

THE STATES OF DELIBERATION
of the
ISLAND OF GUERNSEY

18th March, 2020

Proposition P.2020/21

AMENDMENT

Proposed by: Deputy E A McSwiggan

Seconded by: Deputy C J Green

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND

To insert the following Proposition after Proposition 1:

“1A. To direct the Policy & Resources Committee to set the funding criteria for the Social Investment Fund in a way that respects, and seeks to preserve, the autonomy, creativity and political independence of charities which are eligible for funding, recognising that:

- a strong voluntary sector – capable of addressing the needs of our community in ways that are not prioritised by the public sector, and able to challenge government policy and practice without fear or favour – is an essential pillar of any flourishing democracy; and therefore,
- the role of charities in addressing unmet social needs, and in challenging harmful government policies and practices, should be valued equally with their ability to assist the States in achieving its own policy priorities.”

RULE 4(3) INFORMATION

This amendment is not believed to have any financial implications.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This amendment is borne out of learning from the Scrutiny Management Committee’s Review Panel on Freedom of Information, of which the proposer and seconder are members. Although the Panel has not yet completed its report, work to date has shown the

importance of a confident, independent civil society (including charities, non-profits and other citizens' groups) as one of the pillars of any flourishing democracy.

Guernsey's civil society is well-developed in some areas and under-developed in others.

It is important to ensure that the Social Investment Fund is embraced as an opportunity to nurture the growth of Guernsey's civil society, and not to tame the voluntary sector or yoke it entirely to government's agenda.

We think it is important to ensure that the **autonomy, creativity and political independence of charities** are respected and preserved through the creation of the Social Investment Fund; particularly in the funding criteria that will be set by the Policy & Resources Committee.

The Social Investment Fund looks likely to replace at least two independent processes for distributing funds to charities: the proceeds of the CI Lottery, formerly distributed via the Association of Guernsey Charities; and Probate funds, formerly distributed via the Guernsey Deanery. The Policy & Resources Committee will be the sole shareholder of the Social Investment Fund, and two of its five directors will be senior public servants. This gives the States much greater influence over how vital funds are distributed to local charities than it has previously had.

With this in mind, it is vital that we do not over-reach ourselves, and that we make it possible for the Social Investment Fund to continue to support a diverse and independent voluntary sector, which is capable of being a partner and a critical friend to the States.