



OFFICIAL REPORT

OF THE

STATES OF DELIBERATION

OF THE

ISLAND OF GUERNSEY

HANSARD

Royal Court House, Guernsey, Thursday, 29th May 2014

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Law Officers

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The West

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The South-East

Deputies H. J. R. Soulsby, R. W. Sillars, P. A. Luxon,
F. W. Quin, M. P. J. Hadley

Representatives of the Island of Alderney

Alderney Representatives L. E. Jean and R. N. Harvey

The Clerk to the States of Deliberation

J. Torode, Esq. (H.M. Greffier)

Absent at the Evocation

H. E. Roberts Esq., Q.C. (H.M. Procureur)
Deputy E. G. Bebb (*absent de l'île*), B. J. E. Paint (*absent de l'île*),
S. A. James, M. B. E. (*absent de l'île*), M. G. O'Hara (*absent de l'île*),

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States of Deliberation

*The States met at 9.30 a.m. in the presence of
His Excellency Air Marshal Peter Walker C.B., C.B.E.
Lieutenant-Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Bailiwick of Guernsey*

[THE BAILIFF *in the Chair*]

PRAYERS
The Greffier

EVOCATION

Billet d'État X

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

**XV. The Introduction of a Universal Entitlement
to Pre-School Education –
Debate commenced**

Article XV.

The States are asked to decide:

Whether, after consideration of the Report dated 10th March, 2014, of the Education Department, they are of the opinion:

1. To agree in principle the introduction of a universal entitlement of quality preschool provision of 15 hours per week for the equivalent of 38 weeks a year for all 3-4 year olds, delivered through a partnership approach with the private and voluntary sectors with effect from September 2016 as set out in section 9 of that report.

2. To direct that by no later than September 2015 the Education Department and the Treasury and Resources Department shall jointly lay before the States a report advising of one or more viable options for funding universal pre-school education.

The Greffier: Billet D'État X, Article XV. Education Department – The Introduction of a Universal Entitlement to Pre-School Education.

5 **The Bailiff:** I was going to say the Minister of the Education Department, Deputy Sillars, will open debate, but I see that Deputy Brouard is on his feet.

10 **Deputy Brouard:** Sir, if I may, as a founding member of the Trust – well, a founding member and trustee of the Daisy Chain Charitable Pre-School – we are directly affected by these arrangements. I feel it would be inappropriate for me to take part in the debate and I will take my leave, sir.

Thank you.

15 **The Bailiff:** There is no need for you to take your leave but if you wish to do so you may do so. Deputy Sillars.

Deputy Sillars: Thank you, sir.

Having perfected overnight you will be pleased to hear that I have decided that less is more.

Most of our decisions we make in this Assembly have a real impact on people's prosperity on the contents of their wallets and their purses. We make tough choices which affect how much tax they pay, how

much social security, the cost of services the States provides. These choices can be controversial, that is inevitable. Governing is all about making the difficult calls, especially in an era of recession and economic uncertainty. But, even though these debates spark fierce disagreements, in the vast majority of cases the difference they make is a matter of a few pounds or pence, more or less. They do not fundamentally change lives – not really.

The issue before us today *is not* like that. It *is not* just about economics. The issue of pre-school education for every child in Guernsey and Alderney has implications that far exceed the usual short term questions of who wins, who loses, of cost and of affordability.

Today we debate a provision that has the capacity to transform the lives of many thousands of children now and in the future. At the same time it has the potential to safeguard the economic performance of Guernsey and Alderney, even their survival as independent jurisdictions in an increasingly competitive world where mediocrity condemns businesses, even whole nations, to oblivion.

It is a shameful fact that as matters stand we pull many children into our school system who are thoroughly unprepared for what lies ahead. I believe the words of Frederick Douglass – an African American social reformer, for those who do not know him – 1818–1895, speak volumes in this context. He said:

‘It is easier to build [a strong child] than to repair [a broken man].’

Primary school headteachers, teachers and parents tell me just how much of an ordeal it can be for children who arrive at the reception class with no experience of pre-school or access to ineffective pre-school.

Children around them might already know the basics of reading, of writing, of counting. From the start they feel left out, bewildered and excluded. Teachers tell me they can spot at a glance the children who have had no pre-schooling. Their eyes are clouded with doubt, suspicion and even fear. All our States’ headteachers – the professionals in the field – are fully supportive of these proposals and for those of you who may not have seen their comments I will read their statement in full:

‘As experienced educationalists we believe that the early years are highly influential in a child’s future fulfilment and success as a learner. High quality pre-school education provides the cornerstone of a child’s early development. It enhances the all-round development of our children and is the most effective way to meet the social, emotional, educational needs of a child and promote readiness for school.

As head teachers we strongly believe that this should be an entitlement for every child. By supporting all Bailiwick families we would provide equality of access which would greatly benefit the future generations and therefore our whole community. By allocating additional funding for pre-school education the States of Guernsey will be investing in our children’s future.

We are passionate about giving every child – that is *every* child – the best start to their education through universal pre-school provision. Today’s learners are tomorrow’s world.’

I sincerely hope that the Members of this Assembly are just as passionate about giving every child in Guernsey the best start to their education, because do we not have an obligation to do the right thing for all our children? Now, of course, our teachers and our learning support assistants do a wonderful job in working with children who need extra help. They work with them one-to-one to improve social skills, to nurture basic educational techniques which other children picked up almost when they were toddlers in nurseries, kindergartens or pre-schools.

I have to tell you that despite all the excellent care and all the resources available often these children do not recover from this early deprivation. In most cases the story of their education is already written. It is one of under-achievement, alienation which can lead to poor academic results, poor self-esteem, poor employment prospects and all the disadvantages that brings with it. Of course many adults in our community, and I daresay most of us here today, enjoyed childhoods where books and learning were central to everyday life. We may have had comfortable homes with parents always ready to read bedtime stories to open their eyes to the magical world of numbers. We might even have lived in other countries where pre-school places were, and are, easily affordable and accessible for all.

But we all know the distressing truth that life for too many children in Alderney and Guernsey is not like that. We like to imagine that education is a warm embrace, a place of safety, a haven to learn and grow. But for too many children, children without a grounding in essential social and learning skills, education is an unrelenting ordeal. For these children starting school is not the beginning of a wonderful journey. It is a wearisome trudge ending almost inevitably in failure.

Universal pre-school education can end the cycle of deprivation and underachievement – it is *that* powerful. For the sake of an early investment in pre-school education much of that misery, of that fear, of that waste of human talent, can be eradicated.

This is not a new concept, a modern vogue adopted by educationalists. The Greeks knew it. Plato wrote:

‘The most important part of education is [proper] training in the nursery.’

We should fund pre-school education not just because it is the right thing to do – although it is – we should also support it because the prosperity of our Islands is at stake. Quite simply it makes overwhelming economic sense.

75 The proposal is simple: to establish a universal entitlement to 15 hours a week of pre-school education for every child in Guernsey and Alderney in the year before they start in their reception class. This crucial year of preparation will be shaped by guidelines on curriculum content and on the quality of teaching, wellbeing and care, to ensure that every child receives the greatest possible benefit from their introduction to education.

80 The skills they learn will provide a vital launch pad for their learning, a foundation which is regrettably absent for too many children now. These skills will include language and communication, learning to share, to take turns, to develop physical capabilities, to sit and to listen, to make friends and to embrace all the possibilities that schools offer.

85 These skills are essential if children are to succeed. Headteachers have told me time and time again, that the happiest children, the ones who make the smoothest transition to school, the quickest learners, are the ones who have had a good quality pre-school education. All too often the ones who have not had that formative experience fall behind – and they stay behind for the whole of their education careers.

90 Pre-school education brings wider rewards, far beyond the real immediate and positive effects it has on the life of children. Families in Guernsey and Alderney can reap enormous dividends from the experience. It can offer parents a chance to get back into the workplace earlier or to extend their working hours. Pre-school education empowers a new layer of potential, productive employees to get back into the work much sooner than might otherwise have been possible, offering extra benefits to employers, to our economy and to our tax revenues.

95 It is no coincidence that the Republic of Ireland have continued to commit to universal pre-school education despite suffering from severe economic problems. The Irish data now shows that for every €1 invested arising from provision of one universal quality pre-school service €7 are returned.

100 For our headteachers and hard-working school staff, pre-school education offers a chance to work with cohorts of children who do not require extra help to grasp the basic concepts or more attention to deal with behavioural issues. They can spend far more of their time in providing top quality education for all pupils motivated, ready and able to learn.

Our Island community too stands to gain from a better-educated work force, better-informed citizens, well-qualified individuals, who enjoyed educational journeys free from feelings of inadequacy, of a predestination to failure and to disappointment.

105 I have argued that pre-school education should be a universal benefit for *every* child, regardless of the family's economic status. Of course, there are ways in which education for three-year-olds could be means tested, we could attempt to target only those children from families who need help most. But every – that is *every* – study into early education shows that these programmes work best when they are universal, when they do not try to divide society on the basis of income or class.

110 There is no fool proof ultra-precise way of measuring family circumstances, not without the risk of some children missing out on the early helping hand that could make the difference between a happy, fulfilled, school career and an educational experience scarred by underachievement and the kind of bone-deep sense of disappointment that stays with you long into adulthood – years after you have left the school gates for the last time.

115 I could give you a number of examples of so-called targeted programmes which have failed to deliver the desired outcome for the children. It is one reason why the City of New York – to name but one – has recently scrapped its selective approach to pre-school education and is replacing it with a universal scheme.

120 Many colleagues have already made thoughtful and useful contributions in the weeks leading up to this debate today. They have questions and they have concerns. Well, that is healthy and natural. This is an area which has the potential to make a huge impact on the future of our Islands and it is not one we undertake lightly. Education costs money but ignorance costs more.

In response to some of those points, first let me say that pre-school education forms a central part of the bold vision for education that was unanimously embraced by the States. Our entire strategy rests on the foundation of high quality pre-school education. Without that there is a limit to what we as a Board and we as a States can deliver in terms of better outcomes for all our children. It is *that* important.

125 There have also been suggestions that universal entitlement is a luxury and that we should adopt a targeted means tested approach. This is a fundamentally flawed assessment. It simply does not work. If it did we would be recommending it. But unfortunately it does not work and has been shown time and again not to work.

130 We have provided plenty of empirical evidence in our report, but let me reiterate again and take an example of the Foundation of Children Development October 2013 report, and I quote:

‘Although early research focused only on programmes for low income children more recent research focusing on universal pre-school programmes provides the opportunity to ask if pre-school can benefit children from middle income as well as low income families. The evidence is clear that middle class children can benefit substantially and that the benefits outweigh the costs for children from middle income as well as those from low income families.’

The question is clear, at least to me and my fellow Board Members: do we want a better education system, better standards, higher achievement, better results? Yes. The work to achieve that leap forward begins at pre-school, not when the child enters secondary education. For too many, it is too late then. Today
135 we have to decide whether we want to change our system to make the improvements we crave possible. Otherwise, frankly, it is just talk.

It has been pointed out that these proposals ignore provision from birth to three years. I answer that it has *not* been ignored. That remains an important element of our vision. Provision for the year before reception is a preparation, it is one more brick in the edifice we want to build for a peerless education
140 system that sustains our citizens from birth, throughout school and beyond.

Of course the question of funding has been raised, and quite rightly. It is a critical issue. The provision we create has to be affordable and it has to give good value for money to taxpayers. Colleagues will understand that is too early to talk in fine detail about budgetary considerations. We have nearly two and a half years before we implement this policy. It is not being rushed. We have the time to find the model that
145 is right for Guernsey, but I have to tell you that even the higher estimates of what this provision will cost represents a tiny proportion of the States’ Budget. In terms of benefits pre-school education will bring us, I am utterly convinced it is a wise and worthwhile use of public funds.

This investment will generate substantial savings for the States in the future. Studies elsewhere have shown that for every pound spent governments save £3 to £7 in future costs. I ask you: how many States’
150 investments have returned on investment of this magnitude?

A 2013 report by the World Health Organisation entitled ‘Improving the Lives of Children and Young People’ makes a number of key points highlighting experience in the UK and I make no apology for quoting a short extract in full:

‘The most significant [facilitator] of these changes seems the hardest to replicate: political will. The previous government...’

