each other, we should be engaging with people, and we should at all those levels formulate a long-term, 10-year strategy for our health and social care here on the Isle of Man. That is absolutely important and that is what this governance review has and will deliver. That is not something that has just been created. We absolutely must have that and it must be fed in with demand, data, capacity, and that is something that I am very keen on this governance review being able to deliver.

He is absolutely right, accountability, those are the kinds of things that we would like to discuss in those workshops, absolutely saying who is accountable for this, who is the Manx Care Chair accountable to, who is the CEO accountable to, making sure that those lines are absolutely clear going forward to the Manx public, so the Manx public can understand what they are ultimately, as far as I am concerned, paying for.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Ms Edge.

Ms Edge: Thank you, Mr President.

I know the Minister has had a really tough job since she went in there, and she is trying to make the right changes. I just want to pick up on what the Hon. Member and DEFA Minister said before with regard to bills. Unless everything is devolved to an organisation to hold them to account, as in their bills, as in responsibility for all of their infrastructure, you are never going to be able to hold anybody to account. Will the Minister take into account that a full statutory board model style is what is required to ensure that we can hold people to account, and before anybody takes on this challenge there should be a forensic audit to ensure where the money currently is, where it is sitting, where it is placed, before anybody is expected to take that on in the future? Because currently anybody walking in there, it would be very difficult to know whether the right percentage of spend is spent in social services.

How is the Minister going to ensure that she leaves something that another Minister could pick up and be confident that the finances, although we are saying there are going to be changes etc., how they are going to be confident that they can pick that up and know exactly how much money is left in the pot the day the Minister walks out?

The President: Minister.

The Minister: Thank you.

Another excellent question. I think I probably live every single day saying to Departments, to the Department civil servants, saying to them what we finish and what we deliver must be able to be picked up. I can give you an example. In Ramsey and District Cottage Hospital I am insisting that every single report that comes now that we are producing has that resilience factor about the north so that another Minister sits in this seat and does not get told something else. They see that, they know the importance of the resilience is so important on this Isle of Man, we cannot keep having this conversation about having – you would not normally have two hospitals within 15 miles of each other. That is not what we do here on the Isle of Man, we must have that resilience. So these are exactly those kind of things that we would – and I am absolutely delivering within this.

With regard to the finance, as I have said, our new interim Finance Director has been in two weeks. He is doing exactly – albeit that it is not the fancy name of a forensic audit, but he is doing exactly that. He is following the money, he is looking at where that is being spent, he is putting extra robust sign-offs on every single thing, including one of our biggest areas, and that is obviously in recruitment and spend on staff.

So these things are being done, and I absolutely want to support that team, the Financial Recovery Programme team as well are supporting the interim Finance Director to deliver on that, and I do hope that we will see the fruits of their labour, as they say, over the next coming months. I hope that the next Minister, whoever it is, will absolutely be able to reap what we have sown in these early days today.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Mr President.

I have got two questions for the Minister. The first is around this three-year funding model. Obviously, it is important. It is so unbelievably important to this, that the Department has mentioned it four times in the Report, but it simply is the same four lines over and over again, where it says: 'This is a key requirement and we are going to work with Treasury on the development of future funding models.'

That is it. That is probably the most significant of the recommendations and it is the one that is given by far the least attention in this progress report. I just wanted to flag that, because to my mind, this is the largest risk any Minister of Health is going to face, is getting the Treasury on board with changing the way it deals with its budgets.

We have seen that in this Hon. Court with debates on budget reform and how resistant Treasury has been to that. We have seen a Treasury resistance to changing audit processes and I just need to flag this, that this is critical, and I know the Minister understands that. It just needs to be made very clear to staff and to whoever follows her in this role, that without this there is no point doing anything else.

But I would also like to ask the Minister about the accountability when it comes to the new interim DHSC board structure. So the proposal in the Report is to actually move to include Manx Care's Chief Executive around the table at the DHSC board, which is an interesting development. My question for the Minister is, Manx Care's board are not properly represented around that table, the chair, the NEDs are not represented, but who will the CEO of Manx Care then be accountable to? Will the Manx Care Chief Executive be responsible to the Minister, as they now sit around that board table and are accountable to the Minister, or will they still be accountable to the Manx Care board?

In which case, what is the point having them around the table if they cannot make commitments, answer any questions, because ultimately Manx Care's board are still the ones holding the pen. It just feels like what this is actually going to do in practice is dilute and further confuse accountability and responsibility. I appreciate what is trying to be done is to give a

better opportunity to talk about strategic issues. But it just feels that the way it has been structured actually is going to result in worse accountability rather than better.

The President: Minister.

The Minister: Thank you.

Two, again, very excellent questions, and I am really glad that the Hon. Member has brought up specifically the three-year funding. It is interesting because we have obviously started the process for next year's Mandate, and we have started that engagement. We have started as early as now, as early as last month in terms of that. What we realise is that in terms of a cycle, we sat down and we worked out that we probably have to get this first year, this next year, over the line, and then come back with that next one, new Minister, with a three-year plan.

Then where that falls in the next administration, we would be in a really good way of it not happening when it is happening now. So you would not be developing a three-year strategy as a brand new Minister – sorry, as an old Minister, so to speak. But what I would say is, what is integral to that three-year financial plan is the commissioning, because we will be commissioning three-year cycles. For example, we are in conversations with the Hospice, who will be doing exactly the same in terms with Manx Care.

So this is about us being able to do that and having the workforce to be able to do that and the build-up of that. That is not going to happen overnight. So it will be up to us to be able to come to Treasury and say, 'This is the funding that we require over three years for us as a healthcare'. We obviously will be working with Treasury, and what that looks like, what exactly that means – because I think the misconception could be, well, we do a three-year funding in the Pink Book already.

No, that is not a planned health service. That is not saying and looking at demand and looking at capacity and looking at the actual need, and actually responding to that and actually coming up with those ideas. It is a very different thing to perhaps what somebody might – an accountant might think, 'Oh well, I will do a three-year forecast'.

In answer to the second question with regard to accountability; we are not changing anything to do with the accountability. The CEO will absolutely still be accountable to the Manx Care chair of the board. But what they can do is they can certainly be part of that conversation and escalate any issues for approval by the Manx Care board. We talk about aligning our strategy, and that is where the focus is. It is interim, it is until we can actually put the physical changes that we possibly might need into the Manx Care Act in the next administration.

But I do honestly trust and do believe that putting Public Health, for example, in the next three months, while we are discussing the things that we are discussing in terms of the Mandate etc., having them sat at that table is really important. The same with a very leading expert in terms of clinical excellence, who is now the CEO of Manx Care, who is literally the ears and eyes and has been for all of the situation that has been happening in not just our Hospital, but also GPs and also in our mental health services.

I do believe that having that expertise, which we do not necessarily have in the DHSC, we have talked about the areas that we do not have the expertise there, I think that that is really important. That we actually be honest about that and say, 'Let us actually get around the table and talk together'.

Thank you, Mr President.

A Member: Hear, hear.

The President: Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

Just on the Department itself, it is the last question, (Laughter and interjections) I think getting hot under the collar there. It has previously been acknowledged it is a small Department. There are capability and resource implications, and if the Department is taking on a more strategic review, what extra skills and resources does the Department need?

The President: Minister.

The Minister: Thank you.

We are obviously looking across the system in terms of skills and resource where we can import that, so to speak. We obviously do have some commissioning expertise, for example, within Manx Care, and we will be looking to that to help support us. But I would say that the Hon. Member has raised a really important valid point, and that is why the workforce review is really important in terms of what happens over the next coming months.

The Department does need to strengthen specifically in the commissioning area, it does need to strengthen specifically in the way it works with shared services, and so does Manx Care. That is essential, and I would implore any Minister that is responsible for any service that helps provide to our Manx Care and to our healthcare, that that is a priority for them over the next coming months as well. Because that shared service function and making sure that that improves is so vital to the success of this.

So it is not just in terms of the Department, but it is also who we work with and who Manx Care work with. I answered earlier in a question about updating a website. I am not responsible for updating the website; that is out of Manx Care's remit, but it is another Department. We desperately need those shared services to absolutely help and assist and make sure those things happen quickly and smoothly, because this is our health care. Patients must come first and they must be informed as quickly as possible. But I do know those Departments are working with us and they are absolutely supporting us to make those improvements and have those conversations.

Thank you.

The President: We now turn to Item 9 on –

Mr Glover: A point of order, sorry.

The President: A point of order, Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: You read out a long list of people who had leave earlier at the beginning of the sitting. I was wondering, I did not hear the Hon. Member for Glenfaba and Peel being listed, Ms Lord-Brennan. Was she on that list and if she was not, has somebody reached out to try and find out what is happening?

The President: Thank you.

No, that was not on my list of leaves as presented to me today. I have not yet started to get into that. Obviously there has been an awful lot going on with the sitting today, but thank you for raising it.

9. Economic Policy Review Committee –
Second Report for the Session 2025-26:
The Department for Enterprise and the Executive Agencies –
Debate commenced

The Chair of the Economic Policy Review Committee, Mr Moorhouse, to move:

That the Economic Policy Review Committee – Second Report for the Session 2025-26 – The Department for Enterprise and the Executive Agencies [PP 2026/0087] be received and the following recommendations be approved:

Recommendation 1
That the scope and purpose of the Department for Enterprise should be reviewed by an independent third party alongside future reassessment of the key purpose and implementation of the Economic Strategy.

Recommendation 2
That the Department for Enterprise should develop a more clearly defined approach for business development activity and monitoring, designed to support private sector business to an appropriate degree.

Recommendation 3
That a unified brand and place marketing strategy should be developed for the Isle of Man that articulates the Island's value proposition and key messages for all types of business. The promotional messaging for the Island should be adapted accordingly, and this should be adopted by Government to support the endeavours of those who champion and promote the Island as part of their day-to-day operations.

Recommendation 4
That the Visit Agency should be incorporated and established as the Isle of Man Tourism Board, as a Statutory Board. Interest in and representation of hospitality as a sector should fall under this board. Consideration should also be given to putting other sectors under remit of the Tourism Board.

Recommendation 5
That consideration should be given to creating a cohesive, unified marketing approach responsible for promoting the Isle of Man internationally as a place to do business, a place for investment, and which supports the Island's export businesses; as part of this, consideration should be given as to whether the Business Agency, Finance Agency and Digital Agency should continue in their current form.

[GD 2026/0078] is relevant to this Item.

The President: I return to Item 9, Economic Policy Review Committee, Second Report, and I call on the Chair of the Committee, Mr Moorhouse, to move.

The Chair of the Economic Policy Review Committee (Mr Moorhouse): Thank you, Mr President.

Something is not quite right. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) (Laughter) Our economy is not as dynamic as it should be.

A Member: It is too hot.

The Chair: An increasing number of local entrepreneurs speak openly about their reluctance to invest, and every week another business of note announces its imminent closure. When I spoke in the debate about the economic strategy, I highlighted the importance of small, dynamic businesses which make our Island such a special place to live and work. I warned about the risk of ignoring the warning signs and becoming just another location that focused on Costa, Tesco and McDonald's, and the danger of that. Only days later, Shoprite was taken over.

There is a new optimism in the adjacent isle, based on Manchesterism, a concept where the needs of the private sector are heard, the emphasis being on boosting productivity and output. The data shows it works, with productivity and investment increasing dramatically in recent years in that city. Here, the data on economic growth is opaque, and that is a concern. Things are certainly not as good as they should be. In fact, they are worrying.

This year, the Government's spend will be over £130 million more than the revenue received. The preoccupation of the last five years has been on more people, not greater productivity. Just looking back at the budget reports, where are the references to business and the policies to enable existing businesses to thrive and new ones to grow? The underlying assumptions of this Report is the importance of our Government's role as a stimulator of growth and a mechanism to move things forward in a positive, dynamic way that will benefit everyone if the offering is right.

The Department for Enterprise must be aware, and if they are not, they need to wake up quickly and realise the current mechanisms which they use are simply not working as effectively as they should. The primary focus of this Report is to examine whether the Department for Enterprise and its Executive Agency models are performing in the way that was envisaged at the time of their formation. Next year, it will be a decade since the changes were implemented and now is the opportune moment to assess and debate whether the current situation and the current structure remains the best way to support economic growth, business development and the Island's long-term prosperity.

The principles referred to in our Report come directly from the 2017 review itself. Whether they are described as the model's principal aims, stated intentions or expected benefits, that is ultimately secondary. These principles were the rationale that was presented to Tynwald, local businesses and the wider community about why this new model should be adopted. The question that this Report asks is whether these commitments are being realised in practice.

At this stage in the parliamentary cycle, we are all in regular discussions with local business people. Many of us have attended public events, such as the meeting held to highlight the challenges of the hospitality sector and the pressures faced ahead of the minimum wage changes, the challenges faced by local hoteliers and the pressure faced by proud entrepreneurs in our constituencies. The messages are so loud and so clear that things are not what they should be, words that have been echoed in the Chamber's recent presentation.

Despite each member of the Committee bringing their concerns to the table, we had to go beyond that. In the limited time that was available, we wanted to have a report with clear recommendations that could be debated by this administration and implemented by the next.

The Committee received public oral evidence from the Minister and Chief Officer, two further written submissions from the Department, written evidence from the Chamber of Commerce and additional private evidence, including from Visit Isle of Man. While the fact that we took private evidence from Visit Isle of Man is not discussed in the Report, the Minister was included in the original correspondence, through which Visit was invited to give evidence.

The Committee has had limited time and resources, but the fundamental desire is to get things right. Our focus was on high-level assessments. To review the Executive Agency model and the Department's strategic role in relation to the economy following the 2017 reforms, we need to get this right. We did not examine every function carried out by the Department. The Committee's expertise with the Aircraft Registry or Civil Aviation Administration, for example, are limited, and that would have risked us losing our key focus. These functions are not within the remit of our inquiry, and they were not subject to any concerns raised.

I would like to reiterate the point that we have started with it stated within a media release. The Report is not a reflection on people overseeing and assuming responsibilities and roles within the Department and Executive Agencies, which include officers and members of the business community. The Report is intended as a challenge to the policy and structural approach that has evolved since determined by Tynwald, in respect of an important area of Government activity that has been in place for nearly 10 years, at a time when DfE is already reviewing its Agency models itself.

With those points aside, I now turn to the recommendations of the Report. Recommendation 1 concerns the overall role and purpose of the Department for Enterprise. Nearly a decade has passed since the Department and Executive Agency models were introduced. We believe it is now time to undertake an independent review of the Department alongside a reassessment of the Economic Strategy.

Given the Department's role in delivering many of the Island's economic objectives, it is important that we periodically ask whether its structure remains fit for purpose, whether it delivers value for money, and whether the current model has shown to be the best way to deliver the Island's economic ambitions. Moving on, throughout our inquiry, we found in the Department and its Agencies' report a significant volume of activity, but there is less evidence demonstrating the economic outcomes that are actively delivered.

Recommendation 2 therefore asks the Department to develop a more clearly defined approach for business development activity, thus focusing on the outcomes beyond job creation.

Recommendation 3 seeks to address the fragmented way in which the Island is marketed internationally. There is currently no single coherent narrative about what the Isle of Man stands for as a place to live, work, visit and invest. That is a missed opportunity.

Recommendation 4 concerns the future of Visit Isle of Man. We found that Visit Isle of Man stands out from the other Executive Agencies in its ability to demonstrate clear economic outcomes. We therefore consider whether such success should be built on through a statutory tourism board, with hospitality explicitly within its remit and the scope to consider other sectors in the future.

Tourism is a major contributor to our economy, that is across transport, hospitality, heritage, culture, events, and relies on long-term strategic planning and industrial partnerships. We believe that placing it on a statutory footing will provide that an already-successful body would have greater independence and better reflect the importance of tourism to the Island's economy, and give a visitor economy a strong institutional voice within Government.

Finally, recommendation 5 builds upon recommendation 3. If the Island is to present a more coherent marketing strategy, then it is reasonable to ask what the correct framework is to deliver that strategy, and why the current model is not produced as a unified place brand. These recommendations are intended to strengthen the Department's ability to deliver for the Island's economy. I hope that Members will agree that they provide a constructive way to move forward. Having had the opportunity to reflect on the Chamber's thoughts, there seems to be a real crossover between what the Report is suggesting and what the Chamber believe is the best way for us to move forward.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Thank you, Mr Wannenburgh.

Mr Wannenburgh: Thank you, Mr President.

I beg to second and reserve my remarks.

The President: We will go straight – oh, Mrs Morphet.

Mr Johnston: Eaghtyrane, sorry.

The President: I am sorry. I did not see you.
Mrs Morphet.

Mrs Morphet: He can go first, that is fine.

The President: Okay, Mr Johnston.

Mr Johnston: Thank you, Mr President.

I welcome the opportunity to respond to this Report. Effective scrutiny is one of the great strengths of our parliamentary system. Where scrutiny is rigorous, evidence-based and proportionate, Government has a duty to listen, to reflect and, where appropriate, to act. But scrutiny also carries responsibility.

Reports placed before this Hon. Court carry weight. They carry weight with Members, with Government and with the people of our Island. They should therefore be founded upon a clear understanding of the subject under examination, a balanced assessment of the evidence, and conclusions which flow logically from that evidence.

Regrettably, I do not believe that standard has been met on this occasion. Mr President, the Committee's central thesis rests upon six purported founding intentions of the Executive Agency model. Yet the document which established that model identifies three principal objectives: to increase capability for economic strategy and policy, to better leverage private sector expertise through Agencies, and to refocus activity into a Department for Enterprise. Not six; three.

Those objectives are set out clearly in the executive summary of the 2017 review. They are a matter of record. They are not matters of interpretation. Yet the Report before us elevates observations, commentary and selected quotations into six purported founding principles which were never established as the formal objectives of the model.

Mr President, if one misstates the objectives, one inevitably misjudges the outcome. It is difficult to conduct a fair assessment of success or failure when the test itself has been incorrectly defined from the outset. A report which misunderstands the purpose of the model it seeks to evaluate is already built upon uncertain foundations. That error alone calls the Report's central assessment into serious question.

Nevertheless, the Committee has invested time in this work, and its conclusions deserve a considered response. There are observations within the Report which merit discussion. There are areas where improvement may be appropriate. But there are also significant shortcomings in the evidence, methodology and conclusions which should concern Hon. Members. Most importantly, I believe the Report confuses operational imperfections with strategic failure.

The fact that a model can be improved does not mean the model has failed. Those are not the same thing. Before turning to the specific concerns within the Committee's Report, I think it is important to recognise what the Executive Agency model has achieved. For almost a decade, it has strengthened engagement between Government and industry. It has brought experienced private sector leaders into public service through Agency Boards. It has created a stronger connection between sector insight, policy development and delivery. It has increased sectoral focus and enabled more direct engagement with businesses, investors and stakeholders.

Those are not incidental features of the model. They are central to the purpose for which it was created. That view is not defined to the Department. In discussing this Report, one highly respected board member, drawing upon some 40 years of industry experience, described the Executive Agency model as the best arrangement for Government engagement with industry that they had ever encountered during their career.

That is not offered as proof that the model is perfect, nor should any single view be treated as definitive. But it is an important perspective, and one that sits uneasily with any suggestion that the model is fundamentally broken. Can improvements be made? Of course they can. The Department itself has recognised that. But improvement and failure are not the same thing. To acknowledge the former does not require acceptance of the latter.

The Report observed that some individuals working within Executive Agencies have less commercial experience than the businesses they support. Mr President, that observation misunderstands the design of the model. It was never intended that public servants should replicate within Government the full breadth and depth of commercial experience found across every sector of our economy.

Rather, the model was designed to bring industry expertise into Government through experienced boards, sector specialists and senior leadership. The role of Agency staff is not to be the most experienced business people in every room. Their role is to convene expertise, facilitate engagement, develop policy, navigate Government and remove barriers to growth. Those are fundamentally different functions. That distinction sits at the very heart of the model established in 2017.

I also wish to place on record my sincere thanks to the many volunteer board members who give their time, expertise and judgement in support of the Executive Agencies. They bring substantial commercial experience to Government. Their contribution has been significant and I do not believe that contribution is sufficiently recognised within this Report.

Mr President, the Report makes extensive observations about the operation of the Executive Agencies, yet none of the Executive Agency Chief Executives, none of the non-executive Chairs and none of the Agency Board members were invited to provide public, oral or written evidence during the preparation of this Report. Those directly responsible for leading and overseeing the Agencies were therefore not afforded the opportunity to explain on the public record what works well, what does not, and where improvement may be required.

Hon. Members may wish to reflect on that. If a committee were reviewing the Health Service, would it not wish to include evidence from clinicians? If it were reviewing education, would it not wish to include evidence from those responsible for leading schools? It is difficult to understand how a report concerning the effectiveness of Executive Agencies could be produced without taking evidence from the Chief Executives who run them, the chairs who oversee them, or the board members who provide private sector expertise.

I simply ask Hon. Members to consider whether that would be regarded as satisfactory in any other area of public administration. I am pleased that the Committee engaged with the Chamber of Commerce. The Department values its relationship with the Chamber and welcomes the opportunity and the important role it plays in representing and advocating for the business community. However, I do have concerns regarding the evidential basis upon which portions of the Report rely.

The Chamber's initial submission to the Committee was framed as reflecting perspectives from within the business community. Yet, it subsequently became clear that those views had not at that stage been informed by wider consultation with the Chamber Members, but reflected perspectives of a limited number of Chamber board members. It was only after the Committee sought additional evidence that a broader call for member reviews was undertaken to support the original submission.

I would have expected that sequence to be reversed. One would normally expect wider member evidence to inform an organisation's position, before that position is presented as reflecting broader business perspectives. Here, the initial submission came first; the wider call for evidence followed afterwards. Even then, the supplementary submission did not materially alter the original position. Much of it repeated points that had already been advanced, and only a limited number of additional examples were provided.

The additional examples concerned, first, correspondence awaited by a business in relation to education; and secondly, the effect of housing availability upon a potential relocation. Both are legitimate concerns affecting the wider business environment. Neither, however, concerns a function within the direct responsibility of the Department for Enterprise, or provides evidence of a failure in the Executive Model Agency.

Mr President, I do not dismiss those concerns. They should be heard and by the responsible authorities; properly considered. But anecdotal evidence, particularly where it is limited in scope

and relates to matters beyond the responsibility of the organisations under review, cannot reasonably be regarded as a sufficient basis for far-reaching conclusions about the structure and governance of a Department for Enterprise. Policy should be evidence-led. Structural reform should certainly be evidence-led.

In my view, the evidential threshold required to justify recommendations of this scale has not been met. The Report places considerable emphasis on the difficulty of demonstrating economic impact. I understand that challenge. But once again, I fear the Report applies an unduly narrow test of impact. The fact that every intervention cannot be isolated and attributed to a single economic metric does not mean that impact cannot or should not be assessed. It means that assessment must reflect the enabling, convening and policy functions the model was created to perform.

The 2017 review envisaged a Department for Enterprise which enables economic development. Businesses create jobs. Entrepreneurs generate growth. Investors deploy capital. Government creates the conditions in which those things are more likely to occur. The role of the Executive Agencies is to support those conditions, to engage, to convene, to facilitate, to co-ordinate, to help remove barriers to growth. Many of those contributions are recognised throughout the Report, yet they are frequently discounted because their individual contribution cannot always be reduced to a single headline measure.

Mr President, strong engagement with industry matters. Good policy matters. Effective relationships matter. Experienced private sector boards guiding Government activity matter. Economic development is not simply the product of one intervention or one organisation. It is a cumulative result of many activities working together. The Executive Agency model was designed with that reality in mind.

Mr President, the timing also reinforces the need for caution. This Report arrives at the end of an administration, while many of its recommendations raise significant questions of governance, structure and long-term direction. Those decisions will principally fall to the next administration. It is therefore particularly important that this Court does not seek to predetermine them without the benefit of the evidence now being assembled through the review of the Executive Agency model.

Mr President, the Report appears uncertain about its scope. The Committee states:

> 23. This review should not be confined solely to the Executive Agencies. Many of the issues we discuss here originate from the way in which the central Department defines its role and exercises its strategic function.

Yet, the Report contains little substantive examination of many of the Department's major functions. There is no meaningful assessment of the Ship Registry, Aircraft Registry or Central Registry. There is no significant examination of work permits, motorsport, enterprise support schemes, legislative functions or many other important responsibilities, which leaves a simple question. Is this a review of the Executive Agencies, or is it a review of the Department for Enterprise? If it is the former, significant parts of the Report move well beyond the evidence gathered. If it is the latter, it is plainly incomplete.

Mr President, I want to be clear. I am not rejecting scrutiny. I am not rejecting challenge. Nor am I suggesting that improvements should not be made. The Department itself is undertaking a comprehensive review of the Executive Agency model, because we recognise that there is always scope to improve. What I cannot support is the proposition that this Report provides a sufficient reliable foundation for the scale of change it seeks to recommend.

Its evidential base is incomplete. Its methodology has left significant gaps. Its interpretation of the original model is flawed, and too many of its conclusions travel beyond the evidence presented. Scrutiny matters, but good scrutiny matters even more, because the authority of this Court depends not simply upon our willingness to ask difficult questions; it depends on our willingness to reach sound conclusions when we do.

Mr President, despite those concerns, the Department has approached the Committee's recommendations constructively. Where they identify matters warranting further consideration, we have sought to strengthen and refine them. Where they reflect work already underway, our amendments recognise that work and attach clear next steps. But where structural change is proposed without a compelling evidential basis, we cannot support it.

The amendments of recommendations 1 to 4 therefore support review, improvement and informed decision-making. What they do not do is predetermine the outcome before the relevant work is complete. In relation to recommendation 1, the Committee calls for an independent review of the Department for Enterprise, alongside further reassessment of the Economic Strategy.

Mr President, the Report provides no substantive evidence to justify a review of the wider Department. Furthermore, a comprehensive review of the Executive Agency model is already well underway and has involved engagement with Agency Boards, staff, representative bodies, businesses and colleagues across Government.

The Government amendment therefore makes a proportionate and evidence-based approach. It recognises the work already underway and commits to publishing those findings so they can properly inform the next administration's decisions regarding any future reform. That is the proportionate course; complete and publish the present review, assess its findings, then determine whether any aspect requires independent validation or specialist external assurance.

Recommendation 2 addresses business development activity and monitoring. The Government supports the principle behind this recommendation. Indeed, the Department had already identified the need to improve the way in which business development activity is articulated, measured and reported. However, the amendment recognises an important reality. Executive Agencies operate in fundamentally different sectors.

They serve different audiences, pursue different opportunities and face different market conditions. A single measure or uniform operating approach would not properly reflect those differing sectors. What is desirable is greater consistency in how outcomes are demonstrated. The amendment therefore commits the Department to continue the work already initiated through the Joint Agency Group, and to implement the resulting changes by January 2027.

Recommendation 3 concerns the development of a unified Island brand and place marketing strategy. The Government recognises the potential benefits of such an approach. A clear and coherent national proposition has the potential to strengthen the Island's ability to attract investment, businesses, visitors and skilled individuals. However, such a proposal extends far beyond the Department for Enterprise. It would have implications across Government, and would require significant resource, co-ordination and long-term commitment.

Before embarking on such an exercise, Government must understand the likely costs, the potential benefits and the anticipated return on investment. The amendment therefore proposes a cost-and-benefit analysis, led by the Department and published in January 2027, so that any future decision is based upon evidence of value, affordability and deliverability, not aspiration alone.

Recommendation 4 proposes the creation of a statutory tourism board. Mr President, I am not persuaded that the Committee has made the case for such a fundamental change. The Report acknowledges that Visit Isle of Man is already able to demonstrate clear and measurable outcomes. It acknowledges increased visitor numbers, visitor spend, event activity and wider economic benefit.

Paradoxically, therefore, the Agency for which the Report identifies some of the clearest outcome-focused reporting is also the Agency it proposes should undergo the most radical structural change. The Committee has not demonstrated that the current arrangements are failing, nor has it demonstrated that a statutory body would achieve superior outcomes.

Governments should not create a new statutory structure without clear evidence that it would improve outcomes, efficiency or accountability sufficiently to justify the legislative, administrative and financial consequences. The amendment therefore recognises that Visit Isle

of Man forms part of the wider review of the Executive Agency model, and allows the next administration to consider any evidence-based recommendations arising from that work.

Finally, recommendation 5. This is the only recommendation that Government has asked Tynwald to reject outright. The reason is straightforward. The recommendation places structural reconsideration of three Agencies on the table, before establishing that their present form is the source of the problem it seeks to address. Yet, the Report provides no substantive evidence that those Agencies are failing, nor does it present evidence that merging responsibilities or restructuring those Agencies would improve outcomes.

Indeed, elsewhere the Report acknowledges measurable successes delivered by Agencies operating within the existing model. That is a difficult contradiction to reconcile. Government accepts that there may be opportunities to improve co-ordination and strengthen consistency of messaging. That is precisely why work relating to place branding and broader promotional activity is already addressed through recommendation 3.

Recommendation 5 therefore adds little that is not already captured elsewhere. What it adds is an unjustified presumption that the form of those Agencies may itself be the problem, before the necessary evidence has been gathered.

Mr President, I do not believe that this is a sound basis for public policy. As one highly experienced business leader involved with the Executive Agency model observed to me, in business you do not simply dismantle an existing structure, cast the pieces into the air, and hope that what comes down will somehow work better. (Laughter) That is not a sound approach in business, and it is not a sound approach in Government. Change should begin with a clear understanding of the problem, a reasoned assessment of the alternatives, and evidence that the proposed solution is likely to deliver better results.

Mr President, I do not believe that evidential case has been made here. Decisions of that nature should follow evidence. They should not precede it. Mr President, the amendments before this Hon. Court today do not reject improvement. They do not reject review, and they do not reject challenge. What they reject is the proposition that we should embark upon significant organisational change without first establishing a robust evidential basis for doing so.

Our responsibility is not to preserve structures for their own sake, nor to change them for the sake of change. It is to secure the arrangements that best serve our economy and our Island, guided by evidence and judged by results. That is why Government supports the amended recommendations 1 to 4, and it is why Government invites Tynwald to reject recommendation 5. I ask Hon. Members to support the amendments.

Mr President, I beg to move:

The Hon. Member for ayre and Michael, Mr Johnston, to move -

(A) In Recommendation 1, to leave out all words and replace them with 'That Tynwald notes the ongoing review of the Executive Agency model, as set out in the Department for Enterprise's 2025-26 Department plan, and the intention to publish the findings of this review, in respect of any future reform.'

(B) In Recommendation 2, to leave out all words and replace them with 'That the Department for Enterprise should continue to develop a more clearly defined approach for business development activity and monitoring, designed to support private sector business to an appropriate degree, building on improvements already identified through the Department's Joint Agency Group, and implement any changes by January 2027.'

(C) In Recommendation 3, to leave out all the words and replace them with, 'That Tynwald acknowledges the potential benefits of adopting a unified brand and place marking strategy for the Isle of Man and notes that the Department for Enterprise will lead on a cost and benefit analysis of such an initiative, to be published in January 2027.'

(D) In Recommendation 4, to leave out all the words and replace them with, 'That Tynwald notes Visit Isle of Man is included in the ongoing review of the Executive Agency model, as set out in the Department for Enterprises; 2025-26 Department plan, and that a new

administration will consider the findings of this review and any appropriate next steps based on clear, substantiated evidence of the need for changes.'

Several Members: Hear, hear.

The President: Is there a seconder?

The Chief Minister: I beg to second.

The President: Thank you, Chief Minister.
Next on my list, Mrs Morphet.

Mrs Morphet: How do I follow that? I suppose a lot of what the Minister has said echoes what I was actually going to say anyway, so I have cut quite a bit out of it. But because I am not part of the Council of Ministers or the Department, I just want to share my thoughts.

I understand that the Committee has raised concerns around fragmentation, accountability and performance measures. Equally, I see merit in the Government's argument that a review is already underway, and that we should see the findings of that work before commissioning any external review.

Of note, many of the recommendations ultimately come back to the same question: what does success actually look like? Before deciding whether Agencies should be restructured, merged, replaced, brought closer together or left as they are, I would expect us to be clear about the outcomes we are trying to achieve and how those outcomes will be measured. The phrase 'supporting business to an appropriate degree' is used in both recommendations from the Government and the Committee, but I do not know what that means in practice.

The Department states that they have already recognised that the impact of business development activity should be demonstrated more clearly, and give some example indicators in their response. I welcome a more formal record of these outcome measurements, and hope they will be incorporated within the review that is taking place. Without agreed measures, it is difficult to determine whether any model is succeeding or failing.