155 – this is the UK –

‘came to power in 1997 committed to expanding early education for all 3- and 4-year-olds and developing a national child care strategy to support welfare to work strategies. In 1999, the then Prime Minister pledged to end child poverty in a generation. A strong economy meant the government could disproportionately invest in early years programmes, compensating for a history of very little investment and no overall strategy.’

I have heard that before.

‘The government’s willingness to invest in evaluation and develop policy based on evidence was also a key [facilitator] of success.’

160 I would like T&R to listen to this:

‘The second facilitator was the involvement of Her Majesty’s Treasury in policy formation. Once Treasury officials became convinced of the importance of early years [to] lifelong outcomes and potential savings to the public purse through better employment rates, lower crime [and] better health, their willingness to support early years programmes was secured. Their involvement also facilitated cross-government working...’

– as should ours –

‘It became increasingly clear that high-quality early years provision had to include policies from departments of health, education, and employment: the Treasury had always worked with spending departments and now was playing a major role in getting the departments to work together on this social policy.’

165 Certainly food for thought, which could fuel action here in Guernsey.

With the backing of this Assembly we will work with Treasury and Resources to bring a fully-costed plan before this Assembly in September 2015. That gives us time to prepare, in partnership with the Island’s existing pre-schools, for launch in September 2016. Today we ask you to agree in principle that
170 this issue must be accepted as a burning priority for the States.

In conclusion, everyone sitting in this Assembly today was sent here for one reason and one reason only: to make Guernsey and Alderney a better place to live. I have not seen, nor do I expect to see, any other proposal before this States which offers such overwhelming far-reaching benefits as an entitlement to pre-school education. It has the capacity to completely change the nature of education in our Islands,

175 offering a new chance of contentment, fulfilment for untold numbers of children for many generations to come.

I urge you to embrace it, not just with your vote today, but with your heads and with your hearts. Let us not look back in years to come and regret that we missed an opportunity today. Too many of our children already have to live with the reality of missed opportunities every day of their lives. Today we have the
180 chance to make education a world of opportunity for every child, a source for a better future. Let us take it. Thank you.

Several Members: Hear, hear. (*Applause*)

185 **The Bailiff:** Nobody wishes to debate... (*Laughter*) Deputy De Lisle, then Deputy Adam.

Deputy De Lisle: Sir, I think we have to bring the debate back to common sense on the whole issue. Where is the funding coming from for the pre-school education which will *not* be free, but funded by the people of Guernsey?

190 Only a few months ago, sir, the Department voted to close two sustainable community schools (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) – St Andrew’s and St Sampson’s – which carried high accolades of education because of lack of funding.

Guernsey already, sir, has children in full-time education younger than a lot of counties in England. And some would argue that in order to raise standards in school we should concentrate on those who are in
195 school at present.

As a drive to improve learning standards, everything helps. Pre-school helps: 40% receive 15 hours and over now, and 95% access already some form of pre-school nursery or private school placement before entering school. And it is important to note, sir, that in Jersey children must be four years old before pre-school and in England Sure Start provides pre-school for three and four-year-olds, but children start school
200 at five. In fact in England it has become an issue whereby some four-year-olds are being disadvantaged by the age gap – those born between April and August, particularly, having to wait a further year for full time education. But here children aged five before the 1st September start reception from the next academic year and those that reach four on or before 31st August can begin full-time school – that is if spaces and staff are available at school. And I commend the Department on this.

205 What we need, sir, is to be focussing on those not getting the 15 hours pre-school education and also upgrading pre-school practitioners to achieve the Guernsey quality award status. This can be achieved at far less cost than the £1.9 million. If I recall correctly this could be done for under half a million using the third option in the 2008 Report of the Department – a quarter of the near £2 million being quoted in this policy letter.

210 The Department, sir, has to be credible, reimbursing parents for costs they already incur rather than limiting expenditure to those without access to 15 hours per week. It is not rational given the current States’ financial position.

Pre-school should be means tested. Education has to return to the States with viable funding options that respect their FTP targets, the need to focus on restraint – which has been mentioned by the Minister in his
215 opening address – the current deficit and the ongoing sluggish revenue position that we heard about yesterday. And rather than universal entitlements, target families of limited means.

Thank you, sir.

220 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Adam.

Deputy Adam: Thank you, sir.

I was going to start by saying I doubt that anyone in this Assembly does not agree with the value of pre-school education, but after Deputy De Lisle’s speech I do not think I can say that. (*Laughter*)

225 But to me this States’ Report and the excellent speech the Minister has just given clearly outline the benefits of pre-school education. They have been well-researched by many countries over the years, and explained. Now, I assume that most of these reports suggest that 15 hours over 38 weeks is the optimal amount of time that should be provided.

So what are my concerns about this Report? First of all it suggests, or infers, from various reports provided as evidence, the time spent is compulsory. *The time spent is compulsory.*

230 It is a universal thing that one can access, but if people do not access it are we going to end up in the situation we have now, which is 40% of three to four-year-olds have attended pre-school and headteachers from the primary schools state that there are problems – obvious problems – with children who have not attended pre-school? Therefore, my first concern is, if we are going to have universal pre-school facilities or access available, why is it not made compulsory so that *all* children benefit to the same extent and move
235 onwards from there?

Now, I was told when I asked this question that that would mean changing the Education Law. Well, the Education Law is out of date and should have been changed years ago anyway. So I would suggest that one thing the Education Department should consider seriously if they are going to provide the service free at point of contact, to benefit life long expectations of young people... then maybe they should consider seriously making it compulsory.

Deputy De Lisle has mentioned to the States that 39% or 40% are in 15 hour high quality pre-school and 95% total getting some form of pre-school education. These statistics were obtained from a study that Education Department carried out itself. Yet they could have just simply gone to the early years manager of HSSD and found out exactly what numbers were attending pre-school in that way and what hours they were attending. For example, there are 488 attending pre-school in 2013. Therefore, I suggest they might have got better and more detailed statistics in exactly what the situation is concerning the facilities that are accessed.

So obviously these children benefit. As has already been clearly said there is evidence of improved performance, attainment, behaviour, concentration etc. – and headteachers notice those that do not achieve this.

Another problem I see – and it is highlighted – is why do we just concentrate on this group, an age group of children? There are children who would benefit from input at an earlier age. Therefore, I am not convinced just tackling this one area... It is probably better doing that than nothing at all, I accept that, but we have recently had the Children and Young People's Plan delayed for another three years to be developed properly.

I feel that the problem has to be tackled from an earlier age so that the people who are not getting the help and support early on – that is from six to 12 months upwards – will benefit and be able to enter pre-school at a similar stage of development as their peer group. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

How do we achieve that? Well, unfortunately, the plan, which was the initial Children and Young People's Plan which started in approximately 2010-2011 when it got SSD funding – that was £500,000 over a five year period – was considered ambitious. Unfortunately, a number of actions are still to be progressed including the introduction of the child plan which is an early intervention universal assessment document. This plan was meant to be introduced between HSSD, Education, Home Department and other Departments working together. I feel to a certain extent we have lost three or four years because that plan was not introduced. If it had been introduced then it would put more emphasis on the necessity for pre-school education.

Therefore, are we putting the cart before the horse to a certain extent? And, yes, it may be necessary to start at some point but I think the point is getting a child plan which is an early intervention, universal assessing document.

It is not agency and it requires sign up from all services and, if you remember, during that previous debate it was suggested that that had not occurred on a smooth basis.

All Departments involved in children care must work together to ensure each child is given the opportunity to achieve their full potential. This has been clearly stated by the Minister of Education but, unfortunately, as far as I am concerned, he started at pre-school – I feel we ought to start earlier to get the full benefit of pre-school for some children.

As far as funding is concerned, it is a great issue. Deputy De Lisle has mentioned whether it is reasonable to means test. I have never been in favour of means testing. It is divisive. But Education do means testing already for higher education and whether that form would be reasonable, I do not think so.

I think if you are going to bring something like schooling in – a universal facility – it has to be across the board and fair for everyone. But it has to be done in conjunction with overall care, support and help for the young people from the age of six to 12 months of age. Throwing all this money at this one age group *may* be putting all the money you have got in that one area and forgetting all about the area beforehand.

Thus at the present time I am very much in balance. I would *like* to support this because I believe strongly that pre-school facilities – and it is evident from the better-off, their children go already, 40% go already and get 15 hours – that they benefit. Therefore, we do have a division within our population where other ones cannot benefit. Although I accept there are three, or shall we say two and a half **now**, since Education is not supporting Daisy Chain Pre-Schools for those who are less fortunate.

So how are we going to sort out this problem? Put all our eggs in one basket and start pre-school, or are we going to look at the overall picture?

Sir, I will stop there. Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Lester Queripel.

Deputy Lester Queripel: Thank you, sir.

Sir, at the Scrutiny Committee Christmas Lunch 2013, (*Laughter and interjections*) Deputy Soulsby gave me a Christmas present. She gave me a notebook in which to write my speeches. Here is that

notebook, sir. (*Laughter*) I think she was trying to tell me something because the notebooks I usually use to write my speeches are this size. But for this speech I did use the notebook Deputy Soulsby gave me, because what I want to say can be said in a few sentences.

300 My campaign slogan for the 2008 Election was: 'Give the people what they need.' I do have concerns regarding where the money is going to come from to fund free pre-school but surely that will be the subject of a future debate. Today we are simply being asked to support the objective and with my campaign slogan from 2008 uppermost in my mind, our children need us to vote in favour of these proposals today.

Thank you, sir.

305

The Bailiff: Alderney Representative Jean and Deputy Soulsby.

Alderney Representative Jean: Thank you, sir.

310 To me this is about integration of our young ones. I can understand the amount of support for these proposals. It is well-researched in England, the good that they do. Fifteen hours a week in Guernsey and Alderney – and I am grateful to see that Deputy Sillars includes Alderney.

Care for young children has always been difficult for families. Money is required for so many other things – clothes, food, all manner of things – and in many ways it is cost prohibitive for these young families. I do not believe it should be means tested – I do not know what that noise is – I do not believe it should be means tested.

315 Then there is the time all this takes. I believe a freedom of choice is open to all those families if these proposals are accepted. Funding in two and a half years. There is time. We can look at the detail later of where the funding is to come from – and I agree with Deputy Queripel when he says that.

320 The benefits will outweigh the expenditure. I believe that this money will be returned in spades, generation after generation after generation. It also does give these families a choice and a flexibility which some of them do not have now and means that they will be able to do more for themselves and have more choice.

325 I think this is a good idea, I think it is very important and I think for generations to come the benefits will be enormous. Unfortunately, my colleague and myself may not be here for the vote, and I am disappointed in that – but we have to go back because otherwise we would be here until Friday night.

Thank you, sir. (*Laughter*)

The Bailiff: Deputy Soulsby.

330 **Deputy Soulsby:** Sir, I really am pleased that Deputy Lester Queripel appreciated my present. It was a brilliant speech as well. (*Laughter*)

I have long been a supporter of universal pre-school provision. Indeed, I have been working in a personal capacity to try to increase provision on the Island.

335 Having a mother as a teacher, I am not at all surprised why the Island's school heads – that is those with the professional experience in this area – have been willing to make public their endorsement of these proposals.

There is overwhelming evidence for decades that outcomes are better for children who have attended a pre-school. Ask any primary school teacher worth his or her salt and they would be able to point out those children who attended a pre-school, and those who have not.

340 The reality, of course, is that these proposals do not go far enough. In the report written by Graham Allen MP called 'Early Intervention: the Next Steps', which is quoted in the Report, he does say that there are now two competing cultures, the dominant one of late intervention and the growing one of early intervention, and how these need to be better balanced. He states that it is not an either/or. We must continue to swat the mosquitoes, but we can drain the swamp too. These proposals kind of swat a few mosquitoes but do not do much to drain the swamp.

He also goes on to say that pre-school provision for three to four-year-olds does not give such a great return as programmes built around socio and emotional capabilities. However, he does make the point that they still do make a substantial difference, a net benefit per individual of £6,000 is quoted.