I am also conscious that a significant proportion of the evidence underpinning the Committee Report comes from the Chamber of Commerce, and reflects concerns and proposals put forward by that Chamber. Those views are important and deserve to be heard, but they are not the only views that matter. Before considering making any structural changes, I would like to be satisfied that we have heard not only from the Chamber but from a wider range of businesses, Agency Boards, stakeholders and independent voices.

I do not think that doing nothing is the answer, and I welcome the statement that has just been given by the Minister. Having read the Report, there is evidence to suggest that some change is needed. However, I do not feel that these reports give me the breadth of evidence, the variety of voices, or the clarity around outcomes and performance measures to conclude with any confidence what that change should look like.

Regardless of the outcome today, I hope the current review feels able to challenge some of the assumptions that may have become embedded over time, whether those assumptions sit within the current Agency model or within any alternatives. Most importantly, I hope it provides a clearer picture of what success looks like and how it will be measured. Without that, we again risk repetitive debates about structures, when what matters is outcomes.

As we have repeatedly seen over the years, and I have said also, reorganising structures can create a great deal of activity and cost without delivering any improvement. The focus has to be on solutions and outcomes, not organisational charts and just moving the pieces around the board.

Several Members: Hear, hear.

The President: Mr Hooper.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Mr President.

I find myself actually in agreement with a lot of what the Minister has just stood up and said. I have got a number of questions that I would like to put to the Chair of the Committee, and hopefully he will be able to answer them. I would like to get an answer to the question of why no evidence was actually taken, either from the Agencies themselves or from the private sector. Relying on one witness, the Chamber of Commerce, I think is an inherently risky approach. The Chair, in his opening remarks, said the Report's recommendations reflected the same views and there was lots of crossover with what the Chamber were looking for. That is hardly a surprise when they are the only people that actually gave evidence to the Committee.

The Agencies themselves represent tens of thousands of workers; the Finance Agency itself represents about 8,000 workers on the Isle of Man. Does the Chair of the Committee not feel it would have been helpful to maybe take some evidence from the people that actually represent those employees and those firms directly, or perhaps even from the firms themselves?

I know local businesses across the Island would have been happy to talk to the Department and to the Committee about the Department and the Agencies. They could have had a lot of evidence in the Report that would have been grounded in reality and real business experience, as opposed to what they have at the moment, which is not.

I would also like to ask, the Minister mentioned this in his remarks, that in the Report at the start, it does talk about a number of objectives that were established when the Agencies were set up. I was around in DfE when the Agencies were set up, and those aims do not look like the ones that we had when they were established. But it is the last one that I want to draw attention to. One of the apparent intentions for the creation of the Agencies was for the Executive Agencies to become predominantly industry funded. That is one of the things the Report claims.

The problem is it then provides a link to a report that does not mention that anywhere. In fact, I have gone through a number of reports around the Agencies, and I cannot find any evidence anywhere that ever suggested the Agencies were going to be predominantly industry funded. The term that was always used was 'joint funding'. The idea was these would be public-private partnerships. You would work together in collaboration and there will be funding from the Government and from the private sector.

Joint funding was always the intention, never to have predominantly industry funded. There is a risk there of capture, and that is one of the things that people were concerned about when the Agencies were established. So can the Chair advise where that came from? Because it is not reflected in any of the evidence in the Report, and I would just be interested to know why the Committee feels that that was one of the stated intentions, and of course where it was stated that was one of the intentions.

I would also like to ask if the Chair could expand a bit more on this idea of a statutory board for tourism. I would like to understand what the benefits are. I would like to understand what the costs of a new statutory board would be. I would also like to understand where the evidence comes from, because if you look for the words 'statutory boards' in the Report, it appears four times; twice in the Committee's terms of reference and twice in the two recommendations.

There is actually nowhere in the evidence that anyone suggested it should be a statutory board. There is no evidence in the Report that supports or does not support. In fact, the Report is silent on it apart from that recommendation. So if the Hon. Member and his Committee want to expand the size of Government with yet more statutory boards, I would like to know what the evidence is for them making that recommendation.

The last thing that I really would like to say to the Hon. Member, and to the Committee as a whole, is really to reflect on what was just said by the Hon. Member of Council. The scrutiny function should be about outcomes. What are we trying to achieve here? This Report really runs headlong into a principle that accountants would call 'substance over form'. There is no substance here, and it is substance that matters.

What is the evidence? What are we trying to achieve? How would a new structure improve that delivery? That is not addressed anywhere in the Report. Instead, the Report talks only about the form of that. It talks about we should have a different structure. We should move things around. We should shuffle the deck chairs and get a better outcome. But actually, nowhere does it really say what that better outcome is.

I find this particularly frustrating because, to my mind, the Government's performance on the economy over the last five years was something of an open goal for the Committee. Some of the stuff we heard even at lunchtime today from the Chamber in their presentation is absolutely true. We have not had the spiralling economic growth of recent decades. We have struggled. The economy has not grown. We have not added as many jobs as we would like. The jobs we have added are not particularly high quality or high value.

There are a lot of issues, actually, in the way the Government has dealt with our economic growth or the lack of economic growth over the last five years. But as the Minister, I think, rightly pointed out, a lot of the core issues behind that are not really things that the Department for Enterprise has a lot of influence over. That would have been a good report, to look at whether some of these other aspects, like external relations, like housing delivery, maybe some of those things should be looked at through an economic lens. That would have been worthwhile.

Instead, we have not done that. We have not really looked at the obvious things here, the lack of economic growth and economic development over the last five years. We have just decided that there is a problem that needs fixing, and it feels like the Committee had decided on what that problem was before they had even started this inquiry. So that does frustrate me, and I will be talking about this a bit later in one of the other motions.

But when you have such a preponderance of evidence that says we have struggled with our economic growth, when you have a Committee whose job it is to try and understand those issues, to get under the hood, and they waste that opportunity with a report like this, that does not provide any meaningful evidence, nothing of substance. That is really disappointing to me. I was looking forward to this Report, and I cannot tell you how disappointed I was to read the detail in it.

So I will be supporting the Government's position on this, unusually for me, (Laughter) because I think they have got it right, actually. Yes, the Agencies need to be reviewed, the structure needs to be looked at. It may not be perfect, but you have to do that by involving the people that are most affected by it. You have to involve private businesses, you have to involve the Agencies, and you have to involve the Department and the Government. The Committee Report has failed in that very simple task.

The President: Now, Hon. Members, I think it is time for a cup of tea. We will suspend the sitting at that point and reconvene at five minutes to five.

Thank you.

The Court adjourned at 4.24 p.m.
and resumed its sitting at 4.55 p.m.

Economic Policy Review Committee –
Second Report for the Session 2025-26:
The Department for Enterprise and the Executive Agencies –
Debate concluded –
Report received and recommendations as amended approved

The President: Hon. Members, we continue our consideration of Item 9, and the next to speak is Mr Clueit.

Mr Clueit: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I had initially distributed a motion in my name earlier today. Having seen the Government amendments, I will not be moving that.

My concern with this Report is narrow but an important one: evidence. The Committee has identified valid questions about the governance and accountability of the Department for Enterprise, but the strength of its major conclusions is not matched by the evidence presented in the Report. That distinction matters. It is perfectly legitimate for a Scrutiny Committee to identify concerns, expose gaps and challenge assumptions, (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) but where a report asks this Court to accept strong conclusions about failure, value for money, governance design or structural change, those conclusions need to rest on a correspondingly strong evidential foundation.

Let me begin by noting some of the reasonable aspects of the Committee Report. The Committee has highlighted a structural accountability problem at the heart of the Department for Enterprise. Nine years after the Executive Agency model was established, there remains no robust framework for attributing economic outcomes to Agency activity. The Department reports activity, events, engagements, inquiries, rather than outcomes, gross value added, tax receipts, private investment leverage and net business formations. The Committee has a point that this is a governance shortcoming. It is not a failure of intent, it is a failure of institutional design and it has persisted across multiple administrations.

The Committee has also identified a genuine, longstanding problem with the Island's place marketing, the fragmentation of brand responsibility across multiple Agencies and teams, the attrition of two previously approved brand strategies, and the absence of a coherent, unified proposition to the world. Again, the diagnosis is sound and the Committee has raised legitimate questions about whether the Agency model as currently configured has delivered value commensurate with the public investment in it. These are all valid questions. They deserve serious answers.

The difficulty, and I do say this with respect to the Committee's work, is that the Report does not consistently provide them, because the evidence supporting the recommendations is, in several important respects, insufficient. Consider the evidentiary foundation. The Report draws on oral evidence from the Minister and the Chief Officer, two submissions from the Chamber of Commerce, an FOI response regarding staffing data, budget figures and two private evidence sessions, the witnesses in which are unidentified. No Agency chief executive was called, no Agency Board member – and there are over 30 of them drawn from the private sector – was asked to give evidence. These are professionals from industry that give their time in helping us develop our economy. That none was consulted is troubling. No independent economic development expert was engaged to assess the model. No beneficiary businesses, those that have received Agency support, were asked whether that support made a difference in their decisions. No detractors of specific Agency interventions were identified or questioned. This does not mean the Committee was wrong. It does mean that the Court should be careful about how much weight it places on conclusions that depend on evidence the Report does not contain.

This matters enormously to the Report's central claim that the Agency model has, and I quote, 'failed to meet any of its aims'. That is a strong conclusion. On the evidence presented, it may well be correct but it is not proven. The absence of a framework for measuring outcomes

does not of itself demonstrate that no outcome has been achieved. It shows that we cannot know and that there is a significant difference between we cannot demonstrate success and we have demonstrably failed. In my view, the Committee drifts between those two propositions in ways that are not clearly signalled.

This is not a technical quibble. It goes to the heart of how parliamentary scrutiny should operate. If Departments cannot demonstrate success, that is itself a serious matter. It may justify criticism, it may justify reform, and it may justify a demand for better performance reporting, but it is not the same as proving that the model has failed to achieve any of its aims. The accountability gap is real. The evidential leap is the problem. The staffing data, a rise from 171.89 to 193.5 full-time employees, is presented as a straightforward negative. However, the FOI response itself notes significant caveats about the comparability of the 2017 baseline. The expenditure increase of 91.8% in nominal terms over six years during a period of significant global inflation without real-term adjustments is less dramatic than it appears. I am not saying that these things are not legitimate concerns. I am saying, however, that they require more rigorous treatment than the Report provides.

The jurisdictional comparisons, Jersey, Guernsey and Iceland, are descriptive rather than analytical. They tell us what other jurisdictions do. They do not tell us if what those jurisdictions do is more cost-effective, more impactful or genuinely transferable to the Isle of Man's specific economic and governance context. A proper comparative analysis would require original research, which this Committee, given the time available, did not have the capacity to commission. None of this is a criticism of the Committee members themselves. They have done what they could with the time, resources and evidence available to them, but the Court should be aware of the limitations of what is before us.

The Council of Ministers' response is in parts frustrating to read. It contests the inquiry's methodology, disputes the characterisation of the 2017 restructure's formal objectives, and at times reads as though written by the Department whose performance is under review rather than by an independent executive body engaged constructively with parliamentary scrutiny. The observation that the Report's publication timing is regrettable is a political comment, not a governance argument, and should be treated as such.

I want to be fair. Strip away the defensive tone and the Council of Ministers' response makes several substantive points that the Court should take seriously. The Council of Ministers is correct that no Agency chief executive was called to give evidence. It is correct that over 75% of the Department's functions, the registries, legislative functions, business support schemes and motorsport, receive little or no scrutiny in the Report. It is correct that improvements to performance measurements were already being advanced through the Joint Agency Group before the Report was published. Whether those improvements are adequate is a legitimate debate, but the Committee's apparent unawareness of them constitutes a genuine evidential gap. Those points do not answer every criticism made by the Committee, nor do they make the Department's existing arrangements satisfactory, but they do reinforce the central point. The Court is being asked to consider conclusions which reach further than the evidence safely allows.

On recommendation 4, the Statutory Tourism Board, the Council of Ministers' position that no evidence has been provided of a problem requiring a solution is infuriating for its complacency but it is not entirely without foundation. The case for a statutory board, while compelling in principle, was not grounded in the Report in a rigorous assessment of Visit Isle of Man's current performance against comparable models. The recommendation rests more on the general proposition that statutory models tend to outperform non-statutory ones than on a specific analysis of what Visit Isle of Man is failing to do and how the board structure would fix it.

On recommendation 5, which the Council of Ministers rejects entirely, I have more sympathy with the Committee's intent than with its drafting. CoMin's observation that 'consideration should be fully given' is an insufficient evidence base for structural change is, in this instance, a very fair one. 'Consideration should be given' is not a recommendation. It is an invitation that can be declined. If the Committee wished to argue for structural change, it needed to make the

structural case. As drafted, the Report does not make it. Again, that does not mean there is no problem. It does not mean that there is no case for reform. There may well be. It means that the evidential chain between the problem identified, the remedy proposed and the outcome expected has not been sufficiently made clear.

Eaghtyrane, I believe this Court can safely say that the governance of the Department for Enterprise needs stronger accountability, clearer outcome measures and better attribution of economic impact. It can safely say that reporting activity is not the same as reporting outcomes. It can safely say that the Island's place marketing has suffered from fragmentation and that two previously approved brand strategies that have been set aside is a matter of legitimate concern. It can safely say that if public money is being invested in Economic Development Agencies, the Court is entitled to expect a framework capable of showing what difference that investment has made. The Court should be cautious about moving from those propositions to conclusions of comprehensive failure without the evidence needed to support them.

Eaghtyrane, the instinct behind the Report is correct. The governance of the Department for Enterprise needs strengthening. The accountability framework needs to be rebuilt around outcomes, not activities. The Island's place marketing is fragmented in ways that erode our competitive advantage. These are real problems that deserve real answers, but real answers require real evidence. The right response to a well-framed question without sufficient evidence is not to reach a premature conclusion. It is to insist on a standard of evidence that can support the seriousness of the conclusions we are asked to draw. That is why, while I recognise the value of the Committee's work and legitimacy of the questions it has raised, I cannot support conclusions that go beyond what the evidence before us establishes. If we are to be serious about economic development, accountability and parliamentary scrutiny, we should be equally serious about the evidential standard which we apply to all three.

Gura mie eu.

The President: Dr Haywood.

Dr Haywood: Thank you, Mr President.

I am going to thank the Committee for its work and for producing its fairly detailed Report on the Department. The Committee has obviously attempted to raise some important questions about economic development, accountability and the Island's future direction. I wish to congratulate the Minister for his robust and detailed excoriation of this Report and thank him for his amendments and rejection of recommendation 5.

I, too, have deep concerns about the evidential basis on which some of the conclusions have been reached. The Committee may have taken evidence from the Department and the Chamber of Commerce and commissioned some research papers. However, many of the Report's strongest conclusions rely heavily on the views and experiences of the Chamber of Commerce and its members. Those views are valuable and deserve to be heard, but they remain stakeholder opinions rather than objective proof that the existing model has failed. The Report is highly critical of activity-based measures such as meetings held, events attended, engagement undertaking, and that criticism might be justified, but questioning the metrics is not the same as demonstrating that the underlying activity has delivered no value. The Report itself can point to outcomes including job creation, visitor growth, inward investment activity and sector development initiatives. Whether those outcomes are measured optimally is a fair question. Whether they demonstrate complete failure of the structure is a different matter entirely.

I am also unconvinced that sufficient evidence has been presented to justify the most far reaching recommendations. There is some evidence that Visit Isle of Man is performing relatively well. There is no evidence that creating a statutory tourism board would improve outcomes or that abolishing or fundamentally restructuring business, digital and finance Agencies would deliver better results. In several places, the Report appears to assume that the organisational structure itself is the cause of the perceived problems, but the Report offers little

comparative evidence showing that an alternative structure would perform any better, or that issues such as economic conditions, resources, policy choices or external pressures are not important contributory factors.

For these reasons, I welcome the Report as a useful contribution to an ongoing discussion. I believe the evidence supports improving performance measurement and strengthening market co-ordination a bit more strongly than it supports significant structural reorganisation. In fact, I am left with rather more questions about whether the resources, time and activity of the Committee have been well spent in generating this Report, because if this Report is the outcome of their inquiry, then perhaps we should be grateful that the Committee producing it will definitely be restructured before the end of this year.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I, too, thank the Committee for its work and the Department for its response. Having read both, I am left with one overriding concern. This debate has become less about whether the Executive Agency model is delivering the best outcomes for the Island and more about whether the Committee's review was conducted correctly. The Department devotes considerable attention to challenging the Committee's methodology, evidence base and conclusions. My conclusion to that is that is the Committee's own fault.