350 Ideally, we would have a full early intervention strategy in place already. However, we do not. But we do have proposals that can be implemented now – at least in States of Guernsey terms – whereas the wider issue of bringing together and developing early intervention strategies involving parenting and family issues will take time and cross-departmental co-operation. And neither do these proposals have to wait for such a strategy. The proposal for universal pre-school provision based around minimum quality standards and a curriculum framework, would surely form part of any future overarching early intervention strategy (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) or Children and Young People's Plan – whatever we wish to call it.

355 Now, in terms of funding, ordinarily – and I expect many in this Chamber think this would be the case – I would be concerned that a Department comes here with proposals that cost money, yet without any

clarification as to how that money would be found. However, the difference here is that these proposals are about investment in the future with a proven payback. Okay, so it is not going to be *immediate* but medium to long term will make a significant difference.

I have become increasingly concerned that with the focus on savings and FTP over the last four plus years, the States has become increasingly inward-looking. We are seeing resources squeezed to the extent work is focused on the today not on the future. We have some great strategies out there but without the resources to implement them or, at best, not implement them in a timely manner. This must change now and to my mind this Report is a great place to start.

Finally, putting aside all the better outcomes for children through a high quality pre-school provision, one of the most important aspects for me, of these proposals, is the opportunities it opens up for women, who are the vast majority of primary carers on Guernsey. There are many women who cannot go to work or have a value to the community in other ways, because they cannot afford childcare, let alone high quality pre-school provision. These proposals go some way to helping these women and ultimately their children, which of course is what this is all about.

It is for all of the above reasons I will therefore be supporting these proposals, and urge all other Members to do so. (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.)

The Bailiff: Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: Thank you, sir.

I am often the sceptic in any room and part of me listens to what I suppose has become the mainstream philosophy of today, whether it be from Education or people who have criticised Education, and take a look back because we can all find examples in history of people who have succeeded and did not have what would now pass for well-organised and trained pre-school education. We could also find examples of other competitive countries where children start school as late as six years of age.

That said, we are living in a particular society that is embedded within the British Isles and a society which has adapted to pre-school private provision and children starting from the age of five. I think too that there is an enormous benefit, not only in integrating people across the social divide but identifying special needs and impairments at an early stage.

On a personal level I did not socialise early with children, I did not go to pre-school before the age of five and it did not do me any harm. Or maybe it did actually (*Laughter*) because perhaps I realised that when I started school at the age of five it was not just a shock to me and my parents, it was a shock to the school. (*Laughter*) Apparently the Deputy Headmistress threatened to resign and so I quietly left the school after three weeks (*Laughter*) and went to a pre-school, even when this was... It was something to do with perhaps I went to school without my trousers on or broke a bird's egg or something, but never mind. (*Laughter*)

So I had my problems, because for the first time in my life I was mixing with children from other backgrounds, boys and girls, all kinds of situations and there was no longer just one or two of me. And I think pre-school education is very important.

What I am hearing today from different voices, whether it be Deputy Soulsby or Deputy Adam, is a view that maybe this does not go far enough in terms of targeting need, in terms of really early years intervention.

Now, if that is so – and I think we have heard that from Children's Services campaigners in the voluntary sector as well – then actually it is putting a pressure on this Assembly to not only support this today, but work towards a broader holistic children and young people's strategy that delivers that resource – which will be several more million pounds a year, let's not be shy about it – for children from the age of one upwards. It is not a reason to reject this Report today, because you would just be kicking the can down the road, throwing out years of good work and undermining the vision that we all unanimously supported approximately 18 months ago.

We are always being told in the States that we should listen to professional advisers, people with perhaps more qualifications or experience than ourselves. And, overwhelmingly, the consensus amongst headteachers is that this is the way forward – and indeed some of them have attended the presentations I went to and put the case personally in a busy schedule.

I think what we are really debating today is not whether to approve or throw out this Report, but the more crucial issue of the universal entitlement. That is the nub of the disagreement in political terms.

Now, the States is ambivalent about that at the moment, we go one way and then another. But I think the point here, as Deputy Sillars said, is that societies that have tried the pick and mix free choice option have found that the results have not been encouraging. And that has applied across the social spectrum.

Do we really want to go back to the electorate – as Deputy Queripel said, 'Give the people what they want,' – and say, 'What we have done is we have decided to employ a few more civil servants at the Education Department in order to supervise a means testing analysis'?

We know from experience that once we start to target assistance at this level it usually means that some people who are already benefiting from other welfare programmes benefit a bit more, and others just above that threshold lose out and become disengaged from politics and frustrated. I sometimes wonder if – with the possible exception of the Housing Minister – we would all be thrown out on a wave of UKIP support if UKIP organised on the Island, because organisations like that may not have the answers but they listen to the people's concerns and there is a growing sense that the people in the squeezed middle are disenfranchised and disengaged.

This set of policies today, for anybody who does not like width taxes or paid parking or anything like that, is a way of giving the money back to the people we most want to help, who are young working parents for the most part – although I respect there are those parents who do not work as well, who want to or are able to, financially focus upon the children – but we should be targeting that group instead of just... And that is the group that we are going for, every parent with children aged between three and five. They would contribute more to the economy – we know that from the survey – and I suspect the survey undervalues the reality of the picture, because the kind of people who fill in surveys, the 50%, the 60%, are usually the more motivated, the more educated, the people with perhaps less socio-economic problems.

They have clearly said that they would be able to contribute more to society and the economy with this facility. They have also very clearly said that they only on average, on a mean, afford nine hours a week. Now clearly the myth that has gone around politically that 95% of the population are already getting the facility is not true – the evidence does not support that.

And universal entitlement does encourage use: why did most of us support a free bus service just a few weeks ago? (*Interjection and laughter*) Well, not all of us but most of us. That was because we had a view that more people would use the service if there was not a charge. We should apply the same logic to something arguably as important – if not significantly more important – as pre-school education.

I think I have heard over the years from a number of people – even senior politicians past and present... they often say what a wonderful, great, incredible place Guernsey is to live. I think we would all agree with that, but it does come across occasionally as complacency, because the Island does have real social problems. A higher than average record of domestic abuse. We have one of the highest prison populations per capita in the western world. Even three American States and Mexico are doing better than us.

There is a direct link between, unfortunately, local people who find themselves in trouble and lack of motivation at school, disengagement, exclusions, special needs that were not identified etc. This is a way of ensuring those children get an extra two years – and it will be appropriately regulated so that the provision is of a meaningful quality and standard as well.

This has to be the beginning of a universal children and young people's strategy that aims to not only improve the lot of working parents who need something back from the States but also make tomorrow's children higher attainers and maybe too, in the longer term, improve our overall employability rates and examination results – which of course have been an issue in the last few years for some schools.

So if we do not support this today we will be putting the clock back and maybe having to put money by in a strategic reserve for the additional money that we will need to spend 10 or 20 years down the line.

The Bailiff: Deputy Lester Queripel.

Deputy Lester Queripel: Sir, point of correction, if I may. I did not want to interrupt Deputy Gollop when he was speaking, but he said that my campaign slogan was 'Give the people what they *want*', but it is actually 'Give the people what they *need*'. There is a big difference in the two, sir.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Fallaize then Deputy Green.

Deputy Fallaize: Thank you, sir.

I may have a very minor interest to declare in that I have a daughter who is at a pre-school, albeit not for 15 hours a week because that would be unaffordable, and she will not be when this scheme is implemented, if, indeed, it is.

Sir, there are two Propositions at page 1130 and they contain what I regard as three basic questions which the Education Department are asking us today.

The first is: do we agree in principle with the concept of universal access to pre-school education?

The second is: do we agree with the Department's proposed scheme for implementing universal access to pre-school education?

The third is: do we agree with the Department's proposed approach to obtaining funding for access to pre-school education?

The three issues are the principles, the details and the process, and I want to say a few words about each of those things, sir.

480 First of all, regarding the principles, the concept of universal access to pre-school – or high quality pre-school – education. I have to say I think this policy letter could have been written more clearly, and in some parts of it I think that the Education Department are laying it on the line a bit thick.

There is paragraph 5.3.7, for example, which rather implies that if we introduce pre-school education we will have mothers who have better nutrition and smoke less and mothers who use alcohol and drugs less.
485 Now, the problem with this Report is that it does not identify that there are several other variable factors on top of pre-school education which contribute to social disadvantage and social problems. The Report should really qualify the benefits that pre-school education can deliver.

I doubt actually whether, if you take two mothers who are otherwise identical economically and socially, that if one mother's child obtains pre-school education and another mother's child does not, that
490 the latter is more likely to abuse alcohol and drugs and smoke. And I think that the Report of the Department ought to have identified that there are these other variable factors. There is a big difference between observing a trend and proving cause and effect.

But outside of members of the Flat Earth Society, I think that there is broad acceptance that universal pre-school education does deliver very significant benefits to children irrespective of their socio-economic background. We know that because of studies that have been carried out – not by our own Education
495 Department but by internationally reputable organisations such as the OECD – which have demonstrated that the benefits of pre-school education are significant and critically enduring.

Teenage students who have benefited from good quality pre-school education on average perform better educationally than those who have not, even allowing for differences in socio-economic background. It is true that the studies show that the children who benefit most from pre-school education are those from
500 socially disadvantaged backgrounds. But the benefit does not stop there, the benefit is maintained right through a child's life irrespective of their socio-economic background.

The letter which Deputy Sillars referred to from the headteachers is significant. Not only for the reasons which he explained, but also because they are running institutions which are part of the education system and they themselves are competing for scarce resources. If they believed that we would be better to invest
505 scarce resources directly in the primary phase of education then no doubt they would have written to the press and said exactly that. But operating from a different sector of education, they have written imploring the States to invest in the pre-school sector – and I think that is quite significant.

Now, we are not proposing making it compulsory. I do not think – to pick up on Deputy Adam's point – that that is because it would mean changing the law, although I am sometimes concerned that the present Education Law does appear to be somewhat sacrosanct to some of the people within the Education
510 Department. Countless numbers of us arrive desperate to update this law and we are dissuaded, to put it mildly. But I do not think that that is really the reason that Education are not proposing making it compulsory.

I think it is quite reasonable that we make education compulsory from the age of five, either through attendance at school or through parental provision via home schooling, but I do not want to make it compulsory before the age of five. I do not think that there is any logic at all in saying we are not going to vote for this scheme unless the Education Department are prepared to make it compulsory. It is a bit like
515 Deputy Jones' old speech about anti-smoking measures, 'I am not going to vote for any anti-smoking measures unless you are prepared to ban it.' That is not terribly logical and I do not think it is logical to say that we are not going to introduce universal access to pre-school education until we are prepared to make it compulsory.

We are talking about a reasonable number of hours per week of good quality pre-school education and we know that can be hugely beneficial. In fact, even the Policy Council – although their letter of comment is generally critical about the proposals – say that they support the objectives in the Report.
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So if we generally accept the concept we have to ask how are we doing as a society in providing universal access to pre-school education. Well, the answer is, at best, mixed and, at worst, we are falling well short.

I am not personally wedded to 15 hours per week. If Education had come forward with 10 or 12 hours a week I would have supported them, quite happily. But it does appear to be an internationally accepted – not optimum standard, but – *minimum* standard, 15 hours per week.
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Deputy De Lisle said 40% of children in the Bailiwick are already obtaining this internationally accepted minimum. But I am interested in the 60% who are not. (**A Member:** Yes.)

But on top of the fact that 60% of our children are not obtaining the 15 hours per week, we have absolutely no assurance at all about the quality of provision. Now, I know this is a sensitive subject and when I was on Education we were working with the pre-school alliance trying to put together... well,
535 actually, what would have been more or less identical proposals to those which this Department is laying before the States. And it is a sensitive subject. There is some very, very good practice in the pre-school sector, clearly (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) but it is mixed. The provision is patchy, and we do not have any

assurance about the standard of education. I know HSSD have a regulatory regime but you will never convince me that that regime is based on anything much more than health and safety. (*Interjection*)

We do not have proper regulation of educational standards in pre-school provision (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) and all the anecdotal evidence is that the standards are extremely variable. There is some very good practice but it is not universal. So we have far too few children accessing really high quality pre-school education – and that is the basic problem that the Department is trying to rectify in its proposals.

So the second issue is: do we agree with their proposed approach to addressing the basic problem?

There are three ways that we could try and address this. ‘Scheme 1’ would be to attach a pre-school to every primary school, or more or less every primary school. When I was on the Education Department that was the position I started in because that would be the very best scheme. If we really wanted to have the highest quality of pre-school education, that is what we would do. The problem is it would unreasonably put out of business pre-school providers – who at the moment are doing a very good job – and, secondly, it would be very, very expensive. So we have to park that solution.

The second option is to means test, and I know there are some Members of the States – although they are notably silent at the start of this debate, but we will hear from them later on – who very much favour means testing, targeted provision.

Now, I am hugely opposed to means testing pre-school education. Not because I have some kind of mushy attachment to providing additional benefits for the middle class – I do not. But because means testing works well for cash benefits. I am not surprised that the Social Security Department raises the issue of means testing, because they are in the business of providing cash benefits and means testing works pretty well – not perfectly, but pretty well – for cash benefit. But means testing generally is lousy when you are trying to determine access to services.

It is not an effective way of rationalising access to services, which is why – if you think about the various services that have to be rationalised, in Education and particularly in Health Care – by and large we do not use means testing as a way of rationalising services. We use all sorts of other ways: put people on to waiting lists and you say, ‘No you cannot access provision until you have been on the list six weeks or eight weeks’. But we generally do not use means testing as a way of rationalising access to services, and we are debating access to a service and not a cash benefit.

I know this is disputed by some Members but devising a test of means is quite complicated and would inevitably be full of anomalies and inconsistencies. Yes, it is true. I think it was Deputy Adam who said, ‘But the Education Department already means test for access to higher education.’ That is true. But that scheme creates a whole load of anomalies and inconsistencies.

Deputy Adam knows that, as a former Member of the Department, where you have affluent parents who split up suddenly the child is entitled – by some wonderful accounting mechanism, the child becomes entitled to support. And yet the child of two parents who are not particularly affluent but are still together, somehow has support clawed away from them. And you have problems of capital. I know the Education Department has tried to address this to some extent, but you still have problems of people who have *capital* wealth are able to access support, and people who have not found creative ways of obtaining capital wealth do not have the support.

Also that scheme is different because in higher education we are trying to rationalise States’ support to send young people to a scheme which already exists. If Guernsey sent no students to the UK, the UK would still have a higher education system. They would still have all of the universities and colleges they currently have. We are simply trying to buy our way in to a very well-developed scheme.

This is completely different; this is trying to set up a universal scheme more or less from scratch, because 60% of the children we are talking about here are not accessing the scheme that the Education Department wants to provide for them. So I think the comparison between the Department’s higher education test of means and the hideous kind of test of means that would be necessary for this, is not relevant.

Also targeted provision does equal much lower take up. We know that. You only need to look at the difference between the Social Security benefits which are universal and the Social Security benefits which are targeted. There is much lower take up with means testing.

Means testing will entrench social division. Not because you will have one family which does not get a voucher and another family which does get a voucher – I am not talking about any kind of stigma that is attached to it, that is not what I mean by ‘social division’. The problem is, the reason we would entrench social division is, because the scheme will not work.

The only way of running this scheme so that you draw enough – almost all, hopefully – of the existing pre-school providers into the scheme is to make it universal. Otherwise it is not sufficiently attractive financially. If we try to means test we will end up with some pre-schools which do not become part of the scheme and some pre-schools which do. And all the children who become entitled to the means tested scheme will be channelled into a few pre-schools which become part of the means tested side of the scheme. That is what will entrench social division. We will not be able to means test and distribute children

amongst all of the pre-school providers, which is the only way of running this scheme without entrenching social division. So whatever Members do, please do not send the Education Department away to introduce a means tested scheme.

So that leaves the third option, which is somewhere in between the two, the super duper pre-school attached to every primary school and means testing, which is the scheme that the Department is putting forward. Universal access, universal entitlement, but through a public/private partnership.

That is cost effective. It builds upon the existing provision, it provides universal access to 15 hours per week and critically, for the reasons I have just mentioned, it gives the Education Department sufficient leverage to ensure the quality award can apply right across the sector. That is the only way we are going to raise standards in pre-school.

So I think the case is made for the concept and I think the case is made for the detailed scheme which the Department is putting forward, which leaves the question of how the Department is trying to access funding. This is really a question of process.

There is a suggestion in the Policy Council's letter of comment certainly that the Department is acting incorporately, almost as if the Department has dreamt up this concept of pre-school education overnight, does not want to talk to anyone else about it and is just coming to the States and saying, 'We have had this good idea, disregard the other Departments' priorities, vote for this.' Well, of course, that is bunkum.

Pre-school education was identified as a priority by the States as far back as 2003. In the 2007 Government Business Plan – this was put together by the Policy Council – one of the priorities under the heading of Education is 'Develop Pre-compulsory Education Options in Consultation with Private Sector Providers':

'Evaluate cost options and prepare a strategy for submission to the States.'

That is 2007. We are in 2014. In 2009 another Policy Council report – this time it has changed its name to the States' Strategic Plan – and what is identified amongst social policy priorities as a high priority by the Policy Council? Pre-school education. And the Policy Council's narrative is:

'Pre-school education for all three and four year olds, and child care have been high priority since the inception of the Corporate Anti-Poverty Programme in 2003. Pre-school education is essential to give all children the best possible start in life. This project is therefore an investment for the future.'

That was four years ago.

In 2011, another change of name, same Policy Council, under their heading Social Policy Priorities:

'Greater equality of educational opportunity to ensure that quality pre-school service provision for all three and four-year-olds are provided to those children of pre-compulsory school age to maximise life chances and equality of educational opportunity later in life.'

This States cannot get away with it because only last year we agreed to the strategic direction which was in the Education Department's Vision, as they called it, and that report made it very clear that they were committed to universal entitlement of 15 hours a week of high quality pre-school education for all three and four-year-olds, *and* made it very clear that they would be coming back to the States. It says:

'We will bring a States' report to the Assembly in quarter four 2013,'

– you are late –

'seeking approval for the introduction of an entitlement to 15 hours per week of pre-school education for all three to four year olds in partnership with private providers.'

Now, if there has been a failure of policy co-ordination here, is the fault really with the Education Department? I would have thought the Policy Council since 2007 might have been saying, 'Well, now, the States have committed to pre-school education three or four times in 2007 and 2009 and 2011 and 2013. We had better work with the Education Department to ensure that their proposals are properly co-ordinated with the proposals of other Departments.'

No! What happens is that when the Education Department fulfil their pledge of seven years, eventually, and say, 'We are now coming to the States with exactly the proposals we said we would', suddenly a few weeks before the debate, the Policy Council says, 'Oh, hold on a minute. What about the need to co-ordinate their proposals with all the other Departments?' (*Interjections*) Well, that is what has happened.

Now, Proposition 2 is the fallback as far as I am concerned. Proposition 1 says:

'To agree in principle'...

If I was the Education Department I would have taken the words ‘in principle’ out. I do not want to agree in principle. I want to agree just full stop. But that is not as far as Education are going, they are asking us to agree in principle.

Then in Proposition 2:

‘To direct... Education... and [T&R to] lay before the States a report advising of one or more options for funding...’

And that report would have to come to the States by September 2015.

I have no doubt at all that if, upon further analysis of funding options, it cannot be implemented for a year or for two years or for three, we will just knock the implementation date back. That Proposition 2 is a safeguard. We will not have any universal access to pre-school education until the States have made further Resolutions in 2015, pursuant to this Proposition 2. So there will have to be another debate about funding.

The way that Education have set out their Propositions, this Assembly remains completely in control of the timetable, the delivery and the funding, because there has to be a subsequent debate on funding. And implicit in that will be a debate on the timetable for implementation.

I fully expect that when they sit down with Education, T&R’s opening gambit is going to be, ‘Okay, where can you find some spare capacity in your budget?’ And because we know that the Education Department is utterly committed to this – because the Minister has told us – I think the Education Department are going to have to find some spare capacity in their budget – if it means some reallocation, then so be it.

But we will have a further debate. We do remain in control of the process. Proposition 2 gives us that fall back.

Sir, I think the concept of pre-school is accepted. I think it is more or less universally supported. The scheme that the Education Department are proposing is, in reality, the only way of raising standards across the whole sector and the way that the Education Department have laid out their Propositions we will remain in control of the timetable for implementation and the funding plan.

I urge the States on that basis, sir, to support the Propositions.

The Bailiff: Deputy Green, then Deputy Dave Jones, Deputy Trott and then Deputy Le Clerc.

Deputy Green: Mr Bailiff, thank you.

I think most people in Guernsey and Alderney can readily see the very clear advantages of having universal pre-school education for all children.

For me, this policy letter provides a very compelling case and there is undoubtedly a real danger to my mind that this States will actually look rather out of touch with ordinary working families if this Report is disregarded today.

In short, universal pre-school education will help the Education Department to drive up standards and results generally within the education system. It will help to provide greater equality of access and opportunity for all children. And it will also help this Government to some extent over time to reduce the costs of societal failure.

Mr Bailiff, for me politics in Guernsey should offer something more than an argument about why change is bad and I will certainly endeavour to deconstruct some of the arguments against this policy letter during the course of this speech.

But first of all I want to say that I can actually understand perfectly well where Treasury and Resources and indeed the majority of the Policy Council are coming from in terms of their letters of comment. Some of these concerns expressed by T&R and Policy Council are of course valid concerns, but the point for me is they are not totally insurmountable problems.

Objections about how you fund this policy and about corporate governance concerns are not items that are too great to be overcome today, in my opinion.

The funding issue can and will be dealt with later in this speech, but the point about corporate governance and queue jumping, so to speak, rather ignores the point that Deputy Fallaize has made – the fact that this policy is hardly a bolt from the blue. It has been earmarked and flagged for many, many years. It was a policy of the previous Education Department. It was flagged by ourselves in the Education Vision which was supported unanimously only last year by this Assembly. We have made it absolutely clear that universal pre-school education is a key component in our strategic thinking about education. So it should come as a surprise to nobody.

So are we really going to allow procedural nit-picking to get in the way of what is essentially a very good sound, solid idea?

Now, our Education Vision did set out our intention to pursue universal pre-school education, but it also set out the core value of the importance of equality of opportunity generally. And indeed the need for our Island to make the most out of all of our people by investing in all of our children and to enable each child

to better fulfil their own potential. Indeed the States' Strategic Plan also called for equality of opportunity and social justice in respect of social policy.

What is the use of warm words like that without real practical actions to back them up? I do not actually want to be part of a Government that is all warm words on social policy but very little practical action. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) That is not what I have signed up for at all.

However, this policy letter will at last provide some comfort and some evidence that Guernsey's Government can actually bring in family-friendly measures and can support hard working families in these tough economic times.

Now, I know some Members will be concerned and concerned rightly about the funding of this but, as imperative as it is to balance the States' Budget as soon as is practicable, it is also undoubtedly an imperative that we work much harder to build the real equality of opportunity for all of our children if we actually want to see a genuine meritocracy in this Island and if we want to use effectively the best natural resource that we have in our people.

We cannot simply allow social policy to stagnate or ossify in this political term and this policy letter is very much an antidote to that in my view.

Now, we know that in Guernsey today there is unequal access to pre-school education, coupled with variable quality, and it is a fact that there is no equality of opportunity at the foundational stage in learning in education in Guernsey in 2014. And that *status quo*, to my mind, is not defensible.

Some children, of course, benefit from well over 15 hours of good quality pre-school every week. Some others benefit from far fewer hours of pre-school every week and, as I say, the quality is not always assured in terms of the educational content. Good quality pre-school education as opposed to simple day care is not always guaranteed. And of course some children do not benefit at all from a pre-school education in any setting. It is very much a mixed picture – again, as Deputy Fallaize has indicated.

Speak to headteachers across the sectors, right across the Island, particularly in the primary sphere and you will hear those trends encapsulated in their professional experience. Is it any wonder, therefore, that this Island's primary heads and others are so supportive of this policy letter? Members may feel their experiences particularly of relevance here.

This unequal access to pre-school is not just a concept, it has consequences – consequences that we should not deny, consequences which are all too visible at primary school level but also consequences later on in life as well.