I think the Committee has been in error in not talking to the Chairs and leading figures of the boards. I have spoken to a couple, and their biggest frustration is dealing with the clunky way Government works, particularly Treasury but other areas as well. That is not mentioned in the Committee Report because they did not talk to them.

However, the central question for Tynwald remains unanswered. It is after almost a decade of the Executive Agency model where is the independent and measurable evidence that it is delivering the best possible return for taxpayers? I welcome what the Minister had to say in his robust defence that once they have concluded their internal reviews there could be a case for taking this out for independent review. I do welcome that.

The Department argues that many of the Committee's recommendations should be deferred pending its own review of the Executive Agency model, and then once conclusions are reached it will decide on independent verification as a possible route. It also proposes further work on business development, monitoring, branding, marketing co-ordination and structural arrangements. Continuous improvement is, of course, welcome, but this should not get mired in being just more reviews, more analysis and more future consideration. We should be looking to get to clear answers.

Eaghtyrane, the Department itself accepts that economic impact should be demonstrated more clearly and that improvements to business development monitoring are required. If better measurement is still required, Tynwald has to be in a position where it can assess value for money and effectiveness up to this point, and that will be determined next January. I also note the Department acknowledges there may be benefits and greater co-ordination of marketing activity for a more coherent national proposition for the Island, but again that is going to be looked at and decided on at a later date.

I think this whole Report has missed its aim to some respect. It should not be seen as an attack on the hard-working staff, chief executives or board members involved in the Agencies. The question is not about the dedication of the individuals, it is about governance, accountability and outcomes. I would just mention that we need to see what measurable economic benefits can be directly attributed to the Executive Agencies. How do these benefits compare with the cost of the model, and what independent assurance exists that the current structure is the most effective one available?

I think the Committee has missed really an open goal here with this Report. I take on board it was limited in the time it had available, but I will be supporting the Government amendments in full. I believe the debate is less about defending existing structures and more about demonstrating results. I am happy that the Government amendment is going to lead to that, and that has been recognised by the Department. The public will expect evidence, transparency and accountability and that standard we should apply to every part of Government, including the Department for Enterprise and its Executive Agencies. I thank the Committee. I do not think the Report hit home at all, but I also thank the Department for its response and its acknowledgement that points that have been raised here will be looked at and brought back to this Hon. Court.

Gura mie eu.

The President: The next on my list is Mr Wannenburgh.

Mr Wannenburgh: Thank you, Mr President.

I think I could be forgiven for taking part in 'University Challenge' with Tiger Tim in front of me. (Laughter)

I rise as a member of the Committee. At the outset, I think it is important to put people first and to be clear that this Report, contrary to what the Minister said, is not a criticism of the individuals working within the Department or its Agencies. The Department for Enterprise has had a broad and complex remit, and a great deal has been achieved over the past decade. I acknowledge that and I think the Committee acknowledges that. (Interjection) My turn.

What the Committee has done quite properly is step back and ask whether the structure put in place nearly 10 years ago remains the right one for the future of our Island. That is what any self-respecting Committee would do. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) The recommendations are about clarity, co-ordination and effectiveness. They are not about the people involved, whose commitment and contribution the Report itself acknowledges. If I may say, reviewing arrangements after 10 years is simply good housekeeping. Most organisations would expect to take stock periodically and consider whether their structures remain fit for purpose. The Minister acknowledges that good scrutiny matters; good policy matters. The purpose of this Report is to ensure that a strong, resilient working economy matters just as well. That is the essence of this Report. I will leave it to Hon. Members to decide if our economy is as strong and resilient as it should be.

Ultimately, this is about ensuring our economic development structures remain clear, effective and fit for the future. On that basis, I will be supporting the motion.

Thank you.

The President: Mrs Kinnish.

Mrs Kinnish: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I just want to focus on one aspect of the motion, which was recommendation 4 in relation to the Visit Agency. Some Members have contributed similar ideas here. I know there are a couple of Members in here who will have corporate memory about the former Tourism Board. I actually do not know why there was change. If that was so successful, are we just reinventing the wheel here? I know Mrs Maltby will probably refer to her own father as the Minister for Fun, and that branding has stuck for a long time, but are we doing change for change's sake? Is that what we are thinking here?

I respect Mr Wannenburgh said there about good housekeeping and reviewing things, but when you do look at the Visit Agency, actually it is performing quite well from my interpretation of reports. One of the things that the CEO likes to review and reflect on is tourist satisfaction. Tourist satisfaction has increased. It is exceptionally high. It is 99.2%. When you get such a high figure, people tell other people they have been to the Isle of Man and how fantastic it was. They

come back. I should declare at this point that I do have a holiday accommodation and I am seeing more and more people coming back. Visitor spend has increased. The Strategy 2022-32 wanted to increase tourism numbers to 500,000 by 2032. I remember when I first saw that and thought, heck, that is a lot, but actually we are making really good progress on that count.

Within the recommendation, it talks about representation of the hospitality sector. I get that that is probably just to capture that, but representation by the hospitality sector on a voluntary basis is already included in the Visit board.

I agree that the Minister made a robust and passionate speech about the Government position. On that basis, I will be supporting the Government amendments. I feel that the Report has perhaps overlooked some of the success of this Agency. In fact, we just had a presentation at lunchtime from the Chamber of Commerce, which showed actually that the tourism sector was the one that was doing well. Again, I come back to the original point: is this change for change's sake? Because change for change's sake costs the taxpayer money and therefore I would not be able to support that. I will be supporting the Government amendment.

Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The President: Mr Mercer.

Mr Mercer: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I would like to thank Mr Moorhouse and the Committee for the Report and for the opportunity to contribute to this debate. Mr Moorhouse explained in his opening remarks that the Committee had limited time and resources to produce this Report, and I think that is self-evident that it has been rushed. (Laughter) The limitations of the Report and its evidence have already been well covered by other speakers in this debate. There is little to be gained by reiterating those.

The place marketing point I think was well made by Mr Clueit and amendment (C) and the Government amendment I think captures that requirement well. The point about how the Island is marketed externally has already been well made within the Agencies themselves. This is not a surprise, and I personally would be happy to work with those who would like to put more shape to what such a function should look like.

The Hon. Member for Rushen, Dr Haywood, made a great point in her contribution. Opinion is not proof, and I think that is a valuable thing for us to keep in mind. The role of a Tynwald Member exposes us to a huge variety of opinions, and sometimes it is hard to separate those from evidence.

I thank Mr Wannenburgh for his assertion that the Report was not targeted at the people delivering the work of the Agencies, and I respect that. Unfortunately, the human impact this Report had on the staff and the 30-plus volunteers from business who give their time and expertise for free cannot be understated. The Agencies had no opportunity to provide their own evidence to the Committee, even for a simple check of facts, let alone a right of reply. Having witnessed this first-hand, it made me realise that this was not a part of my own Scrutiny Committee's approach, and that is something that we have reflected on and changed in our own framework for scrutiny.

Eaghtyrane, I will be supporting the amendments moved by the Minister for the Department for Enterprise.

Gura mie eu.

The President: I call on the mover to reply.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr President.

Thank you to Mr Wannenburgh for seconding the Item; and also thank you to the Minister. It is concerning that the tone and focus of the argument sits so at odds with what is being experienced in the wider business community. That has been one of my greatest frustrations of

what has gone on this afternoon, because when we actually produced this Report, it was done with a very strong backdrop – a very strong backdrop – about what was happening in the wider economy, and it was also that opportune moment to look at what was happening within the Department for Enterprise that is really the key link between the Government and business.

In terms of that economic backdrop, there are major concerns out there in terms of the way in which the economy is not growing at the rate one would expect, in terms of the marketing provision. It is fragmented and not as strong as it could be. Key sectors are declining. There are no clear growth areas that have been openly and actively promoted, and too many entrepreneurs feel to be alone. The economic data is difficult to actually get hold of in terms of things like the core data on economic growth, looking at materials that are linking back three years, in fact beyond, to March 2024, and you have actually to go out and look at up-to-date research. That is showing that there are real issues in terms of jobs being lost in the export sector, and there are other concerns in terms of business confidence. What we tried to do with this Report was to put that aside and focus on what was available within the Government 10 years on from the Agencies being created.

In terms of the recommendations and the response from the Government, they are not a thousand miles from where we are as a Committee, but there is a disconnect. It is a concern that that disconnect has happened. In terms of the first recommendation, we are really trying to say that it is the opportune moment, after 10 years, to actually have that external review. Normally, an in-house review is positive and useful, but this is the 10th year anniversary. It is a time when there are many within the economy that are struggling, and it just feels to be a delaying tactic by the Department saying, 'We are going to do the internal review, which should be ongoing and a regular thing, and we will report to Tynwald then and potentially we will then go down the route of an external review'. That is a process that is slowing things down, it is taking time, and it is going to be more expensive.

In terms of the second amendment put forward by the Government, this is frustrating because it is not radically different from the original recommendation put forward by the Committee. In fact, it is a play on words, a play on our words. It is frustrating in a way when it does not really accept what we are doing as a Committee to try and push forward ideas and clarity.

In terms of amendment 3 referring to recommendation 3, the Government's response in many ways accepts what the Committee is proposing. It agrees that a unified place brand has value and that it is an area that needs to be looked at and developed. Yet, despite agreeing with these principles, the amendment stops short of action. It is a concern that something so fundamental is being watered down. The recommendations are quite clear in terms of what we need to have is that clear strategy. With recommendation 4, the amendment again is deferring what the Committee is asking to be done now. We remain of the view that a statutory tourism board will enable what is already a success to actually become more autonomous, more successful, more free thinking, more independent of Government. So that is why we are actually suggesting a board in that area could be of real value and actually stimulate not just the tourist sector, but go beyond to other areas in terms of the benefits.

Finally, recommendation 5. The Government has argued that this question should be deferred until further analysis has been completed. Our recommendation in itself is only that consideration be given to future structures of the Agencies. It does not mandate change to the structure. I think that is the fundamental issue here, that the Committee have come forward with a variety of well-meaning, carefully thought-out solutions and the Government has simply spun these. They have simply not gone as far with them as the Committee itself was trying to do.

I would like to thank Mr Hooper for his contribution. We did take evidence from a variety of people both in public and private. The issue is that when you are meeting in private and your time is limited, there is often that issue about incorporating those thoughts and ideas into reports. In terms of the funding, you are quite correct that in the initial movement there was

that movement towards the joint funding method and there was that underlying expectation that the private sector will become more dominant as we move into the future.

I would like to thank Mrs Morphet for her contribution and the way in which she was able to recognise that a review to a certain extent is required, but I do worry that in terms of the review that is currently ongoing, it is not radically different from the reviews we have had previously and it is a case of marking your own homework. After 10 years, it needs something more significant, more future facing, more what can we do to be even better?

I would like to thank Mr Clueit for his contribution and the way in which he was able to speak about various key aspects of the Report.

Thank you to Dr Haywood and my colleague from Arbory, Castletown and Rushen, who was again saying that the independent – (**A Member:** Rushen?) Malew, sorry. I was looking at you and thinking Rushen, sorry.

A Member: A takeover plan, is it?

The Chair: A takeover, yes.

In terms of that movement about the internal review first and then going to the independent review, it is the direction that the Department seem happiest with, but again I do feel we need to move things forward in a slightly faster way. Given this is a period between the new administration and the ending of this one, it is that perfect moment to produce a document that the new administration can come in with, they can look at and reflect on.

I would like to thank Mrs Kinnish and her reflections on the success of the Visit Agency. That is something we can agree with in terms of that has been one of the pinnacles of the last 10 years. It is moving forward in a strong way, and we do think perhaps this was the opportune moment to look at how we could escalate that to make it even better.

Thank you to Mr Mercer and his arguments. Opinion is not proof, and that is quite true. It was a limiting factor that I have mentioned several times before. We would have liked to have spoken to more people and extend the range of possibilities, but the ultimate situation was this Report had to be tabled and available in May for us to have this discussion today. So it was a time restraint that did limit us, but I still stand by the recommendations we have put out. Hopefully, you will all have the opportunity to consider these carefully in the next few minutes as we vote on them.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Thank you.

Now, listening to the debate, what I have been gathering is that people have been talking about being for or against the Government's proposals. No one has suggested that we take these individually, so what I propose to do is take Mr Johnston's amendments en bloc, unless anyone wants to particularly go through them one by one. If that is agreed, then the motion will either be as amended or not amended. There is, of course, recommendation 5 that will need to be dealt with separately. Is that okay? (**Members:** Agreed.)

In which case, putting to the Court first Mr Johnston's amendment. Those in favour, please say aye; against, no.

A division was called for and electronic voting resulted as follows:

In the Keys – Ayes 17, Noes 2

FOR	**AGAINST**
Dr Allinson	Mr Moorhouse
Mrs Barber	Mr Wannenburgh
Mrs Caine	

Mr Callister
Mr Cannan
Ms Christian
Mr Crookall
The Deputy Speaker
Ms Edge
Ms Faragher
Mr Glover
Dr Haywood
Mr Hooper
Mr Johnston
Mrs Maltby
Mr Peters
Mr Smith

The Deputy Speaker: Mr President, in the Keys 17 for, 2 against.

In the Council – Ayes 9, Noes 0

FOR	**AGAINST**
Mrs August-Phillips	None
Mr Clueit	
Mr Craine	
Mrs Kelsey	
Mrs Kinnish	
The Lord Bishop	
Mr Mercer	
Mrs Morphet	
Mr Reid	

The President: In the Council, 9 for, none against. The amendment therefore carries.

Putting to you then recommendations 1 to 4 as amended. Those in favour, please say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

Then putting to you recommendation number 5. Those in favour, please say aye; against, no. Division called. (Laughter)

A Member: Well done, Minister for Fun!

The President: Division called on recommendation 5.

A division was called for and electronic voting followed.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr President, in the Keys 1 for, 18 against.

The President: In the Council, none for, 9 against. The motion therefore fails to carry. Do you have a point of order, Ms Edge?

Ms Edge: Mr President, I pressed the wrong voting button.

The President: Well, we can rerun the vote if you wish to insist.

Ms Edge: Yes, please.

The President: In which case, then we will rerun the vote on recommendation 5. Voting again on recommendation 5.

A division was called for and electronic voting resulted as follows:

In the Keys – Ayes 2, Noes 17

FOR	AGAINST
Mr Moorhouse	Dr Allinson
Mr Wannenburgh	Mrs Barber
	Mrs Caine
	Mr Callister
	Mr Cannan
	Ms Christian
	Mr Crookall
	The Deputy Speaker
	Ms Edge
	Ms Faragher
	Mr Glover
	Dr Haywood
	Mr Hooper
	Mr Johnston
	Mrs Maltby
	Mr Peters
	Mr Smith

The Deputy Speaker: In the Keys, 2 for, 17 against.

In the Council – Ayes 0, Noes 9

FOR	AGAINST
None	Mrs August-Phillips
	Mr Clueit
	Mr Craine
	Mrs Kelsey
	Mrs Kinnish
	Mr Mercer
	Mrs Morphet
	Mr Reid
	The Lord Bishop

The President: In Council, nought for, 9 against. The motion therefore fails to carry.
Putting to you, then, the motion as a whole, those in favour, please say aye; against, no.

A division was called for and electronic voting resulted as follows:

In the Keys –Ayes 19, Noes 0

FOR	AGAINST
Dr Allinson	None
Mrs Barber	
Mrs Caine	
Mr Callister	
Mr Cannan	
Ms Christian	

Mr Crookall
The Deputy Speaker
Ms Edge
Ms Faragher
Mr Glover
Dr Haywood
Mr Hooper
Mr Johnston
Mrs Maltby
Mr Moorhouse
Mr Peters
Mr Smith
Mr Wannenburgh

The Deputy Speaker: Mr President, in the Keys 19 for, none against.

In the Council – Ayes 9, Noes 0

FOR	**AGAINST**
Mrs August-Phillips	None
Mr Clueit	
Mr Craine	
Mrs Kelsey	
Mrs Kinnish	
The Lord Bishop	
Mr Mercer	
Mrs Morphet	
Mr Reid	

The President: In Council, 9 for, none against. The motion therefore carries as amended.

10. Standing Orders Committee of Tynwald – Second Report for the Session 2025-26: Attendance of the Attorney General – Motion carried

The Chair of the Standing Orders Committee of Tynwald, Mr Speaker, to move:

That the Standing Orders Committee of Tynwald – Second Report for the Session 2025-26 – Attendance of the Attorney General [PP 2026/0120] be received and that the following recommendation be approved:

That the amendments at Annex 1 to this report, which would remove the requirement that the Attorney General attend the totality of every sitting of Tynwald Court unless given leave of absence by the President, be made.