So I do really believe that the moral case for this policy letter is very clearly made out. Deputy Adam in his speech this morning asked whether this should actually be compulsory and personally I do have some sympathy with that. That was not the direction that we decided to go in in the end, but I do have some sympathy with that. Yes, it would require a change in the law, which of course would delay and be time consuming, but surely the point is that we should actually try to make this work before we make it compulsory. If the problems that he suspects may happen without it being compulsory do happen, then perhaps that is something that we would fall back to in due course, but I do not think that is really an argument for today, in my view.

Mr Bailiff, I would argue – and I always argue – that sensible public finances do go hand in hand with strong social policies and I would say that this policy letter is not inconsistent with that notion. It is of course perfectly reasonable for Members to ask: how can the States fund this? We are, after all, the custodians of the public purse, ultimately. But neither Proposition that is the Billet actually commits the States to any particular expenditure today. We are asking for in principle support but not for a commitment of any money at this stage.

The second Proposition is for T&R and for Education to work together to agree the funding model. So I would suggest it is a partnership approach, it is a consensus Government approach *par excellence*. It is actually something which perhaps does not happen enough and we do have the time to be able to do this, as Alderney Representative Louis Jean said a moment ago. We have the time on our side, if you like.

By choosing to work with Treasury and Resources that does show, in my opinion, that we are not off on a frolic of our own, we are mindful of public finances and we are mindful indeed of the review of personal taxes and all the rest of it, which is currently being undertaken.

Now, of course this is expensive but generous and inclusive ideas usually are. And again I do not want to be a part of a States that is not prepared to consider generous and inclusive ideas. But just because this comes with a price tag it does not mean that it is automatically invalid or unreasonable as a concept. It simply means that we have to work and think harder to identify the funding. But really it is a question of priorities.

Now, personally speaking, I think a reallocation of existing States' spending away from lower priority or more questionable areas and towards universal pre-school education would be my preferred way of doing it. This does absolutely not imply the need to raise taxation – not one bit. But of course we are not looking for the finance today in any event.

Now, T&R make much of the argument that the Review of Personal Taxes, Benefits and Pensions is looking at the appropriateness of existing universal benefits and that the possibility of providing a universal entitlement to pre-school education should be considered within that process – if I have got that argument right – but I have always considered that that is something of a category error: to say that a suggestion of a universal educational service should be, in effect, lumped in with universal cash benefits or tax allowances. Universal pre-school is so much more than a cash benefit. Really it is quite qualitatively different from any universal cash benefit.

We at Education inherited many problematic issues which were and are a legacy of failure and complacency over many years in the past. The failure to invest in quality and universal pre-school education and in the early years of life generally in the golden years of Guernsey's strong economic growth was in my opinion a failure of epic proportions – one which continues to hold back our education system and indeed many individual Islanders.

This policy letter will simply extend universal educational provision back by one year only from its current provision – a measure that will bring with it, as the Report makes absolutely clear, a whole host of social, economic and educational benefits. Even given our issues with the Budget deficit we should still recognise the clear and obvious benefits, including the financial benefits in avoiding the costs of social failure in this policy letter. You only have to look at the table on page 1117 for the real evidence on that. We should perhaps take a long-term view in politics rather more often and not purely a short-term one. My question may truly be this: can we actually afford not to pursue this policy in the long run?

Now, I want to deconstruct the suggestion that this should be means tested and my job is perhaps made rather easier by Deputy Fallaize having immediately preceded me because he made some good points in that regard.

But for those who seek to argue now that pre-school should really somehow be targeted or rationed, really they must try to answer why that particular logic is not more broadly applicable to States-funded primary schools, for example, or indeed secondary education. There are many problems with means testing for services like this, as opposed to a cash benefit. Means testing is such a blunt instrument which would inevitably draw some entirely arbitrary line that would not enable the genuine equality of access that we seek. It would, I fear, leave out many Guernsey families in the squeezed middle of our Island. Those who presumably would end up just above the means test threshold would miss out and that cannot be right or that cannot be consistent with genuine equality of access.

In any event, we are talking about the early years and the pre-school years which are vital foundational years for everything that follows. The fact that we means test higher education grants is not much of an analogy in my opinion as that comes at the opposite end of the spectrum in terms of a young person's life, not at the key foundational stage.

So I think there is a very kind of superficial attractiveness to the means testing argument but all of the evidence, certainly in this Report, seems to suggest that means testing would not be a good or appropriate solution.

Indeed, why is it that jurisdictions including England, Scotland, Jersey, Republic of Ireland and others have all opted for universal pre-school and not for a means tested variety? Surely we must seek to learn from the experience of our near neighbours and, by opting for a means tested solution, we would actually be simply out of line with those jurisdictions who have preceded us and gone before us.

So this is about the vital foundational stage of learning. It is certainly not a nice-to-have policy, it is crucial in this day and age.

It is often said, Mr Bailiff, that you would not try to build a house without first building the foundations and that is what we want for all Guernsey children – a proper foundational learning, a good solid start in life. But, sadly, we know that Guernsey is a long way behind other neighbouring jurisdictions in this regard and that is a deep shame that we really need to rectify.

Now, I want to say a few words about the work of the Children and Young People's Plan here. Clearly some questioned whether Education should be bringing this policy now, ahead of the updated plan for young people and of course people have questioned whether this is the real priority at this time, in terms of the early years area in general. But in my view it really is rather inconceivable that the Children and Young People's Plan will not eventually include a universal entitlement to pre-school education in any event. I think Deputy Soulsby made that point this morning and I agreed with her.

However, Education certainly does wish to work closely alongside the CYPP Group and the other relevant Departments in order to improve all outcomes for children right through from nought to five. We do sincerely believe that investment in universal pre-school education *is* the right priority for this Government right now. But that does not mean that we are in any way disregarding the nought to three age bracket. Education, together with other Departments and voluntary groups, really can improve those outcomes with better joined agency working, with better data sharing and other well-crafted initiatives, especially as regards the so-called first 1,000 days of life.

Indeed, Deputy Adam wondered this morning whether we were putting the cart before the horse by pursuing this policy letter, but actually, in light of where we have started from, I do not think there is necessarily one right answer in this area. I understand the point he is making, but I am not sure there is necessarily one fixed idea of how you proceed from the, frankly, not particularly impressive state of the early years provision in general at the moment. So I do not think there is one real answer there.

I do concede and this is... Mr Bailiff, I do think it is important for politicians to sometimes admit their mistakes and I think one mistake in the Education policy letter is that not enough attention was given to measuring outcomes. And I do concede that it is entirely right for there to be effective monitoring of universal pre-school to ensure that we can properly measure the impact and the realisable benefits, and I am not sure we necessarily gave enough attention to that when we were scrutinising the draft report. So personally I apologise for that. I think we should have given more consideration to measuring impacts and realisable benefits. But, nonetheless, this is something we can certainly work closely with the Children and Young People's Group on in future.

Mr Bailiff, in conclusion, this policy letter is very long overdue. It is strongly supported by the substantial research available that suggests that universal pre-school will bring with it significant educational social and economic benefits as set out in the Report. This is policy absolutely based on the available evidence. It is supported by the Guernsey Pre-school Learning Alliance and by the primary and secondary headteachers, which I think is a very powerful statement in itself.

I said at the beginning politics should offer more than an argument about why change is bad. This is an issue that fundamentally is not going to go away. Together with T&R we can work out a way of funding this if the will is there.

Members will not be voting for any particular public spending today by backing the principle of universal pre-school and by backing the second Proposition.

Most, if not all, States' Members want to see the performance of our education system improve, especially in terms of outcomes and results. Supporting this policy will go a long way to boosting the whole of our local education system.

Please support the Report. Do what is right for all children in this Island. Give them all equal access to quality pre-school to get a good solid start in life.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Dave Jones.

Deputy David Jones: Thank you, Mr Bailiff.

I am one of those right-wing swivel-eyed loons – a bit of a 'Perrot-ism' there – that Deputy Perrot refers to on a time who think that by and large people who have children should be responsible for them and things like maternity and paternity leave are all a bit over the top and if you have the decision to make children then you should make provision for them. However, I am not quite as right wing as Deputy Quin (*Laughter and interjection*)

When it comes to education, however, I think it is a whole different ball game and the sooner that we can get our youngsters into some sort of pre-school education, to help them with the transition between what they used to call kindergarten to full-time education, the better.

We were very lucky. I mean both my children were taught from a very early age at home and we sat and read with them – well, I did not but my wife did – (*Laughter*) for many hours before they ever started mainstream school and they were able to read to a fairly primitive standard before they started.

So I am going to support Education. This is, as we say – as Deputy Green has just said – an in principle agreement.

Just on a history of the Policy Council, we had a long discussion at the Policy Council and as the longest serving Member – and it was useful Deputy Fallaize giving us the history, the historical time line of this subject, because he is absolutely right... and when this first came to the Policy Council you have got to remember we still had surpluses of £30 million to £40 million sloshing around. Everything was possible. But the discussions of late round the Policy Council have been supportive of the principle of pre-school education. But quite rightly some of the Ministers – and the Treasury Minister, in particular – are concerned about how it might be funded.

Now, I went against my basic principles and voted for the closure of two schools, when I had firmly (*Interjections*) – yes, well – believed previously that our Parish schools were the best option. But part of that decision was because I wanted Education to use their budget better, to do the things that they wanted to do and pre-school education was always in there in that mix.

I agree with Deputy Fallaize again – that is twice in one morning – apart from some of *The Guardian*-reading comments that he made on other things to do with – (*Laughter*) but I think that he is absolutely right that the Education Department will have to look to their budget to see what money is available to help fund this education.

I also did not want to vote for the four new members of staff at Environment for the transport strategy. I said in my speech at that time that if it came to pre-school education and £2 million for that, against four new members of staff, at a time when we are trying to slim down our bureaucracy, I would vote for it every day of the week.

The other thing is as well, at the Policy Council there is some concern over the universal benefits. Now I agree with those who do not want means testing for this, because I think this is not a policy where means testing will give the fairest result for certainly some of the middle income families, because whenever you put means testing in you have to draw a line – there has to be a threshold – and it is always those people who have just got a toe over that threshold who lose out (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) and that is what is wrong with means testing.

But you cannot argue that the Treasury Minister and others who are working on the tax and benefit review... because I want to see an end to universal benefits for people like me, in terms of the £12 grant for doctors. I do not think anybody who is earning what we are earning as Ministers should get a £12 grant when there are people who cannot go to the doctors (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) because they cannot afford to go. (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) That needs sorting out.

So I do not want people to think that the Policy Council are beating up on Education because I have been at all those meetings when this was discussed and the Minister is nodding his head but I do not think that is how he sees it. But you cannot blame the Treasury Minister and others for flagging up some of the problems that they are facing in the Tax and Benefit Review, the issues with universal benefits, against means testing for something like pre-school education which we are rolling out – or hopefully going to roll out – at 15 hours per week that is going to be paid for –

I will give way to my Deputy Minister.

Deputy Hadley: While the Minister is talking about universal benefits and the £12 grant, has he forgotten that in fact access to primary health care is means tested in a way that Deputy Fallaize seems to have forgotten. Because it is provided free for people who are on social security or benefits at all, but there are a whole raft of people who do not go to the GP or do not go to the Accident and Emergency Department because they cannot afford to. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

Deputy David Jones: I thank the Deputy Minister for that interruption but I thought that was the point I was trying to make. (*Laughter*)

But at the moment what we have got with pre-school education is a bit like legal representation. At the moment you get the justice you can afford. And that is the same with pre-school education. And Deputy Perrot is not in the Assembly so I might have got away with that. That is the situation we are in at the moment.

And unfortunately I have to say this – and I have been banging on about this for months and I think two previous Bailiffs have also made the point – that in Guernsey you basically get the justice that you can afford. The rest is means tested by legal aid and that is it; and the same with pre-school education. If you have got a reasonable or two reasonable incomes and you can afford to send your child to a pre-school, a day school that is fine, but what about all the other people?

The other reason I am supporting this is because I think it will help hard working families. It will help them try and get ways of further income to help them support their families and people are really struggling. There was a thing on *Channel Television* – I think it was last night – showing in Jersey where food banks now have become the norm for lots of families, and that is in 2014! Families are resorting to food banks to feed their children! It is disgraceful. (*Interjection*) In Jersey, I agree but I am not aware of that situation being that hard here yet. (*Interjections*)

And as I said it will help the transition between pre-school education and full-time education.

Going back to the Policy Council, I think the main concern of some of the Members of the Policy Council is the funding issue, which is always going to be a problem. We have still got a structural deficit. That has to be addressed. The funding issue – the fact that... how this is going to roll out – the detail? But we are here today to talk about whether we support the principle of this.

And I for one do support and have always supported the principle of having some form of pre-school education in Guernsey.

I think that when it comes back, if Education have not brought a report back with all the bells and whistles, and with the overall satisfaction of the people carrying out the Tax and Benefit Review in Treasury, then we are going to be in for a very interesting debate at that point having agreed it in principle, which I sincerely hope we do today. But that is the time to get into that argument.

Today can we just please agree on the principle of pre-school education, so at least that they can move on with some confidence that this particular Assembly is signed up to that?

I will be supporting this report. Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy Trott, to be followed by Deputy Le Clerc and Deputy Stewart.

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

With all this talk of left-wingers and right-wingers, I am reminded of the comments of a great statesman of yesteryear who said,

‘Never be afraid to walk down the centre of the political road because on either side there is a gutter.’

960 *(Laughter)* I find myself, sir, increasingly centrist in my political views. *(Laughter and interjections)* I give way, sir –

Deputy Fallaize: Has Deputy Trott heard of the saying that those who walk down the middle of the road invariably get run over? *(Laughter)*

965 **Deputy Trott:** Not with our traffic strategy. *(Laughter and applause)*

Sir, I need to start by declaring an interest because I am the very proud father of a gorgeous seven-month-old daughter who, of course, perhaps uniquely amongst Members of the States, will – if these Propositions are passed, or certainly eventually – be amongst the initial benefactors of this policy.

970 Sir, with that declaration made, can I make a point about the cost of education *per se*? And I do this for the benefit of our listeners and for the readers of *The Guernsey Press*. I think this is a point that I have made privately on many times in the past but never publicly. If you earn an average wage in the Bailiwick of Guernsey you do not pay enough into general revenue through your income taxes to fund the existing annual costs of educating a single child.

975 Now, what makes that relevant is that we are often told what an enormous waste of money... how we waste peoples taxes and this that and the other. Well, the reality is that most of our taxpayers do not pay enough, as I say, to educate a child in what most people would regard as an excellent education system.

980 Sir, HSSD is currently forecasting a year end overspend of circa £4.75 million. We heard that yesterday from the Treasury Minister. And Education may also fail to hit their FTP targets although academic year timings and such like make that analysis difficult. But, in any event, 2014 is likely to miss the FTP targets and by a significant margin.

985 Now, the Education Department have made a compelling case for pre-school education and they have certainly convinced me of the educational and social and, indeed, economic benefits. They are huge. And therefore I wonder why they have not given this matter the priority it deserved in the past. This, I have to say, is an example of a question that I already know the answer to. Why? Because I have already asked the Education Minister that question in a briefing that the Department were kind enough to give me. But the answer is illuminating and I think those who have not heard it may benefit from doing so.

I do pose the question though maybe the Department could have scrapped funding for media studies courses earlier, as an example of where some funds may have been released.

990 But a more relevant question is this: can I ask the Minister, in his summing up or indeed other Members of the Education Department who have yet to speak and that includes the majority, where does this policy rank in the overall policy matrix of the Education Department?

995 Another question I would like him to answer, sir, is: what service or services are the Education Department willing or able – or possibly both – to cease providing in order to release nearly £2 million per annum necessary to fund this service?

So if we look at paragraph 12.1 on page 1125, it is a paragraph that deals – as all States’ reports must, as all reports of this nature must – with compliance and corporate governance issues and strategic objectives.

Now, the Education Department tell us that the contents of this States’ Report are in accordance with the objectives in the States’ Strategic Plan, in particular the objectives on equality of opportunity and sustainable long-term finances.

1000 Well, let’s just remind ourselves of some of the key initiatives of some of the States’ Strategic Plan – particularly those to do with fiscal constraint. And it is with this in mind, sir, that sometimes I feel as if I am in a little bit of a Walter Mitty environment in this Assembly from time to time, and I am delighted that my good friend the Deputy Advocate Green is amused by that, because it was something that he said that enabled me to scribble this down – I find myself particularly in this sort of odd place with arguments which tell me that I signed up for a Vision so it must happen. Okay, I accept that – I signed up for a vision so it must happen. Well, this Assembly, sir, signed up for fiscal constraint for the FTP and yet we were told yesterday that it is becoming an unmitigated failure. *(Interjections)* Well – *(Laughter)*
1005 I gladly give way, sir.

1010 **Deputy St Pier:** I had to rise to my feet at some point, I guess. *(Laughter)*

Yes, point of correction. I do not think I described it as ‘an unmitigated failure’ in any shape or form. There are challenges – significant challenges – particularly for the Education Department, which is perhaps the more relevant point in the context of this debate, sir.

1015 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Trott.

Deputy Trott: Thank you, sir.

1020 So this Assembly did though – regardless of whether it is a failure, mitigated or otherwise – sign up to fiscal constraint. It is apparently committed to a Financial Transformation Programme and yet we heard yesterday that the FTP is struggling at best, mortally wounded at worst.

1025 So I would like the Minister – I am going to support the Propositions, Deputy Green, so... Absolutely, this is what happens when you walk down the centre of the political road! (*Laughter*) It is a dangerous place to be, as we have already heard. So I would ask the Minister, finally, in his summing up or again for other Members of the Department, to address when they speak, of examples of what the Department considers are viable options for funding universal pre-school education. Because the easy part is saying ‘yes’ to a States’ Report that makes an overwhelming case in favour of pre-school, the difficult part is deciding how best it can be funded if we are to continue to adhere to arguably our most overarching important strategic objective of all and that is fiscal constraint.

Thank you, sir.

1030 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Le Clerc.

Deputy Le Clerc: Thank you, sir.

If I walk down the centre of the road I shall make sure that I am well behind Deputy Trott.

1035 I, like many others, have a few issues with this Report. My heart, and to some extent my head, tells me that we should vote in favour of this, but the fiscally responsible part of my head says, ‘Hold on a minute. This is going to cost approximately £1.9 million per year.’

As the FTP draws to a close and despite the fact that we have not yet banked all the savings, we seem to be turning on the tap and spending money again.

1040 I, like many other States’ Members, attended sessions very kindly put on by Education, but many of the questions I raised at that time are still unanswered. So I am just going to go through some of my concerns.

1045 Paragraph 3 states that the outcome of this policy is to increase the percentage of pre-school children receiving 15 hours per week from 39% towards 100%. I am realistic enough to understand that we will not achieve the 100%, as the proposal is not compulsory. So, sir, my first question for the Minister is: how will the remaining 61% or even 50% – assuming that there is not full take up – be accommodated?

1050 In head count terms this is 366 additional children aged between three and four requiring a place. In addition to suitable accommodation there will be a need for trained staff, and at a ratio of one staff per eight children – because that is the requirement for three to four year olds for this group – that is another 46 staff to be trained. I know the Report indicates that there is going to be some training provided but that is still quite a concern for me.

As this proposal is for pre-school education to be provided by the private sector, will there be discrimination within the selection criteria if there are insufficient places for all?

1055 My second question is: how do we get the children along who would most benefit from pre-school? And I am not just referring to those families on low incomes. Some children from better off parents may not wish to send their children to pre-school. Those children can also start school with a lack of socialising skills and I know this from the work that I do with the school in St Peter Port.

In the *Press* headteachers expressed their views saying that future generation will show the benefits of pre-school education.

1060 At the recent presentation from Education I asked how long the UK had offered 15 hours pre-school to children, and we were advised for approximately 20 years this has been offered. However, we still see some poor performance in the UK schools and the need for additional numeracy and literacy during early years. So we must be realistic and not think that all of our children will be good learners. Much of their development and learning skills are also down to parents. Lack of parental support will still be an issue for many children and I am not sure how much pre-schooling will encourage parents that are unwilling to engage to engage and also to take some responsibility for their children’s education and upbringing.

We were advised that the cost will be £1.9 million per year, worked out presumably at 600 children at 15 hours per week. How can we be sure that the cost will be contained? We will be at the mercy of the private sector who will need to pay market rates for their staff. How much would those costs increase over the next few years and, as I say, how will they be contained?

1070 Will it lead to a two-tier service for those who can afford to pay extra and those who only can afford the basics? Again this is of concern to me.

However, it is not all doom and gloom and, a bit like Deputy Trott, I am going to finish on a positive note. I do not want to see pre-school means tested. The States of Guernsey already provides spaces for children for the neediest in our community. But I see this as an initiative to help those children from hard working low and middle income families and working single parents who really do struggle with the cost of child care. And they are the families that always miss out on the benefits, other than family allowance. And we know that family allowance will probably be reviewed in the future.

So I would just like to finish that my heart, as it so often does has overruled my fiscal head, and I will support this Report, and I hope that will be a key part of the Children and Young People's Plan going forward.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy Stewart.

Deputy Stewart: Mr Bailiff, I think there is a bit of a theme starting to emerge.

Firstly, I absolutely support the sentiments of this Report. Better education – the evidence is there. As Deputy Fallaize says, better education will give us better economic outcomes. I think that is well proven.

However, I struggle – as my colleague Deputy Trott has pointed out – with the funding and, given today's front page of *The Guernsey Press* and the headline of *The Guernsey Press* today, 'HSSD and Education set for £7.5m. overspend'...

So my question is: are we going to vote today in principle for another £1.9 million annual spend on money that we do not actually have? And how are we going to balance our books?

I think there are now two fundamental questions that we are rapidly heading towards as an Assembly and those questions are: how big should our Government be and how will we tax Guernsey to fund initiatives such as these if this is what we want?

The reality is the public rail against paid parking and the debate on GST is already raging. And I am constantly, as Minister for C&E, having Jersey quoted at me. 'Oh' Jersey are supporting their finance sector.' 'Their budget for Jersey finance is three times Guernsey finance, maybe nearly four.' 'Jersey support their fishermen better.' 'Jersey already have a digital hub up and running. They already have a promotional body for diversifying their economy.' Again and again and again. And my response is, well, Jersey have a bigger tax base. Jersey also have GST (**A Member:** Boo.) And that is the point.

I have been in business all my life so my economics or my fiscal policy in business has been that of Angela Merkel. It is the hausfrau mentality: be prudent, be careful how you spend your money. Or, if you want to go back in time, my favourite Dickensian character, Wilkins Micawber. There is a lot of truth in what he said.

If we approve this Report let's take what I am going to do at C&E, because on Tuesday we are going to have a very busy Board meeting and we are going to let Lester Queripel in with his bullwhip, we are going to work all hours, we are going to get up before we go to bed, we are going to work eight days a week, 27 hours a day and Christmas Day and have no turkey because I am going to be churning out reports along the lines of financial sector development unit: I need at least another three people and I can bring some real economic benefit to Guernsey. And I can write you a report which will be right. It will show that if I have three more people (*Banging on desk*) I can bring economic prosperity to Guernsey. I can also write you a report to say if I get another £2 million a year for promoting tourism I can develop tourism further and faster than we are doing at the moment.

I can also write a report next Tuesday and bring it and say, 'Let's have some viable and I will work it out.' Gavin – he will not be walking down the middle of the road he will be lying in the middle of the road. (*Laughter*) Nobody is going to be run over because he is going to be working on how we can get the viable resources to fund all these reports, which will be really convincing, which you have to approve because they will be right.

So what I say today is we are heading towards this much bigger debate, and that debate is what size do we want this Government? And if we want to do all these things... and I could bring reports which will show economic benefit but it will probably mean increasing the budget of Commerce and Employment from slightly less than what the GFSC have at the moment, just over £11 million to something like maybe £18 million or £19 million.

So I have one question for the Minister: do you support higher taxes and do you support GST? Because we can have all these things but we are going to have to pay for them and we are going to have to be realistic about how we tax Guernsey and how we actually can fiscally manage our situation.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Le Lièvre.

Deputy Le Lièvre: Thank you, sir, Members of the Assembly.

I would like to praise my Minister for his eloquence, his conviction, his dedication to the task in hand, his single-mindedness related to his fight for equality of opportunity for all of the Island's young learners because it is an example to us all.