The President: We turn then to Item 10, Standing Orders Committee, the Second Report for the Session 2025-26, Attendance of the Attorney General, and I call on a member of the Standing Orders Committee, Mr Hooper, to move.

4785 **A Member of the Standing Orders Committee of Tynwald (Mr Hooper):** Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

Hon. Members, I stand to move this Report on behalf of the Standing Orders Committee of Tynwald, as our Chair has decided to abandon us for the lofty heights of the President's seat. (Laughter)

Hon. Members, today's Report is not about the overall role of the Attorney General, but focuses on just one element of that role: the requirement to be present at every sitting of this Hon. Court. The core of the issue at hand was trying to ensure that Members of this Hon. Court had access to good quality legal advice. One of the main concerns was that legal advice given on the hoof is not necessarily good practice and not always going to be of the highest quality.

Eaghtyrane, the Constitutional, Legal Affairs and Justice Committee of 2021, of which I was a member, recommended addressing this issue by originally recommending that the Attorney General should no longer be a Member of Tynwald. That recommendation was not accepted but was instead referred to Mr Wooler. Mr Wooler came up with a somewhat bizarre idea that the Attorney General should continue to be a Member of Tynwald and the Legislative Council but should also be an unelected Member of the House of Keys. The Council of Ministers was not very sure about that and so the question came back to the Standing Orders Committee. At the end of this process, the proposal which the Committee are now putting forward is a fairly modest reform. All we are saying is the Attorney General should still be a Member of Tynwald but should not be obliged to sit here all the time.

Now, this is not just about releasing the Attorney General from having to sit through days of questions and debates where he has no contribution to make. It also means that if Members think they are going to want the Attorney General's input into a particular debate, they are going to have to think about this in advance and let him know. The Attorney General could then decide to come to Tynwald or, if he was for any reason unable to come, he could, with the approval of the President, arrange for the Solicitor General to come in his place. The new arrangement will make more efficient use of the Attorney General's time. It should also ensure that, where the Attorney General does provide legal input into a debate, he has got time to prepare this and is no longer expected to provide legal opinions on the hoof.

Eaghtyrane, the Attorney General himself has, of course, no vote in this Hon. Court, but I am hoping that he will see the merit of what we are proposing and will agree that it responds positively to what he and his predecessor have been saying over the last seven years.

On a personal note, Mr President, if these amendments to Standing Orders are adopted I fully expect there to be an Attorney General-shaped hole in the door as he exits speedily from us. (Laughter) If our learned colleague does immediately disappear from view, I for one will miss his presence in this Chamber. I know that deep down he will miss sitting through some of our debates, (Laughter) applying his mind to tackling the sometimes quirky and unusual legal queries that we throw his way, but I take comfort that the system is being reformed for the best of reasons.

I beg to move.

A Member: Hear, hear.

The President: Ms Faragher.

Ms Faragher: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

Ta mee shirrey kied dy pholldal as dy loayrt ny s'anmey my vees feme ayn.

The President: I call on His Majesty's Attorney General.

The Attorney General: Thank you, Mr President.

I begin by thanking the Standing Orders Committee of Tynwald for its Report and recommendation.

Hon. Members will recall, as has been mentioned by the mover, that this particular journey began as long ago as July 2021, when this Hon. Court received and debated the Report of the Constitutional, Legal Affairs and Justice Committee, in consequence of which Mr Stephen Wooler was commissioned to carry out a review of the role of the Attorney.

Mr Wooler's report, debated in July 2023, made various recommendations, bizarre or not, as to the Attorney's membership of the legislature, namely that membership of Tynwald Court and the Legislative Council be continued but without the requirement for the totality of attendance or attending the totality of every sitting unless leave is given of absence by the President, and that the Attorney should in future also be a Member of the House of Keys on the same flexible basis.

The Report which is up for debate today has accepted the recommendation in respect of Tynwald Court only, and proposes that the Attorney should attend whenever required by either the President or the Chief Minister or whenever he or she chooses to attend, but that the Attorney should otherwise be released from the absolute obligation to attend throughout, which in my respectful view makes appropriate distinction between the Attorney's membership of Tynwald Court on the one hand and on the other his attendance requirements.

Mr Wooler's recommendation, founded in flexibility, enabling the best use of resources I suggest, flowed from his examination of the Attorney's contribution to Tynwald sittings over a number of years, as well as what he described as the intangible benefits of membership, which have much to commend them. In this regard, if I may be permitted, I shall mention those as I see them. As Crown officers, both the Attorney and the Solicitor General are appointed by the Crown. That appointment process brings with it independence so that they are not accountable to a particular Government, to a particular Council of Ministers, and by their independence instead form part of the system of checks and balances to support legality in public administration. As a result, the position of the Attorney and his or her continued membership of the legislature and support of good governance can and should be considered, indeed celebrated, as part of the Island's constitutional arrangements.

As I said during the debate in July 2023, Attorneys General are the subject of many different arrangements in democratic societies. Some are elected and may have political affiliation, while in our case some are appointed and have no political affiliation. Most, but not all, are members of the legislature. I respectfully suggest that that membership communicates a commitment to recognising and supporting the constitutional principle of the rule of law in which we are all interested. In our fellow Crown Dependencies, the Law Officers are ex officio members of their legislatures. In our case, the position of Attorney is one well-known to the legislature for centuries. As Hon. Members will be aware, the Attorney has been a member of the Legislative Council in all of its capacities since revestment.

As a consequence of there being no single uniform approach or template, particular arrangements can be tailored or evolved to best meet the needs of the jurisdiction in question, which is what I believe underpins both Mr Wooler's proposal and the Committee's recommendation, which I welcome.

Thank you, sir.

The President: I call on the mover to reply.

Mr Hooper: Thank you very much, Mr President.

I have nothing further to add, and I beg to move.

The President: I put the question at Item 10 that the Standing Orders Committee Second Report be received and that the following recommendation be approved. Those in favour, please say aye; against, no.

A division was called for and electronic voting resulted as follows:

In the Keys – Ayes 18, Noes 1

FOR	AGAINST
Mrs Barber	Dr Allinson
Mrs Caine	
Mr Callister	
Mr Cannan	
Ms Christian	
Mr Crookall	
The Deputy Speaker	
Ms Edge	
Ms Faragher	
Mr Glover	
Dr Haywood	
Mr Hooper	
Mr Johnston	
Mrs Maltby	
Mr Moorhouse	
Mr Peters	
Mr Smith	
Mr Wannenburgh	

The Deputy Speaker: Mr President, in the Keys, 18 for, 1 against.

In the Council – Ayes 9, Noes 0

FOR	AGAINST
Mrs August-Phillips	None
Mr Clueit	
Mr Craine	
Mrs Kelsey	
Mrs Kinnish	
The Lord Bishop	
Mr Mercer	
Mrs Morphet	
Mr Reid	

The President: In the Council, 9 for, none against. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

Procedural –
Addition to Bills for signature – Nicotine Products Bill 2026

The President: Before we move on, Hon. Members, I mentioned at the beginning of the sitting that the Bills for signing were listed on the Order Paper. For the record, I should also say that the Nicotine Products Bill 2026 has also been circulated for signing. This was agreed by the Branches on Tuesday, 14th July, and so was therefore too late to appear on the Order Paper. That is why there is a difference between the two.

**11. Select Committee of Tynwald on Poverty (2021) –
First Report for the Session 2025-26 –
Child Poverty: Education and Health Solutions –
Report received and recommendations as amended approved**

The Chair of the Select Committee of Tynwald on Poverty (2021), Mr Speaker, to move:

That the Select Committee of Tynwald on Poverty (2021) – First Report for the Session 2025-26 – Child Poverty: Education and Health Solutions [PP 2026/0085] be received and the following recommendations be approved:

Recommendation 1
That Tynwald supports giving demonstrable priority to reducing poverty, as committed to within the Economic Strategy, and calls for its inclusion in the next Island Plan.

Recommendation 2
That the methodology for measuring and reducing of the attainment gap should be included explicitly as an objective in all future Department of Education, Sport and Culture Department Plans.

Recommendation 3
That the Department of Education, Sport and Culture should collect and publish data on attainment by free school meal status and interventions used by schools, and analyse and share this information to understand which interventions reduce the attainment gap as part of its annual reporting to Tynwald.

Recommendation 4
That the Department of Education, Sport and Culture should organise an annual conference for school leadership, teachers and support staff to network and share ideas and best practice.

Recommendation 5
That the contract for Etio's quality assurance framework should be amended so that inspections explicitly address the attainment gap and learning inequalities.

Recommendation 6
That the Government should develop a unified family-hub model, building on existing services such as Talk and Early Help and Support, to create a single, accessible point of entry for children and families. This model should enable practitioners to assess need and triage individuals to appropriate support across mental health, education, financial advice, perinatal and parenting services, and early childhood provision. An implementation report should be delivered to Tynwald by July 2027.

Recommendation 7
That clarity should be provided on whether the Early Help and Support service operates primarily as a signposting service or a direct delivery service. Standards relating to caseload levels, resourcing and outcome monitoring – including the use of clinically validated indicators across the Department of Health and Social Care's children's services, as well as educational and social outcomes – should be set out and published in the Department Plan for 2027-28 to ensure that families below formal thresholds receive timely and effective support.

Recommendation 8
That the Government should move the Early Help and Support function and associated resources to the Department of Education, Sport and Culture.

Recommendation 9
That the Government should reconfigure its provision in order to take forward the implementation of the Planet Youth model as a co-ordinated, whole-system approach, ensuring a sustained focus on improving young people's wellbeing and reducing risky behaviours. As part of this programme of work, the Government should develop and report on plans for low-cost, community-based support and recreation provision to reduce social isolation and future demand on acute and specialist services; and report to Tynwald within 12 months.

Recommendation 10
That the Department of Health and Social Care and Manx Care should adopt a more outcome-based model within children's services, with clinically validated indicators and educational and social outcomes built in, and report on this within the Department Plan and Manx Care's Operating Plan for 2027-28.

Recommendation 11
That the Cabinet Office should formally review the Data Protection and Safeguarding Acts by the end of 2028 to ensure the Acts effectively support appropriate and lawful data sharing between relevant agencies.

Recommendation 12
That Tynwald is of the opinion that, by the 2027-28 reporting year:
(a) there should be rigorous and public performance management reporting applied across both the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department of Education, Sport and Culture for externally commissioned children's services; and
(b) the Departments should require sufficient financial oversight to provide assurance over the sustainability of any children's commissioned service.

Recommendation 13
That Tynwald supports the ambition of the Childcare Strategy to extend the childcare credit scheme to children aged two on a means-tested basis.

Recommendation 14
That the Government should, as a matter of priority, establish the necessary vires and develop a clear quality framework and outcomes-based inspection regime for early years education, jointly between Department of Education, Sport and Culture and Department of Health and Social Care; and report back to Tynwald within 12 months.

Recommendation 15
That the Childcare Strategy should be expanded to include an outcomes framework similar to the UK SEED study, and a plan outlining deliverables and dates for completion, and report to Tynwald by December 2026.

Recommendation 16
That the Department of Education, Sport and Culture should develop a centralised system for recording and sharing pupil information across early years settings, schools, and University College Isle of Man to ensure that staff are fully informed of students' needs at key transition

points and can provide appropriate support from the outset; and report to Tynwald by December 2026.

Recommendation 17
That the Department of Education, Sport and Culture should include as part of its reporting framework recommendations from the Nuffield Foundation that address the following; and report to Tynwald within 12 months:
(a) early identification of declining attendance;
(b) targeted support;
(c) engagement with families; and
(d) addressing physical and non-physical health barriers to attendance.

Recommendation 18
That the Department of Education, Sport and Culture should survey teachers and education support staff on the impact of withdrawing specific funding for Nurture provision, including effects on behaviour, teacher capacity, and outcomes for vulnerable pupils. It should use this evidence to undertake a gap analysis and develop a standardised, evidence-based and appropriately resourced model for Nurture provision, potentially delivered through hub schools on a regional basis, and report to Tynwald within 12 months.

Recommendation 19
That the Department of Education, Sport and Culture should develop a national framework for parental engagement, identifying minimum expectations of communication and involvement so that there is consistency across schools, and report to Tynwald within 12 months.

Recommendation 20
That the Department of Education, Sport and Culture should demonstrate leadership and co-ordinate training and support for schools in sharing best practice, especially around engagement with low-income families.

Recommendation 21
That the Department of Education, Sport and Culture should ensure consistent access to affordable early morning meal provision across all schools; and report to Tynwald within 12 months.

Recommendation 22
That the Government should consider reinstating free bus travel for all school children, or if this is not possible should implement reforms around the bus pass system to reduce the impact on families in poverty; and report to Tynwald within 12 months.

Recommendation 23
That the Department of Education, Sport and Culture should explore whether GCSE and A-level provision could be reinstated or expanded at University College Isle of Man, or alternatively delivered through hybrid models for those who miss the school-age window before the start of the 2026-27 academic year.

Recommendation 24
That the Department of Education, Sport and Culture should ensure consistent pathways between secondary schools and University College Isle of Man, avoiding unintended restrictions on progression.

Recommendation 25
That the Department of Education, Sport and Culture should develop flexible, part-time or modular pathways for adults seeking to re-enter education; and report back within 12 months.

Recommendation 26
That the Department of Education, Sport and Culture should review maintenance grants for non-degree further education courses on Island, as current levels (£2,970) may prevent those on low incomes from being able to pursue these, and include this consideration in the Student Awards Regulations for the 2027-28 academic year.

[GD 2026/0061] is relevant to this Item.

The President: With that procedural matter out of the way, we turn to Item 11 on our Order Paper, and I call on a member of the Select Committee of Tynwald on Poverty, Ms Faragher, to move.

A Member of the Select Committee of Tynwald on Poverty (Ms Faragher): Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

Poverty affects children and their families in almost every aspect of life. At the start of this inquiry, we considered extensive international research showing that its effects are cumulative and long lasting. Poverty can affect children's health, development, educational attainment and later opportunities. Children who grow up in poverty are also significantly more likely to experience poverty as adults, perpetuating an intergenerational cycle that decades of research have shown can be extremely difficult to break without sustained intervention.

Among the interventions shown to improve social mobility, education is consistently the most powerful. Academic attainment is the strongest predictor of whether a child from a disadvantaged background will achieve financial security as an adult. By improving educational outcomes for those who start life with the fewest advantages, we not only transform individual lives but invest in a stronger economy and more productive workforce and lower long-term demand for public services, because children who achieve better educational outcomes are more likely to be adults who secure stable, well-paid employment, are less likely to experience long-term unemployment and less likely to rely on Social Security. Breaking the link between childhood poverty and adult poverty begins in the classroom, and that is why our recommendations seek to narrow the attainment gap, strengthen early intervention, join up support for children and families, and ensure that opportunities to learn remain available beyond compulsory education.

Eaghtyrane, we are pleased that the Council of Ministers has accepted 17 of our 26 recommendations. We are also very happy to say that following further discussion with Minister Caine, Minister Christian and Mrs Kelsey, we have been able to reach agreement on all 26 recommendations. With the additional amendments tabled by Minister Caine today, the Committee is content to support all nine of the Government amendments because we are satisfied that they preserve the substance and intended outcomes of our recommendations. After such a substantial period of research and evidence gathering, we think this is a really encouraging outcome and we sincerely thank the Ministers for their engagement. If approved today, these recommendations have the potential to make a real difference to children and families across the Island by helping them access the right support earlier, more easily and more consistently. (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.)

Eaghtyrane, before closing, I thank the schools that took time to collate data and answer our questions about the attainment gap, the Government officers who provided us with the information required to undertake this inquiry, and the Council of Ministers for its constructive consideration of the Report. I also again thank Minister Caine, Minister Christian and Mrs Kelsey

for meeting with the Committee and helping us reach an agreed position on the amended recommendations.

Eaghtyrane, ta mee shirrey kied dy chur roish y treealtys ta scruit fo aym.

Gura mie eu.

The President: Thank you. Mr Callister.

Mr Callister: Thank you, Mr President.

I am very happy to second this motion and its 26 recommendations.

The President: Mr Cannan.

The Chief Minister: Thank you, Mr President.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Select Committee for its detailed and considered Report. The Committee has examined a complex and important issue, drawing together evidence across education, health, public services, community support, childcare, early intervention services, and indeed more. The Report highlights the relationship between poverty, educational attainment and health outcomes, and the need for early intervention and co-ordinated action across services. Child poverty is not a matter for one Department alone, Mr President. Neither are its causes or consequences. The Council of Ministers welcomes the Committee's work in identifying areas where further progress can be made to improve outcomes for children and young people, and to support families more effectively.

The recommendations have been considered carefully. The Council of Ministers has sought to recognise and support the direction of travel whilst ensuring that the commitments are framed accurately and responsibly. Hon. Members will be aware that many of the matters covered in this Report are already being progressed through existing strategies and programmes, including educational improvement work, early help and family support, the Childcare Strategy, children's services, Public Health, housing, transport and wider work to reduce inequality and improve opportunity. Recognising this work already under way, the Council of Ministers accepts a number of the Committee's recommendations.

Members will also see that the Council proposes to amend a number of others. Mr President, I want to be clear about the reasons for that. The amendments are not intended to diminish the importance of the issues raised by the Committee. They are intended to ensure the resolutions approved by this Hon. Court are realistic, deliverable and aligned with proper governance. In several cases, the original recommendations carry significant financial, operational or policy implications. In those areas it would not be responsible for Government to commit to implementation within the proposed timeframe without necessary further analysis, policy development, assessment of resource implications and Treasury concurrence. That is particularly important in the present context as we enter the pre-election period following the upcoming dissolution of the Keys.

Some of the recommendations point to areas of work that may require new funding, new staffing, changes to service models, or decisions that properly sit within the priorities of the next administration. Where that is the case, the Council of Ministers has sought to be open with Members and to propose amendments that allow relevant work to be properly developed, costed and brought back to Tynwald where appropriate.

Moving to the amendments that will be moved, Mr President, recommendation 4, the annual conference for school leaders and teachers. The proposed amendment to recommendation 4, rather than committing to a new annual conference as recommended for school leadership, teachers and support staff, builds on the range of existing networking forums already in place and ensures that the education-related issues associated with disadvantage and poverty, such as attainment, are regular agenda items, are outcome focused and include expert input where appropriate. These will be offered on an annual basis. The opinion from the Department of

Education, Sport and Culture, based on their expertise, is that a whole conference, as suggested, is neither logistical, practical nor the best way to achieve the aim, but I believe the Committee have agreed with the amendment.

Recommendation 5, quality assurance. In terms of recommendation 5, the Government agrees with the Select Committee that attainment gaps and learning inequalities should be a clear focus within our established quality assurance framework. The amendment simply reflects how the Island's external validation model operates in practice, whilst maintaining the Committee's intention that these issues are specifically considered as part of the review process.

Recommendation 7, early help and support. For recommendation 7, a small amendment is proposed to better reflect how accountability for health services is managed. The early help and support service is much more than a signposting service. It provides direct, co-ordinated support to families through dedicated co-ordinators who work alongside parents, children and professionals to develop and oversee tailored support plans. We agree there should be clear standards around caseloads, resources, outcomes and performance measures, but these are set and monitored through the Department of Health and Social Care's Mandate to Manx Care, which is the established mechanism for setting expectations and measuring delivery across health and care services. By placing these requirements in the Manx Care Mandate for 2027-28 we can ensure they sit within the appropriate accountability framework whilst still delivering the transparency and assurance sought by the Committee. The amendment focuses on strengthening accountability through the Manx Care Mandate rather than prescribing broader publication requirements.

Recommendation 8, early help and support. Turning to recommendation 8, the amendment acknowledges that while schools play a crucial role in identifying children and families who may need support, early help extends beyond education and includes such areas as safeguarding, family support, mental health and housing. Given its cross-Government nature, the Council of Ministers believe a review is needed to determine the most effective long-term delivery model before any structural changes are made.

Recommendation 9, Planet Youth. In relation to recommendation 9, Government agrees with the aim of strengthening preventative support for young people, but agrees that it would be premature to commit to a specific model at this stage where more information is needed. The amendment maintains a focus on improving wellbeing and reducing risk-taking behaviours, while allowing flexibility to pursue the most effective and evidence-based approach for the Isle of Man.

Turning to recommendation 15, Study of Early Education and Development (SEED) outcomes framework. To recommendation 15 the Council supports the intention behind this recommendation. However, establishing a comparable programme on the Isle of Man would require significant long-term investment, specialist expertise and extensive data collection. The amendment therefore commits the Department of Education, Sport and Culture to using the findings of established research, including the SEED study, to inform policy and practice, ensuring decisions remain evidence based while avoiding unnecessary duplication of research already available.

Turning to recommendation 16, the centralised learner information system. Recommendation 16 seeks the creation of a centralised learner information system. Government fully supports the objective of improving information sharing for children and young people and acknowledges that the Department of Education, Sport and Culture has already taken significant steps in this area. Implementing a fully centralised information-sharing system, particularly one encompassing private early years providers, would present legal, operational and financial challenges, and the proposed amendment therefore commits the Department of Education, Sport and Culture to continue to enhance existing information-sharing arrangements across our schools and UCM, and to report progress back to Tynwald, ensuring that the intention of the recommendation is not lost.

Turning to recommendation 21, school breakfast provision. For recommendation 21, Mr President, Council supports the principle of breakfast provision and recognises the benefits it can bring to children and families. However, extending the provision across all schools would involve important practical and financial considerations. The amendment therefore commits the Department of Education, Sport and Culture to undertaking a feasibility review so that any future decisions are based on the clear understanding of the costs and the operational requirements that are involved.

Turning to recommendation 26, maintenance grants for further education. Lastly, to this recommendation 26, the Council of Ministers recognises the importance of reviewing maintenance support for non-degree further education students. Government acknowledges that the Students Awards Regulations were recently updated for the 2026-27 academic year. The amendment maintains the commitment but proposes a more realistic implementation timetable, ensuring that any changes are properly developed, costed and considered alongside Treasury before being introduced.

I hope that Hon. Members can get behind the amendments in the spirit of pragmatism that they are tabled. The accompanying Council of Ministers' response to the Committee's Report provides more of the rationale than I have outlined here. These amendments retain the spirit of the Committee's recommendations whilst ensuring that the commitments are, I hope, realistic and achievable.

Mr President, I would like to reassure Hon. Members that the Government accepts the overwhelming intent of the Committee's Report and the seriousness of the issues raised. Across education, childcare, early intervention, safeguarding, family support, attendance, wellbeing, skills and lifelong learning there is much work already under way, and this Report will provide a valuable challenge and direction of travel as that work continues. Where recommendations may create new or additional costs, it is right that those implications are properly developed and considered through the usual processes. This is not a barrier to progress. It is how Government ensures that commitments are sustainable and that Tynwald is not being asked to approve actions that Treasury cannot fund. The Council of Ministers remains committed to tackling poverty, improving life chances and ensuring that every child and young person on our Island has the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their circumstances.

Thank you, Mr President. I beg to move the amendments standing in my name:

The Hon. Member for Ayre and Michael, Mr Cannan, to move -

(A) In Recommendation 4 to remove all the words 'That the Department of Education, Sport and Culture should' and replace them with the words 'ensure there ius at least an annual opportunity across schools for sharing effective practice and networking, including Senior Leaders meeting, Leadership Forum, Educational Leadership Team, school cluster groups, focused working groups and wider training events and that, going forward, the Department should continue to ensure that topics such as poverty related education issues such as attainment are regular agenda items, are outcome focused and include expert level input';

(B) In Recommendation 5 to remove the words 'contract for Etio's', and to remove the words 'be amended so that inspections' and to replace them with the words 'ensure that external validation visits';

(C) In Recommendation 7 to remove all of the words and replace them with the words 'That the Department of Health and Social Care should ensure that standards relating to caseload levels, resourcing, outcome monitoring and clinically validated indicators related to the Early Help and Support service are set out and published in the Manx Care Mandate 2027-28';

(D) In Recommendation 8 to remove all of the words and replace them with the words, 'That a review of the Early Help and Support function should be conducted with a report to be brought back to Tynwald within 12 months';

(E) In Recommendation 9 to remove the words 'the Planet Youth model' and replace them with the words 'a model such as Planet Youth';

(F) In Recommendation 15 to remove all of the words and replace them with the words 'That the Department of Education, Sport and Culture should draw on the findings of the UK SEED study and other relevant research to inform a framework and delivery and advise into, early years education and its evaluation, ensuring that delivery remains evidence-based and proportionate and report progress back to Tynwald within 12 months';
(G) In Recommendation 16 to remove all the words after 'That the Department of Education, Sport and Culture should' and replace them with the words, 'continue to develop its centralised system for recording and sharing pupil information across schools and University College Isle of Man, to ensure that staff are fully informed of students' needs at key transition points and can provided appropriate support from the outset; and that the Department should report progress back to Tynwald within 12 months';
(H) In Recommendation 21 to remove all the words after 'That the Department of Education, Sport and Culture' and replace them with the words, 'review the feasibility cost and resource implications of providing consistent access to affordable early morning meal provision across all schools and report progress back to Tynwald within 12 months, noting that any resource or cost implications required to implement this would be subject to Treasure concurrence'; and
(I) In Recommendation 26 to remove the words 'and include this consideration in the Student Awards Regulations for 2027-28 academic year' and replace them with the words 'for consideration in the Student Awards Regulations for the 2028-29 academic year, subject to Treasury concurrence'.

The President: Mrs Caine.

Mrs Caine: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I rise to support the Chief Minister and the Council of Ministers' response to the Select Committee's Report and, in particular, the amendments proposed by the Chief Minister.

Before adding a little detail on some of the individual recommendations, I want to place on record my thanks to the Committee for its work. The Report highlights important issues affecting children, young people and families, and I believe there is broad consensus across this Hon. Court that reducing the impact of poverty and improving life chances must remain a priority. The amendments before Tynwald today should not be interpreted as opposition to the Committee's objectives. Rather, they are intended to ensure that any commitments made by Government are practical, evidence-based, affordable and capable of being delivered successfully.

I want to thank the Committee particularly for their input and collaboration to support slightly amended amendments that the Chief Minister brought today. It seems like a cleaner way forward, and I really appreciate the input and discussion that we were able to have to come, hopefully, to this cleaner, collaborative way forward.

The Chief Minister has touched on quite a number of the amendments and so I think just to say a couple of key points that are of particular interest to the Committee. The amendment regarding the annual conference, the proposed amendment reflects extensive network of existing forums already operating across education, including senior leaders' meetings, the educational leadership team, school clusters and focused working groups, and wider training opportunities. The amendment ensures that these established mechanisms continue to address education-related issues associated with disadvantage and poverty, such as attainment, and that they are regular agenda items, they are outcome focused and include expert level where appropriate, and these will be offered on an annual basis.

On recommendation 5, as the Chief Minister outlined, the Committee seeks the greater focus on attainment gaps and learning inequalities within quality assurance arrangements. The Department entirely agrees with the principle. However, the recommendation as drafted refers to amending the Etio contract and to inspections. In practice, the contract does not determine

the contents of the quality assurance framework, and the Island operates the external validation model rather than an inspection regime. The amendment, therefore, simply makes a technical correction while preserving the substance of the Committee's intent by ensuring that attainment gaps and learning inequalities are explicitly addressed through external validation visits.

I think the Chief Minister outlined much of the other points, but just a little bit of detail, for instance, on recommendation 9. The amendment extends the reporting timeline from December 2026 to 12 months. That reflects the importance of obtaining meaningful input from schools in identifying what further practical improvements can be made. As schools break up for the summer holidays this week and do not return until the beginning of September, the original December 2026 deadline would not prove sufficient time to engage fully with schools, consider their feedback and undertake the necessary work. The revised timeframe would allow for proper consultation and the development of informed, practical recommendations before a progress update is brought to Tynwald.

Just to touch on recommendation 21, I fully recognise the importance of breakfast provision in supporting wellbeing, attendance and readiness to learn. Some schools already provide breakfast clubs through a range of local arrangements. However, introducing consistent provision across every school would have implications in terms of cost, staffing capacity, school infrastructure and transport constraints. The proposed feasibility review to properly assess these issues before any commitment is made that would require additional public funding seems the responsible approach to ensure any future decision is informed by robust evidence and costings.

Finally, recommendation 26. The Department acknowledges the concerns raised regarding maintenance grants for non-degree further education courses. However, given the work already undertaken, we think it is more realistic to align any potential changes within the 2028-29 academic year rather than 2027-28. The amendment preserves the commitment to review the issue while ensuring any proposals are properly developed and considered alongside Treasury.

Mr President, these amendments do not weaken the Committee's recommendations. Rather, they strengthen them by ensuring they are achievable, evidence-led and aligned with good governance. They allow us to continue making progress on behalf of young children, young people and families while remaining realistic about resources, responsibilities and deliveries. For those reasons, I am very pleased to support the Chief Minister's amendments and commend the amended recommendations to this Hon. Court.

Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The President: Thank you.

Mrs Morphet.

Mrs Morphet: Thank you, Mr President.

I just want to place on record my sincere thanks to the Committee and the Office of the Clerk of Tynwald for a very thoughtful Report with a clear and detailed evidence base and a focus on best practice. I also want to thank the Council of Ministers for taking this Report seriously and proposing amendments. I really look forward to being able to hear of the progress during the next administration. I just wish to highlight that the outcomes from these recommendations will offer opportunities that will change lives and will go some way to levelling a very wonky playing field.

Several Members: Hear, hear.

The President: Ms Christian.

Ms Christian: Thank you, Mr President.

I rise to obviously support the Chief Minister's amendments. There are some areas obviously that affect the Department of Health and Social Care, and the Chief Minister has outlined that.

But there is one recommendation, recommendation 16, which gives the priority to the Department of Education, Sport and Culture, but it was actually through the conversations that we had with the Committee that I was able to also discuss our role. While it is not in the amendment or it is not in the original recommendation, I think it is important to just speak a little bit about what we can do as a Department in this area.

We obviously all know that transitioning between early year provision and primary school, secondary school and further education can be periods of increased vulnerability. I know a lot of my constituents have spoken to me about that for some of their children and young people, meaning it is essential that support needs are identified earlier in reducing delays and improving outcomes. From a Health and Social Care perspective, I would like to just put on record that the Department agrees with the opportunities to strengthen the consistency and is committed to working collaboratively with the Department of Education, Sport and Culture to explore how the existing legislative and regulatory framework might support this specific objective. This includes considering the role that legislation such as the Regulation of Care Act 2013 may play in supporting effective information sharing and continuity of care where services regulated under that Act might be involved.

I will just leave that as that. As I said, I was very pleased to be part of the amendments and very pleased to see such an absolute well thought-out Committee Report. I think this is really a great accolade, seeing how parliament and Government can work together really successfully, and I am very proud to be a part of that alongside my colleagues here today.

Thank you, Mr President.

The President: Thank you. Mr Glover.

Mr Glover: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I thank the Committee for its excellent work. It has produced a serious Report on one of the most important challenges facing our Island; child poverty. I just really want to make a brief clarion call for the next administration that this really needs to progress now, because the difficulty I have is that while Government, I am pleased to say, has accepted many of the recommendations, too often the response is a review, a feasibility study, a future mandate or a commitment subject to Treasury approval. The Family Hub proposal is welcome, but full rollout is years away, if we are honest, and still dependent on funding. Breakfast provision becomes another feasibility exercise. I understand why, but it is a feasibility exercise for now. Childcare expansion remains uncertain and free school transport is merely under consideration.

Children experiencing poverty today cannot wait for endless reviews and plans. They need support now. I support much of the direction of travel, but the future Government must move from agreement in principle to delivery in practice. Measure of success is not how many recommendations are accepted but whether fewer children grow up in poverty as a result. We cannot review our way out of child poverty. At some point, the next Government must stop studying the problem and start solving it.

The President: Mr Craine.

Mr Craine: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I would like to thank the members of the Select Committee on Poverty and their officers for the enormous amount of work that has gone into this Report. I welcome the Report. I feel that I am as committed as anybody to reducing poverty, especially childhood poverty, and reducing its impact on both educational outcomes and future opportunities. Offering a former teacher and educationalist perspective, I plan to speak in relation to only a handful of the

recommendations of the Committee, not to challenge but hopefully to join up and develop some of the threads in the Report.

Recommendation 1: the relationship between poverty and education is a hugely important one. Poverty can be a barrier to educational progress, draining family aspirations, resolve, support and confidence. Education, on the other hand, can be a ladder for children growing up in low-income households to escape poverty. I believe and I have seen the evidence that education can break generational cycles of poverty. I urge Tynwald Members to support recommendation 1 and to commit this Court to poverty reduction going forward, especially where it impacts on children and future generations.