My drive to seek a more level playing field for very young learners is no less passionate than that of Deputies Sillars, Conder, Sherbourne and Green – or, for that matter, non-States member Denis Mulkerrin.

In the run up to this debate and during the debate this morning some of the views expressed include that our education system, particularly for the very young learners, is probably adequate and does not need any adjustment or enhancement. And if anything needs to be done – and this was mooted by Deputy Adam – then it should relate to targeting both socially and financially. That would be sufficient. And that virtually all children attend pre-school so why should we spend a significant sum of money that effectively reimburses those that are already paying. In other words, so why introduce a universal service?

The impression he gave is that most children have access to adequate levels of pre-school and get a very similar start in life. Okay some might need some more input – a few, a great deal of support – but generally speaking we are doing alright as we are.

There is somewhat almost, what could be termed, a warm glow about what the Island does for the education of three to four-year-olds. I am sad to say that this impression is very wide of the mark. I fear that this Assembly and previous Assemblies for that matter have not recognised just how uneven the current playing field is in relation to equality of opportunity for many of our young learners.

Some of you will expect me to say that. The same old left-wing nonsense from somebody who should know better. (*Laughter*) However, all of us have heard from our headteachers how quality pre-school produces lasting effects that are carried into primary education and upwards into secondary education. How the experience of quality pre-school will stand you in good stead right up to employment and possibly more importantly for somehow a lack of quality pre-school acts as a brake on their development and reduces forever their chances of benefiting completely from their future education experience.

It was the latter point – the damage done by a failure to obtain access to quality pre-school provision – that worried me the most. Was there any pointer that this might be the case in Guernsey? What might we have regard to further down the line that might give the slightest indication that our system is slightly or even significantly deficient?

Now, about three weeks ago I asked at a Board meeting if it would be possible for the staff to obtain me a very specific statistic that might help to highlight or demonstrate the levels of equality of opportunity and social mobility that exist in Guernsey today. Initially there was some resistance, not because they did not want to provide me with the statistics but because the quantity of work involved due to the current record structure not recording what I was asking for in the form I wanted it. I was offered a different statistic but I refused this offer on the grounds that financial need by itself is not indicative of equality of opportunity or, for that matter, social mobility.

My request was simple enough. I asked how many students at the Grammar School were accommodated in social housing and how many scholarship pupils at the colleges were similarly housed? Both statistics to include all pupils in academic years 7 to 13. My reason for doing so was that this Assembly, the States, has long since recognised that those people who are in most financial need, with the lowest income brackets in the Island, are generally housed – not exclusively but generally housed – in social housing. Therefore these families would find it most difficult financially to access quality pre-school. Therefore if there was any indicator of what might happen further down the road... and that is why I asked for the attendance at the Grammar School and the colleges. I wanted to know if there was equality of opportunity across the system. In the case of the Grammar School there are 1,232 students in the academic years 7 to 13 and in all three colleges there would be around 350 scholarship pupils in the same period.

Although I prepared myself for a disappointing answer, the figures provided by Education staff just a couple of days ago dismayed me beyond measure.

Taking the colleges first, of the 350 scholarship students, not one – *not one* – hails from social housing. This means that not one child has passed the 11-plus to the colleges from social housing in the last seven years – seven years! Not one child from social housing has been –

Deputy Perrot: Point of order.

The Bailiff: Deputy Perrot.

Deputy Perrot: Is this germane to the debate?

The Bailiff: Deputy Le Lièvre.

Deputy Le Lièvre: I think it is, sir, because I am talking about –

1195 **Deputy Perrot:** Irrespective of the fact that Deputy Le Lièvre thinks it is – he would say that wouldn't he – I ask the question: is this germane to the debate? (*Interjections*)

The Bailiff: I think Deputy Le Lièvre is making the point that there is unequal access to education opportunities at the moment that results in different outcomes later in the educational process. Is that...?

1200 **Deputy Le Lièvre:** That is correct, sir. I want –

The Bailiff: – which, if that is the point he is making, is germane to the debate.

1205 **Deputy Le Lièvre:** It is. The reason for doing this, sir and Deputy Perrot, was that I wanted to see if the statements made by our educationalists – all our headteachers – about the impact further down the line was... there was some key performance indicator which would indicate that possibly the equality of opportunity was not what it should be for some members of our community and, because I wanted to know in relation to those least able to fund quality pre-school education, I chose those people in social housing.

1210 I think it is germane. It is a conversation this Assembly has *never* had before. In fact, this statistic has never been released before and, as distressing as it is, I feel it is my duty as a Member of Education to bring it to the notice of this Assembly.

So, as I was saying... seven years and not one child from social housing has been adjudged to be of sufficient educational ability to attend Elizabeth College, Ladies' College or Blanchelande College.

1215 Yesterday various Deputies praised the academic achievements of Ladies' College and they were correct to do so, but this Assembly has a duty to ensure that all children with the mental capacity to enjoy such a quality of education have the opportunity to do so.

1220 I am sorry but I do not accept that the children I am talking about are that different. Children from social housing are not smitten with some education-based disease that makes them different to other children. Something within the Island's existing educational system has changed over the years. In the past, selection and social housing and an almost total lack of pre-school produced a quite significant level of equality of opportunity.

1225 Yet today the current combination of low to very low income for social housing tenants, selection, tutoring and relatively expensive pre-school provision produces something that is very different. Equality of opportunity has to a large extent given way to the provision of services that are only available to those with incomes above those associated with the residents of social housing. For some – in fact most – social housing tenants equality of opportunity has become unaffordable.

1230 I will admit it has been some years since I took my 11-plus, but at that time it was not unusual for children housed in States' houses to attend the Grammar School or, for that matter, the colleges. In the Rue des Marais estate I am aware of two boys that went to Elizabeth College, two to the Grammar School for boys, with one girl going to Ladies' College. And that was from just two families. That is five children from a 14-unit estate in the Grand Bouet.

Today we have none to the colleges, from 900 or so family homes and over a period of seven years. This is simply unacceptable. As a Department and a Government we have failed these children.

1235 Over seven years some 3,000 children will have taken the necessary 11-plus exams and, although 300 or more will have reached an appropriate entry level to access a college education, not one of them will have a social housing background – not a single one.

1240 In relation to the Grammar School the figure is, I think, even more depressing given the slightly lower entry level and the fact that children from secondary schools have the opportunity to join the Sixth Form Centre after taking their GCSEs. There are a total of 1,232 students at the Grammar School and the Sixth Form Centre. Of these students, just 21 have a social housing background and in the years 7 to 10 there are just 10 – two a year. That is just 1.7% of all students at the Grammar School and less than 0.5% of all Guernsey students over seven years. (*Interjections*) –

1245 **Deputy Fallaize:** Sir, can I just –

The Bailiff: Deputy Fallaize.

Deputy Fallaize: I thank Deputy Le Lievre for giving way.

1250 A very small point of order is that the entry test for the colleges is not greater than the Grammar School, it is the same. The distribution is to do with what the parents choose as their first choice.

But the real reason I am standing and asking Deputy Le Lièvre to clarify something is: is he saying – I cannot follow these figures – that out of upwards of 1,500 children selected through the 11-plus in years 7 to 11 that there are only 10 selected through the 11-plus who come from social housing?

1255 **Deputy Le Lièvre:** Thank you, Deputy Fallaize, for pointing out my error, but with regard to the numbers that have attended the Grammar School and the colleges there are only 10. Year 7 at the Grammar School – one learner, Year 8 – one learner, Year 9 – two learners, Year 10 – five learners, Year 11 – one learner and none at the colleges. So that is 10 children from social housing have attended the Grammar School and/or the colleges between the academic years 7 and 11.

1260 And I am going to admit to being deeply angered by this revelation because even I thought the figures would be higher than that.

Deputy De Lisle: On a point of order, sir. I think –

1265 **The Bailiff:** Deputy De Lisle.

Deputy De Lisle: – that the debate is straying into selection. I think it is going away from what we are supposed to be debating here, which is pre-school education.

1270 **Deputy Brehaut:** It is straying in to the truth, I think, sir. *(Laughter)*

The Bailiff: Deputy Le Lièvre.

1275 **Deputy Le Lièvre:** I am sorry Deputy De Lisle feels like that, because these figures have not been released to this establishment ever before. We are allowed to live in some sort of land where we believe that everything is pretty tickety-boo, that every child has equal opportunity, that there are still droves of children attending the colleges and the Grammar School from all walks of life. Well, that quite clearly is not the case and the reason that is so is because many of the parents of these children cannot access pre-school education for anywhere near the time allowed that would bring on the benefits for these children. **(A Member:** Hear, hear.) They cannot do it because they simply do not have the money.

Today Education has come to this Assembly asking for equality of opportunity for all in the sure and certain knowledge that no such equality of opportunity exists in Guernsey at the moment. The socio-economic mix –

1285 **Deputy Hadley:** Point of information –

The Bailiff: Deputy Hadley.

Deputy Hadley: – from Deputy Le Lièvre.

1290 What I do find odd about those figures is that, in fact, people from social housing are some of the people who are provided with early years education at the States' expense. So if you follow this to a logical conclusion it is not actually being effective implementing this policy.

The Bailiff: Deputy Le Lièvre.

1295 **Deputy Le Lièvre:** I think if Deputy Hadley enquired of the many of the recipients of the welfare pre-schools they are some of the children that are identified as, if you like, most benefiting from pre-school – the very people that Deputy Hunter Adam referred to and others this morning – but they are just a small part of the need for quality pre-school being spread universally for all our children. They are, if you like, the most needy cases. That does not mean to say that we are providing all of the pre-school education needed across the community. They are just the tip of a very large iceberg.

We now know beyond mere speculation that if you live in social housing your chances of attending the Grammar School and the colleges is no more than 1 in 200 and in the case of the colleges nearly zero, or actually zero.

1305 This is not because their intelligence quotient is necessarily lower than other children but because their equality of opportunity is reduced for one or more of several reasons usually associated with an inability to pay for additional quality services.

This Assembly cannot ignore what it must accept is the best evidence it is going to get that the playing field is extremely uneven. Just how uneven very few had any idea and for some the pitch is unplayable.

1310 Today the Assembly can take the first real and positive steps to rectify this failing at a cost that is minimal when compared with the very positive social and financial outcomes that will come when young learners are given a real opportunity to flourish in an environment where learning is fun and relationship – building the norm.

1315 The payback will be at a rate many times greater than any return currently enjoyed on the funds held by T&R and I would predict far faster than expected.

Now, I appreciate the Department will be accused of jumping the gun. But if you were in Education's position and you knew the benefits of pre-school and the quite horrendous lack of equality of opportunity and social mobility would you have sat back and waited for the crock of gold to be delivered to your doorstep or would you seek to take action? Education is taking the latter course of action because it had little choice.

Now, I know some Deputies favour means testing or identifying social need or vulnerability as a method of better targeting our resources. However, I would say to you that the issues we face have long surpassed the stage where we can vacillate around the edges hoping that a prod here and nudge there will bring about the equality of opportunity some of our children so very desperately need to give them not an equal start in life, just a better one.

However, putting the above to one side for a moment it must be clearly understood by all that equality of opportunity will not and can never be obtained by means testing. It sounds like the right medicine but unfortunately in relation to a service as opposed to a benefit it very rarely does what it says on the tin. Furthermore the important issues are not just limited to the means test itself. Although I will deal with those issues first.

As I have already said, means testing works well when calculating benefits but it totally excludes services of the type we are talking about – unless they are associated with employment and that is a completely different matter.

Because benefit values always exclude any allowance for a service the value of the service has to then be added in to the test of means to assess the applicant's ability to pay. The net outcome being that you end up talking about very much higher requirement rates than the States might find acceptable, especially so when the aggregate maximum allowances can produce figures of hundreds of pounds more than current schemes.

To be truly effective the means test would have to be so generous that most persons would be eligible to claim assistance in any event. If the above were not to be the case we would end up in exactly the same place as we are now.

I think, if you just think about the practicalities, Mrs Smith might qualify so Jimmy can go to pre-school but three months into his period at pre-school her circumstances change and her entitlement would reduce to zero and she would then be told, 'Well, I am sorry, Jimmy has got to come out of pre-school or you have to fund him yourself,' and she might not be able to do that for virtue of other commitments. Can you imagine the mess that would get people into? It just would not work.