Recommendations 2, 3 and 5 all make reference to the attainment gap. Recommendation 2 urges that the Department of Education, Sport and Culture should measure and reduce the attainment gap. Recommendation 3 spells out that this specifically refers to attainment by free school meal status. Recommendation 5 wants this attainment gap to be addressed by the Etio quality assurance framework. I will support recommendations 2 and 3 as well as the amended recommendation 5. Indeed, I will be supporting all of the recommendations and the Council of Ministers' amendments. I am not looking to make amendments but to raise awareness and highlight some important links.

There are three points that I think are important to make, Eaghtyrane. Point one, in education there is more than one attainment gap. I would like to explain that as an educationalist I recognise not just the free school meal attainment gap but also the attendance attainment gap, the children looked after attainment gap, the gender attainment gap, the additional education needs attainment gap and the age attainment gap, as well as gaps relating to other context. These can all be barriers to learning and pupils' progress.

The commentary in the Council of Ministers' response to the Report is right to recognise that there is more than one gap in attainment. I accept that these attainment gaps must never be an excuse for failing students. They are not fixed and immutable. Indeed, in my career I witnessed the gender attainment gap actually reverse, primarily due to social change. Boys routinely used to outperform girls. Now the opposite is true. Schools must have high expectations for all students. But these different attainment gaps are strongly interrelated and that introduces some complications.

Point two, then. There is a strong link between the poverty attainment gap and attendance, as well as a strong link between the poverty attainment gap and parental engagement and other poverty-related factors. Use of school meals data does not explain how families living in poverty translate into lower student attainment. The explanation lies in large part by the translation of poverty into low school attainment through low attendance. Research consistently reveals that school absenteeism accounts for a considerable share of this gap.

There are two parts to this. Students entitled to free school meals have significantly lower attendance than other students. Attendance levels then affect learning and outcomes. Missing core lessons causes severe knowledge gaps that make it difficult for students to pass exams and advance academically. Students from low-income households may miss school due to health issues arising from poor-quality housing, poor diets, lack of winter clothing, parental anxieties or lack of money for the bus.

In the appendices to the Report, appendices 17 through to 24 at the end, the secondary schools outline the attainment levels based on free school meals but also in relation to attendance. At Ballakermeen in 2023-24, page 444, the free school meal student attendance was eight percentage points lower than the attendance of all students. Castle Rushen, page 454, the attendance of free school meal students was 10% lower than all students, an average of one afternoon more per week. This difference actually peaked at 17% in Key Stage 4.

Other schools show similar patterns. The Castle Rushen summary on page 454 on how attendance impacts on attainment was particularly clear. This is an area very thoroughly researched in education. Compared with students who have excellent attendance, over 95%, those students with between 90% and 95%, which you might think is still quite good attendance,

lose one-quarter of a grade per subject, or one grade in every four subjects, compared with those at the higher level. Students with 80% to 90% attendance lose three-quarters of a grade per subject. Students with under 80% attendance, and that is more than one full day's absence per week on average, lose two full grades per subject. Their Cs turn into Es. It is attendance that is the issue.

A second clear bridge between poverty and low attainment is also evident in the school's answers to questions about the correlation between parental engagement and academic achievement. At Castle Rushen we observe a strong positive correlation between parental engagement and academic attainment, where there is positive engagement, students at home are supported to take study seriously, reinforcing and reflecting on the improved life chances good qualification and skills bring. At Ramsey Grammar School, where parents show an interest, engage with the school and promote good learning habits at home, students tend to attain and achieve better.

I have no wish to stereotype low-income families here, so I want to point out that there are some low-income households who very successfully mitigate the effects of their own low income (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) by being totally encouraging and supportive of education, ensuring regular attendance at school, making full use of libraries, engaging in reading with young children and so on. Their children make good progress despite the lower income at home.

The third point is that the aim of narrowing the poverty attainment gap cannot be realistic if the causes remain. In one of the secondary schools, page 438, in 2024, the percentage of students making four or more levels of progress in Key Stage 3 – a standard measure of the progress students make in English, maths and science – showed that students on free school meals were making significantly slower progress than all students. If attendance or parental engagement remain lower for free school meal students, they will not catch up.

These points indicate that the impact of poverty on attainment is both complex and multidimensional, and I urge the Committee to recognise that when schools are responding. But I would also agree that they may be complex and they may be multidimensional, but that does not remove the need for schools to look hard at reducing the barriers to pupil progress. The Committee's fundamental argument that students in the poorest households face barriers to learning that need to be under constant erosion by the schools is valid. The Government must also find a way to reduce the number of children growing up in poverty.

Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The President: I call on the mover to reply.

Ms Faragher: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

I will just start by thanking my seconder, Mr Callister. Thank you to the Chief Minister for his contribution and positive words welcoming the work the Committee has done. I was really happy to hear his words regarding the ongoing work which is taking place, which I think and I hope shows the commitment to the outcomes identified by the Committee in this Report. Again, I do encourage Members to support the amendments moved by the Chief Minister. Thank you to Mrs Caine for her supportive comments in seconding that and her further explanation around some of the recommendations.

Mrs Morphet, thanks for your very positive and supportive words. I think you are right to talk about putting these recommendations into action and seeing progress. I too look forward to that, whether from inside or outside here. Mr Glover sounded this what he called a clarion call, too. I think there will be many eyes watching future progress. A gentle word of warning to any future Education Minister maybe. (Laughter)

Thank you also to Ms Christian for her words and for being part of the collaboration around the amendments. I appreciate Mr Craine's words and obviously very clear understanding via working experience of childhood poverty. I think we were aware as we progressed in our inquiries that the attainment gap linked with poverty was also linked with other things, such as

low attainment and low parental involvement. I hope it reassures the Hon. Member to know that this was why we framed a lot of the recommendations in the way that we did, for example in bringing schools together to share initiatives, because it was clear from the data that some schools were closing the gap better than others, but what we did not know was how they were doing that. That was information that we did not have. We needed to replicate that across the Island, and the dearth of information is exactly what we were trying to address. That was baked into the recommendation, so I hope that does reassure the Member.

In closing, I want to once again express the Committee's thanks to staff across Departments who assisted us throughout this inquiry, and to everyone involved in finalising the recommendations and amendments. I would also like to thank my fellow and sister Committee members. Serving on the Poverty Committee and working to address some of the real inequalities that arise simply from the circumstances into which people are born has been work that is deeply aligned with my own political values and I am incredibly proud of this Report and what the Committee has achieved together. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

Eaghtyrane, with genuine hope for the positive difference I believe these recommendations will make for the lives of children and families across our Island, I encourage the Court to support the recommendations and the amendments and once again beg to move.

The President: Again, Hon. Members, having heard the debate, I would propose to put the Chief Minister's amendments as a block and then the recommendations as amended as a block, because I have not heard anybody try and pick anything out that they would like to vote against. Is that agreeable, Hon. Members? (**Members:** Agreed.) Wonderful.

In which case, then, I put the Chief Minister's amendment. Those in favour, please say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

Putting to you, then, the motion as amended, those in favour, please say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

Thank you, Hon. Members.

12. Select Committee of Tynwald on Whistleblowing Policy Implementation Report 2025-26 – Debate commenced

The Chair of the Select Committee on Whistleblowing Policy Implementation, Ms Edge, to move:

> That the Select Committee of Tynwald on Whistleblowing Policy Implementation Report 2025-26 [PP 2026/0099] be received and the following recommendations be approved:
>
> Recommendation 1
> That the Isle of Man Government Whistleblowing Policy should be updated to remove any language implying that good faith remains a legal requirement for protection, to ensure compliance with the Employment Act 2006 as amended by the Employment (Amendment) Act 2024; and that the Department for Enterprise should bring forward proposals to reverse the burden of proof in whistleblowing detriment complaints so that, once a worker establishes a protected disclosure was made and detriment followed, the burden shifts to the employer to demonstrate that the two were unconnected.
>
> Recommendation 2
> That the list of prescribed persons under the Employment Act 2006 should be kept under regular review and in particular that further engagement with Social Work England should continue as a matter of priority with the aim of adding them to the list.

Recommendation 3
That the Tynwald Auditor General should complete as a matter of urgency the work he has begun on whistleblowing and that the Tynwald Auditor Selection Committee should ensure that this happens; and that the Office of Human Resources should supply to the Tynwald Auditor General as a matter of urgency any information he needs for the purposes of this work.

Recommendation 4
That the policy of passing Integrity Line referrals to MIRS should be reconsidered. If it is to be kept in place, it should be explained more clearly to potential Integrity Line users.

Recommendation 5
That the Isle of Man Government Whistleblowing Policy should make clear that the Public Service Integrity Line is available currently not only to employees but also to workers and contractors providing services to Departments, Boards and Offices. The eligibility criteria, referral route and confidentiality need to be stated clearly and publicly in one accessible place.

Recommendation 6
That the whistleblowing figures reported to Tynwald should include the number of people who invoke the Isle of Man Government Whistleblowing Policy and the number who are subsequently upheld as whistleblowers. The figures should also distinguish clearly between the number and type of substantive concerns reported by staff (which Government should aim to maximise) and the number of employment disputes consequent on such concerns (which Government should strive to minimise). The figures should show separately how many of the substantive concerns have been upheld, dismissed or referred to other procedures; and how many of the employment disputes have been resolved. Data collected from Designated Whistleblowing Officers and prescribed persons should be combined and any duplication eliminated. Matters before the Employment and Equality Tribunal should be included in the figures.

Recommendation 7
That the Isle of Man Government Whistleblowing Policy should state clearly that strict statutory time limits apply to complaints before the Employment and Equality Tribunal; that those time limits are not paused by internal procedures; and that workers who believe they have suffered detriment after whistleblowing should seek independent advice without delay.

Recommendation 8
That the Isle of Man Government Whistleblowing Policy should be revised to make clear in plain language which reporting route or routes a worker must use to engage the statutory protections of the Employment Act 2006; that where reporting to a prescribed person is required for statutory protection this should be stated explicitly; and that a worker who reports through the internal route alone should not lose statutory protection as a result.

Recommendation 9
That the Isle of Man Government Whistleblowing Policy should be updated without delay to inform workers in plain language that, where dismissal follows disclosure, they have the right to apply to the Employment and Equality Tribunal for interim relief (meaning pay and employment continues while the case is heard) but that this right must be exercised within seven days of dismissal; that workers should be informed of this right at the point of dismissal; and that the Government should clarify the description in Annex G of the Policy,

which describes sections 118A to 118E as a power for interim relief, to make it clear that the right is already in force.

Recommendation 10
That as a general principle correspondence from an employee or contractor to their employer or client should be answered within 10 days. Where anyone invokes the Isle of Man Government Whistleblowing Policy, a determination should be made within a month as to whether they are upheld as a whistleblower and if not, why not. Anyone who is upheld as a whistleblower should receive updates on the progress of their case on at least a monthly basis without having to ask. This should be made clear within the Isle of Man Government Whistleblowing Policy.

Recommendation 11
That Tynwald is of the opinion that the Tynwald Commissioner for Administration Act 2011 should be updated to enable the Commissioner to review all public sector whistleblowing cases once closed by the employer and to report to Tynwald on whether due process has been followed and whether decisions are sound; that legislative amendments to give effect to this opinion should be prepared by the Tynwald Management Committee as part of its work on a Tynwald Commissioner for Administration (Amendment) Bill; and that the necessary resources should be provided to enable the Commissioner to do this.

Recommendation 12
That the Cabinet Office and the Department for Enterprise should bring forward a proposal for a full statutory whistleblowing framework; and should complete the work to establish the feasibility of the Isle of Man becoming the first British jurisdiction to adopt a comprehensive statutory whistleblowing framework with an independent body for the receipt, oversight and monitoring of public interest disclosures.

Recommendation 13
That the Public Accounts Committee should take oral evidence in public annually about how the Isle of Man Government Whistleblowing Policy has supported the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of Government policy.

Recommendation 14
That Tynwald welcomes the existing practice of including in conciliated settlement agreements a clause emphasising that the agreement cannot prevent whistleblowing; and that this practice should be written into guidance and explained in the Isle of Man Government Whistleblowing Policy.

Recommendation 15
That consideration should be given to further simplifying the Isle of Man Government Whistleblowing Policy to clarify the messages that concerns should be reported and addressed, whistleblowers should be respected, thanked, and kept up to date throughout the process.

Recommendation 16
That where the Employment and Equality Tribunal finds that a whistleblower has suffered detriment, that finding should automatically be referred for review by the Tynwald Commissioner for Administration; that seniority of officers should not prevent such consideration; that deliberate or sustained detriment should be treated as a serious matter warranting appropriate action aligning with the Employment Act vicarious liability; that legislative amendments to enable the Commissioner to undertake this function should be

prepared by the Tynwald Management Committee as part of its work on a Tynwald Commissioner for Administration (Amendment) Bill; and that the necessary resources should be provided to enable the Commissioner to do this.

Recommendation 17
To give credibility to the message that whistleblowers should be respected and thanked, opportunities should be sought with the consent of all involved to give credit in public to individual whistleblowers whose disclosures have benefited the public whether that be through financial savings, improvements in efficiency or other positive outcomes.

[GD 2026/0079] is relevant to this Item.

The President: We turn then to Item 12, and I call on the Chair of the Select Committee on Whistleblowing Policy Implementation, Ms Edge, to move.

The Chair of the Select Committee of Tynwald on Whistleblowing Policy Implementation (Ms Edge): Thank you, Mr President.

Hon. Members, if you have read the Report, you will know that this Committee's work has not been easy, but before I take you through the Report of the Select Committee on Whistleblowing Policy Implementation, I want to set out what it actually found and what the Court is now being asked to do about it.

The Committee's remit had four elements: the implementation of this Court's February 2021 resolution on whistleblowing; the impact of the Government whistleblowing policy; the use of non-disclosure agreements on terminations, with particular reference to whistleblowers; and the capability of public bodies to address their relevant failures. Our Report runs to 580 pages, with 21 conclusions and 17 recommendations.

The Report is not really about paragraphs and recommendations, it is about people. Twenty-two public sector whistleblowers wrote to us. Twelve were invited to speak to us, two of them in public, despite what was described as restrictions placed on them and despite knowing, in a community this size, exactly what has happened to others who spoke before them. That took real courage, Mr President, and I want to put on record the Committee's gratitude to every single one of them.

Here is a finding that should stop every Member of this Court. Senior managers and designated whistleblowing officers told us, almost without exception, that the system is working well. Their words were all very similar. The whistleblowers who have actually been through that system told us, without exception, the opposite. The TUC's evidence on their behalf was that whistleblowers face trauma and psychological harm. When the people running a system say it works, and the people put through it say it broke them, one of two things is true. Either 22 workers are all mistaken, or the system is being judged in public only by the people it is serving the best.

The evidence showed us exactly why. Consider what the Attorney General's Chambers does across a whistleblowing case. The same Chambers provides training for designated whistleblowing officers. The same Chamber advises Government on its legal exposure when a disclosure is made. The same Chamber can be involved in drafting and reviewing settlement agreements that whistleblowers are asked to sign. We heard from the Unite Union that representatives of the same Chambers can attend meetings at which whistleblowing cases are resolved. Training, advice, settlement, resolution; every stage through one office acting for one side.

It does not stop there, Mr President. The Committee heard in public evidence that the Public Services Commission itself has no staff of its own. It relies on the Office of Human Resources for advice and support and the Executive Director of OHR sits as the Secretary to that same

Commission. So the very office responsible for handling and administering whistleblowing cases across Government also sits inside the structure that it is meant to oversee.

That leaves this Court with an uncomfortable question, raised directly with this Committee by a serving officer. If the Commission has no staff of its own who actually drafted the whistleblowing policy in its name, if that work was done by OHR, then the policy and the PSC that is meant to hold OHR to account against that policy cannot honestly be called independent of OHR at all.

Against all of that, what does the whistleblower have? No publicly-funded legal support, no independent adviser or caseworker, no external body with the power to investigate or advocate for them, a policy document written under their own employer's legal oversight. It is Goliath in full armour, Mr President, and Sampson with his hands tied behind his back, and then Government professes surprise that people are afraid to come forward.

I want to spend a moment on evidence that we heard directly in sessions from officers of this Government, who came before us knowing full well what it might cost them to do so. They told the Committee of attempts to silence them. They described a culture in which whistleblowers are shut down and isolated rather than heard. We heard point by point why the Isle of Man's policy cannot honestly be described as world-leading practice, as Government has claimed. Compare it directly with the Scottish Civil Service framework, where a concern that cannot be resolved within a department can be escalated to a body that sits outside that department with the power to examine how the disclosure was classified, investigated and concluded.

We were also informed that our policy allows, in effect, a loophole. Whistleblowers' concerns can be and are diverted into ordinary employment and grievance processes rather than treated as protected disclosures from the outset. We were informed that it really does matter, Mr President, because a recent UK Supreme Court ruling has confirmed that whistleblowing and employment matters cannot simply be separated where an element of whistleblowing is present, yet we have seen evidence that that is exactly what appears to be happening. The effect is to strip statutory protection from people who raise a concern, in good faith, through a route they were never warned would not protect them. I do not raise that of any individual's case, as this Court is not the place for that. I raise it because it illustrates, in a testimony, almost everything the rest of the Report finds at a systemic level.

Mr President, we also heard in the public session from the Chair and the Secretary of the Public Services Commission. Hon. Members should know what that evidence confirmed, because it is the structural conflict that I have just been describing, admitted from the very mouths of the people running the system. The Chair confirmed that the Commission has no staff of its own, no dedicated budget, and that it delegates the development of the whistleblowing policy and much of its statutory function to the Office of Human Resources. That is far weaker oversight than we ever had with the Civil Service Commission, Mr President.

The same evidence confirmed that the Office of Human Resources' Executive Director sits as the Secretary to the Commission that is meant to approve and oversee the policy. We have one person, Mr President, with two roles, acting on both sides. I did put to the Chair directly that section 4(4) of the Public Services Commission Act 2015 provides that an employee of the Commission must not also be a member of it, this answer on the fact that the Commission has no employees at all. So the provision cannot, in the strict legal sense, hold. But that is not reassurance, Mr President. That is confirmation. The Commission has arranged its own affairs so that the very conflict Tynwald legislated against cannot technically arise.

I also asked – or the Committee did – whether the Commission sees the outcome of individual whistleblowing investigations. We were informed that plainly it does not, that the Commission sits, in its own words, quite high up in this process and does not see the final reports. Yet section 5(1)(k) of the same Act gives the Commission responsibility for arrangements concerning the loss of office of the public sector employee. How can a body discharge a statutory responsibility for people losing their livelihoods when it has told the Committee on the record that it does not see the reports that explain why they have lost them?

When the Committee put to the PSC Panel the evidence of Debbie Halsall of Unite that whistleblowers have suffered real psychological harm, in some cases to the point of feeling suicidal, the response from the Commission was not concern. What we received was direct challenge as to whether any evidence existed to support that claim. That to me, Mr President, is the instinct of an institution defending its own record, not an institution that is going to listen to the people that are trying to protect it.

I should also tell the Court that the Chair of the Commission told us that they personally voted against establishing the Committee, the body now asking Tynwald to trust that its policy works, at its own Chair's hand, the Committee scrutinising it in the first place. So something that was not supported is now being opposed.

Throughout that session, more than once we were informed that the whistleblowing policy is one of the strongest, if not the strongest, in the British Isles. I do not doubt that sincerity. But a Chair who does not see the investigation reports, does not audit the outcomes, and has just explained why its own Commission cannot technically employ the person whose two roles sit either side of the same policy I do not believe is well placed to make that claim. The policy may read well on paper. It is not the wording of the policy that failed these 22 people, it is everything around it that was supposed to hold it to account and does not.

There is a further question I want to put directly to the Court, because it goes to whether anonymity in this system means anything at all. The Committee was told more than once that OHR does not hold or ask the name of a whistleblower, and that anonymity is preserved from OHR's point of view.

Mr President, I put to us all that this claim does not survive contact with how these cases are actually run. I am informed that in practice when a whistleblower is referred to an independent investigator, an officer of OHR attends in a senior advisory capacity to help draft terms of reference, offer support and to take notes. So that officer is in the same room. I am sure they know the name of the person they are in the room with. One person cannot know a name in one capacity and be presumed to not know it in the other. The anonymity this Court has been told protects whistleblowers is not structural. It depends entirely on the discretion of the people who sit on both sides of the process at once.

Mr President, some cases where an investigator has been appointed have sought to get further information prior to meeting the person being investigated. That proves to me the question around anonymity. Again, Debbie Halsall of Unite put in a few words: this system marks its own homework. She told us HR cannot be independent, by design, because it is part of the employer. She told us that things have not improved since the Dr Rosalind Ranson case, the case that produced the largest tribunal award in this Island's history, and that was supposed to change everything.

We know what the homework is costing taxpayers when it is marked. The Chair of the Public Services Commission confirmed in our oral evidence session 10 settlement agreements in a single year at a cost of £438,624. And I understand months into this year there have been a further four settlements. Mr President, we are reaching huge sums on settlements. What we are not doing is fixing the failures whistleblowers reported to their employer. But on ending, what we do is end the employment of the people who reported them, and in the same, we are losing that breadth of experience.

None of it is new, Mr President. In February 2021, this Court resolved on whistleblowing. Recommendation 5 of that resolution called for consultation on a comprehensive statutory framework. Five years, five months later, no consultation, no framework. The Auditor General was tasked with interim oversight in May 2023. His whistleblowing work did not begin until January 2025. I appreciate some of the pressures the Auditor General is under, but this is what happens when this Court passes resolutions.

Mr President, this now brings me to the two documents that should be read side by side. In June, the Council of Ministers published its response to our Report. It rejects a statutory framework, it rejects independent oversight, it tells this Court the system is essentially sound

and that the number of cases where detriment is alleged is small. One is one too many, Mr President.

Four weeks later on 2nd July, the Tynwald Auditor General published his own report. And what did an independent officer appointed by this Court state? That the Office of Human Resources had not supplied the data he needed to complete his review of cases in which whistleblowers' employment came to an end, and that the Integrity Line, the flagship confidential reporting route, still lacks a basic feedback loop.

Having had sight of the Auditor General's full report, I can tell this Court it goes further than Government response. The Auditor General surveyed the designated managers, the officers responsible for handling disclosures, across every Department, Statutory Board and office. Only 15 responded. A third had never received training on the whistleblowing policy at all. Of those who had, most did not believe it was mandatory. Nearly half kept no register of whistleblowing disclosures in their own body. When his office tried to reconcile the Integrity Line referrals against the records Departments actually held, it found that designated managers were not always aware of disclosures relevant to their own organisation.

Mr President, people responsible for whistleblowing cases did not know their own cases existed, so the Auditor General's conclusion was that obtaining an accurate and complete picture of whistleblowing disclosures across Government proved impossible. Impossible, Mr President. Not difficult, not incomplete. Impossible. That is the word of an independent Auditor General.

When Hon. Members ask when these failures will be fixed, the performance plan filed alongside that very report gives the answer: mandatory training for designated managers, not until December 2026; a new support model, February 2027; updated training materials, first quarter 2027; improved record-keeping, January 2027. That is not urgency. The Government is asking this Court to trust a system today whose own architects will not finish repairing it for the best part of another year.

Mr President, the Government assures this Court the system works, and cannot produce its own records to the independent officer appointed to verify. They say, 'Trust us', and when asked to hand over the homework they have been marking themselves, they cannot even hand it over because they have not got it.

Tynwald has been asked to consider what the Government wants done to our recommendations. With respect, they did not sit through this Committee listening to the evidence, the Committee members did.

Recommendation 12. Mr President, 580 pages, 21 conclusions, 22 whistleblowers, a record tribunal award, settlement agreements. I think it was reaching nearly £5 million over a five-year period. An Auditor General who cannot obtain the Government's own data, a commission with no staff of its own overseen by the same office it is meant to oversee. How much more evidence do you want in here for an independent process?

Our recommendation asks for honest numbers, that reporting should count everyone who invokes the whistleblowing policy, not only those subsequently accepted as whistleblowers. We heard evidence that workers who raise concerns are diverted into grievance and other HR processes, which can mask the true scale of what is happening. We also heard a recurring pattern that soon after a whistleblower reports an internal concern, a complaint arises on the individual, appears out of nowhere, or historic issues are suddenly raised.

The Government wants to amend recommendation 6 to merely keep the reporting arrangements under review. If Hon. Members want to know what is actually going on in our public service, this Court must reject that amendment and support recommendation 6 as the Committee wrote it.

Recommendation 6 is not the only one that has been hollowed out. Look at what has happened in the recommendations that would have actually protected people. Recommendation 1 asked for the burden of proof in detriment claims to shift on to the employer once a worker shows a disclosure was made and detriment followed. The

Government's answer is to send that question away for further legal advice, with no timetable, no commitment. Meanwhile, the worker is still carrying that burden alone against an employer with the might of the Attorney General's Chambers.

Recommendation 7 asked for the policy to state plainly that strict time limits apply to tribunal claims, that internal procedures do not pause those limits and that workers should seek advice without delay. The Government has rejected that also, on the grounds that it is not, in its own words, normal or expected practice for an employment policy to explain what to do if the employer fails. Mr President, that is precisely backwards, I believe. A worker does not lose their statutory time limit because the failure was not normal. The clock is running regardless, and Government's own response confirms it would rather not warn people that it does.

Recommendation 9 asked for workers to be told at the point of dismissal that they have a right to apply for interim relief and that the right is lost after seven days. A short timescale, Mr President. Government have rejected that also, on the basis that it is not appropriate for a policy to include guidance framed around the employer having acted unlawfully. Mr President, a seven-day deadline is not an accusation; it is a fact about the law. Refusing to advise a dismissed whistleblower that the clock is already running is not neutrality, it is a choice and it falls entirely on the side of the employer.

Recommendation 10 asked for correspondence to be answered within 10 days, a determination within a month and monthly updates without having to ask. Government amended that too, replacing every one of those figures with what it calls –

The President: Ms Edge, can I just put out one thing? Firstly, the Government amendments have not yet been moved, so you can obviously address those in the summing-up. The second point is that I am really rather obliged to bring proceedings to a halt at half past six unless Members agree otherwise. I do not like to interrupt people, but I think, having left it an extra 15 minutes, I am just wondering how much longer we have to go.

The Chair: Oh, I do not know, Mr President. Not too much.

The President: Okay, well, I think it is only fair to let the mover finish, because I do not like to interrupt, but as long as we are not – Ms Edge.

The Chair: Okay, I will move on. I will jump into bits.

The President: Thank you.

The Chair: Of the 17 recommendations in this Report, Government accepted five outright. All of them were administrative. Every recommendation that touched the burden of proof – time limits, interim relief, fixed timescales or independent oversight – was amended, watered down or waved away to a process with no resourcing attached to it. That is not partial agreement, Mr President, that is agreement with everything except the parts that would have made a difference.

I also note that Government's response leans on the memorandum of dissent of one Member of this Committee to suggest the Report relies on historical evidence predating the current policy. One Member's dissent, properly recorded and respected as it is, does not unmake the evidence of 22 whistleblowers, 12 of whom came and spoke to us directly. Government is entitled to disagree with all our conclusions, it is not entitled to use a single dissent to imply the whole Committee's evidence can be discounted.

In the evidence, Mr President, we were told public bodies were eminently capable of addressing these failures. Mr President, I do agree with that, and that is precisely the issue. A Government that can find £438,624 for settlement agreements in a year can also fund, if they do not do that, an independent commissioner. A Government that can rewrite its

whistleblowing policy twice in three years can bring forward legislation. The problem has never been capability. The problem is a will. They can; they will not. Where institutional will is absent, only independents can supply it.

Nothing we are proposing is novel or untested. Ireland has had a Protected Disclosures Commissioner housed within its Ombudsman Office at a modest cost. Scotland's Independent National Whistleblowing Officer has operated since 2021. New Zealand legislated in 2022. Close comparators, working models. The only thing missing on this Island is the political will to follow them. I say to this Court today, independence will save money. Avoid the conflicts that I have described and lift a cost that currently falls on our taxpayers.

Mr President, in my own assessment, having chaired this Committee for over a year, every failure in this Report traces back to one root cause: nobody wants to take responsibility. It starts with managers and senior managers, who would rather defend a colleague than address a concern raised by another colleague in the public interest. But it does not stop there. Too often when a whistleblowing case becomes politically inconvenient, the easier path for those of us in this Court is to accept the management line, ask no further questions and move on, rather than ask why this same pattern keeps repeating.

Mr President, I can tell this Court from direct experience that working with whistleblowers and helping support those with wrongdoing does not come without cost. Since I began chairing this Committee, I have been threatened. Not lobbied, not challenged, threatened politically, officers of this Government. On 12th March this year, in the High Court, my name was brought up. My parliamentary record was deployed in the High Court for words I spoke in this Chamber. I thought we had parliamentary privilege in this Chamber. I never expected my name and the words I used in this Chamber to be brought up in a High Court. I hope it will never happen again.

I have also had to do something I did not imagine I would have to do as a Member of this Court. I have protected myself with a disclosure and I have placed that formally today for safekeeping. Let that sink in, Mr President. If the Chair of the Select Committee of Tynwald, with parliamentary privilege, with a public platform, with more than 40 years of public service behind her, has to invoke the protections of whistleblowing to feel safe doing her job, what chance does a nurse at Noble's have, a teacher, a social worker, a junior officer with a mortgage to pay on our Island, where their employer is very often the only employer in their field? That is not a rhetorical question. It is the question this Report needs answers to, and the evidence answers it plainly. On their own, whistleblowers have no chance at all. Unless this Court, the highest Court in the land, acts and looks to do something independently, until that responsibility is owned somewhere in this system, by a manager, by a Department or by this Court, no policy, however well written, will change the outcome for the next person who comes forward.

Mr President, I am nearly at closing, but in recent weeks I was proud to be asked to contribute to three debates on whistleblowing held at the Palace of Westminster in the House of Commons, alongside figures such as Baroness Kramer, a real champion for whistleblowers, Dr Chris Day, Jayne Senior MBA, and many more. What struck me most was this: they are up against exactly the same establishment instinct we are – we are – and the same instinct to stifle whistleblowers rather than protect them. I came away from those conversations with new allies, people who understand the value of whistleblowers when so many around us still do not, and yet we keep ignoring the very people who are trying to protect the public that we are all in here to serve. I will always speak up for those who speak up for us. That is what whistleblowers are, Mr President. They are public protectors.

In closing, Mr President, politicians are here to serve the public and we fail the public by what we decline to do. The Report should not be noted and shelved, the resolution passed and forgotten, the amendments that sound reasonable and quietly buries the substance. If this Court accepts these amendments today, we will stand here in 2031 with another Committee, another broken public servant and another Government marking its own homework.

We will account in September for the views of the people of our Island. I believe they all want people in here that will speak up for them, whether they are an employee or just a citizen of our

Island. To the 22 people who came forward, you were heard, you were believed, and this Court will decide whether your courage was in vain. Whistleblowers are not the problem, Mr President. They are the Government's warning system. We either heed those warnings or we join in silencing it.

I beg to move, Mr President, and I ask Hon. Members to reject any Government amendments and to support the recommendations that the Committee have made.

The President: Now, Hon. Members, it is truly past 6.30.

Dr Haywood.

Procedural –
Suspend Standing Orders to extend sitting to eight o'clock –
Motion lost

Dr Haywood: Thank you, Mr President.

Mr President, I wonder if we could suspend Standing Orders to carry on until eight o'clock tonight, just to make some progress through the Order Paper that we have in front of us, which is quite a long one.

The President: Mr Callister.

Mr Callister: Happy to second that, Mr President.

The President: I put the question then that – Ms Faragher?

Ms Faragher: Can I speak, Mr President?

The President: Yes, you may. Yes, indeed.

Ms Faragher: I do not think that we should do this. I do not think that it is giving Members adequate time to make childcare arrangements, and we changed Standing Orders and sitting times for good reason, and we really should stick to it. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) We all know that we have a long sitting ahead of us. We have all been prepared for having many days of sitting ahead of us, and I just do not think this is fair to Members.

A Member: Hear, hear.

The President: Mrs August-Phillips.

Mrs August-Phillips: Just to agree entirely with the Hon. Member for Douglas East, who I know has her own commitments that she needs to make. We did do that for a reason. That reason was to ensure that we have that actual representation in this Court.

Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

The President: Dr Haywood, do you wish to respond to the debate?

Dr Haywood: No, I think we should put it to a vote, please, Mr President.

The President: In which case, we will put it to a vote. Those in favour of sitting until eight o'clock, please say aye; against, no. The noes have it. The noes have it.

In which case, that concludes business today. We will stand adjourned until tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock.

Thank you, Hon. Members.

The Court adjourned at 6.53 p.m.+