Means testing would produce further stratification in addition to that which already exists and which is totally counter to the concept of universal provision where children of different backgrounds rub shoulders with each other. Segregation into socio-economic groupings would inevitably be the case and would simply replicate much of what we have today.

We already have welfare pre-schools means testing would just add a further layer. How broad that layer would be would depend on the test of means, but a narrow band would have little impact whereas a broadband would include most families negating the need for a means test in the first instance.

Means testing conjoined with other policies and unaffordable services have brought us where we are today. Means testing is not the panacea needed to cure the current malaise.

Social targeting of at risk or vulnerable children would be equally ineffectual. We have long since passed that particular place. Our deficiency in provision is too deep, too broad to be bridged by some partial provision based on specific identified need.

Education needs untargeted services and that is why universal provision is the only answer. Leaving issues like education to the individual based on ability to pay will mean that a specific sector will always miss out, and we have the proof of that. Ignore it at the peril of this Island and the social balance of our community.

I would ask you to vote for Education's proposals and let us see a vote that gives a sizeable section of our community confidence that this States recognises universal access to quality pre-school as an investment that cannot and must not be missed.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy St Pier.

Deputy St Pier: Thank you, sir.

I should begin my declaring an interest. My wife is the Chair of the Youth Commission, she is the Chair of Young People Guernsey and she is on the Board of the Office of the Convener and the Child and Youth Tribunal. She has spoken out on this topic, no doubt informed by those positions but not speaking in that capacity.

Sir, Treasury and Resources' position is that I think, with regret... because we were listening to Deputy Sillars. We do understand the principle and accept the benefits of early intervention and the rewards that

that brings, but of course early intervention is far broader than just pre-school education. But, sir, we do regret that we cannot support these proposals.

1380 Treasury and Resources' comments on the resource implications are of course set out on pages 1128 and 1129 and in particular there are three comments on page 1129 that I want to speak to initially.

The first is that the £1.9 million estimated costs at paragraph 10.1 of the Report are unsupported by any detailed analysis at all. It is very much a finger in the air, or so it seems.

1385 If we assume that there are 600 children each year, roughly – and I take that figure from paragraph 2.6 – that is the cohort going in to reception class in September 2013, at 38 weeks a year for 15 hours a week, that £1.9 million – assuming you spend it all entirely on support, so there is no allowance for the quality assurance or the administration aspects of this scheme equates to £5.55 per hour.

1390 Acorn House appear to charge in the region of about £7.15 per hour. So does that mean that actually not all the costs are going to be covered and it is only going to be a proportion of support, because that is not clear? It seems to imply that universal entitlement would cover all the costs so I would like some clarity on that. Or is it that the estimate is simply too low?

Again – and I think Deputy Dave Jones acknowledged this in his comments – we make the comment around the fact that the Personal Tax and Benefits Review is looking at universal benefits and therefore it is appropriate to draw attention to that and to question that. And, as Deputy Gollop has said, we do appear to have some ambivalence in our approach to some of the universal benefits and entitlements that we have.

1395 We are also concerned that the value for money has not been demonstrated. We absolutely support the concept of early intervention – and, as I said, that is far, far broader than just pre-school education – as a way to save money later. We do get that, but the largest proportion of this spending will simply be displacing or replacing private expenditure. Now, how do we know that? There are three sources of information to support that statement.

1400 Paragraph 9.7 of the Report tells us that 94.4% of children entering reception have been to pre-school. In the 2009-2010 Childcare Needs Survey, at paragraph 1.1.3, we are told that 99% of three-year-olds and just over half of four-year-olds attended pre-school, and the paragraph goes on to say:

'However, the vast majority of those four year olds not attending pre-school are already at school – meaning that in total, fewer than 20 four year olds are neither in school nor pre-school.'

1405 And then finally on 31st December 2012 there were 577 children in pre-school. I know that from the information which the Early Years Manager at the Early Years Service at HSSD has provided.

1410 Actually these numbers are quite interesting. It is a shame that they are not actually in the Report. But 577 at the end of December 2012. So one assumes that those formed the cohort that went in to the 600 that went into the reception year in September 2013. So that leaves 23 who were not in pre-school. So that is 96.2%. So in essence those three pieces of data support the conclusion that around about 90% of children are already in pre-school.

1415 So who is it exactly we are trying to reach? There are 20 or 30 children out there. How are we going to reach them? That is not clear from this Report at all. And why are they not attending? That is not clear. Is it just the money or is it that they do not want to? What are the other barriers? What are the other reasons that they are not attending? And how will this policy ensure that they do attend? That is not clear and that is one reason why T&R in its discussion did raise the question that if the benefits and the merits are so clear then why is this not being dealt with through the compulsory attendance age at school. Otherwise what we risk doing is transferring £1.9 million of public money still leaving the same 577 at pre-school and it will have achieved nothing.

1420 Sir, what is missing from this Report? Acknowledging the Education Department's passionate commitment to this policy – and I do recognise that, and I certainly acknowledge Deputy Le Lievre's explanation of why Education have moved on with this policy on their own accord. That makes a lot of sense that explanation to me – I do not believe that this is a good States' Report. I do also say that knowing that as ever it is always easier to be the editor of any document than it is to be the author. But why do I say it is not good? It is because there is a lot of information that is missing. And this is normally territory for Deputy Soulsby actually to point out some of the things that are missing.

1430 This Report is very high on ideal but very, very low on data. There is no comprehensive assessment of current pre-school provision. The numbers of pre-school places – as I say, I found that myself. The number of organisations – again, that is not in there. There are actually 34. That information is provided by the Guernsey Pre-school Learning Alliance. There is no information about the current outcomes – and what the shortcomings are. So there is no base line in here. What does good look like? What is it that we are trying to get to? That is not explained to us. There is no description of the key outcomes, and I acknowledge that Deputy Green recognised that that was perhaps a weakness of the Report. So how will we know if we have been successful?

1435 Perhaps one of the objectives is getting more children from social housing into the colleges. That seems to be the line that Deputy Le Lièvre was taking. If that is one of the key outcomes then why has that not been referred to in the Report? And there are no descriptions of the realisable or measurable benefits. What are the key performance indicators here? Is it the number of children that we are seeking to get to school already, for example?

1440 Turning to the question of means testing, I am not particularly an advocate of means testing in this area, but I do seek to challenge the fact that I do not think that this Report has dealt with that area at all well. It has dismissed it very, very quickly, in a couple of lines in paragraphs 4.6 to 4.9 of the Report. It says targeted provision could be seen as socially divisive. Well, of course it does not have to be. That is very much how it is handled.

1445 In relation to one of the arguments from the OECD report, at paragraph 4.6, that report also said earlier in the report that:

‘Enthusiasm for universal access is not shared by all countries. Questions are raised about whether universal approach is equitable and if so how provision should be expanded in a fair and efficient way. For example, rather than requiring all taxpayers, including low and moderate income families, to fund programmes for children of middle class parents who can afford to pay for services, is it not fairer to channel funding towards targeted programmes for children at risk of school failure?’

1450 The OECD goes on to conclude the recommendation in relation to universal access, but that has not been dealt with in the Report: the fact that it has not explained the rationale as to how the Department have reached the conclusions they have.

There is an academic, James Heckman, who has spoken in this area and he also says that:

‘One could make the programs universal to avoid stigmatization. Universal programs would be much more expensive and create the possibility of deadweight losses whereby public programs displace private investments by families.’

1455 Which is exactly the risk that we do have here, with over 90% already participating at some level in pre-school education.

‘One solution to these problems is to make these programs universal but to offer a sliding fee [scale] to avoid deadweight losses.’

1460 Now, why hasn’t that been looked at? Why hasn’t that been addressed in the Report? I think it is a shortcoming.

He also goes on to say the proper measure of disadvantage is not necessarily family poverty or parental education and I think that is a view that Education Department would share.

‘The... evidence suggests that the quality of *parenting* is the important scarce resource. The quality of parenting is not always closely linked to family income or parental education.’

1465 – and we will all recognise that and endorse that and agree that.

‘Measures of risky family environments should be developed.’

Where are those measures? What families – it comes back to this question – is it that we are trying to reach? I am not at all clear from reading this Report.

1470 The economic case is set out in, I think, section 5 of the Report, and Deputy Soulsby referred to this earlier. Much of the evidence cited is from a report by Graham Allen MP on early intervention – from a report called Early Intervention: The Next Steps 2011. But that is much, much broader than pre-school education, which is merely recognised as just being one form of early intervention.

1475 If early intervention is the model then why have we just focused on this one narrow area? Is it just because this has come and emanated from the Education Department under their mandate? What other early interventions from pre-birth to pre-school would be more effective? Could there be a better use of resources elsewhere, especially if we already have over 90% coverage already? We run the risk of spending £2 million that we have not go to encourage 20 to 30 to attend that are not currently attending and to improve access for another 570. That may only be a marginal benefit compared to spending that money elsewhere.

1480 Paragraph 5.1.5 talks about the benefits and again in a more generic international context about supporting parents to return to the labour market. Again, a very easy argument for us all to recognise the common sense of, but how does that apply in our economy in Guernsey – an economy with nearly full employment? What are our objectives here? How is it actually going to work? How many currently unable to work will be able to do so as a result of this policy? Again, no attempt to explain that – just a reliance on a generic statement that applies elsewhere.

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Which turns me to other jurisdictions. A lot of reliance has been placed on the OECD report of 2006 which of course is eight years ago now. The UK has moved on significantly since then. They now have children's centres which deal with far broader than just pre-school education. They deal with health; they deal with the early learning part of pre-school, but also parental development and support. So that is all about supporting families. Broader than just the pre-school part.

In Germany they are combining old age facilities with child care and have found that both groups can actually benefit from that. Why is it that we are not looking at that? That, in essence, is one of my personal other objections to this is – I think this lacks imagination. To me it feels pedestrian, it feels like we are trying to catch up with other jurisdictions. We are not seeking to leapfrog them. There is an opportunity to do something really special and we have not taken that. We do not appear to, from what is before us, have seriously looked at that. We are copycatting what has gone on elsewhere. We have got the La Mare de Carteret School – the prospect of that being built. We have the opportunity to perhaps build a community facility there that would incorporate so much of the good experience which has gone on elsewhere. None of that has been referred to.

So we run the risk of transferring public funds to existing private providers and again I would certainly like to see us tendering for this service, so that we ensure that we get the best value for money and we can set out: what is it? What outcomes is it that we want? Is it an increase in the number of school-ready children? Is it developmental milestones?

Perhaps we might get some of the UK non-governmental organisations, the third sector – I do not know whether that might be the Children's Society or Action for Children, some of the people who are here already – who might actually come in and tender for that service, and provide a far better outcome than just working with existing private providers.

Deputy Fallaize referred to quality standards. It is not clear at all to me why we could not have regulated to improve quality. All of these institutions are already regulated. As part of that regulation we could have imposed quality standards or we could choose to do so as perhaps the first step to ensuring the quality that we want. And again what will be in the quality assurance framework? It is not clear to me.

I just want to turn for a moment to the Department's Q & As, which they released at the time of the Report coming out. It says:

'8. Why don't you provide pre-schools in your existing primary schools?

At this stage it would be too expensive to provide dedicated pre-schools within each primary school due to building costs and availability of space. Also, providing pre-school places within all our primary schools would have a significant negative affect on private providers.'

So it appears to imply that protecting private businesses is part of the plan here in that response. That may not have been what was intended.

'Whilst there may be a need for some public provision, we expect that a large majority of places will be offered in the private sector.'

So far so good.

Question 14.

'14. What will happen if there aren't enough spaces in the private pre-schools?

The Education Department will provide additional places to fill any shortfall in private provision.'

Where? How is that going to happen? So I think the Q & A has raised more Qs for me than As. (*Laughter*)

With regard to funding – and again others have made this point – there is no money, of course, available so we do have this question of where is the money coming from? If the Propositions are successful then of course Treasury and Resources will work with Education as directed, but the first point of call will – as others have made – quite obviously be the re-prioritisation of existing budget. (*Interjection*)

Which current – and again Deputy Trott has raised these questions, but I do not think it would do any harm to repeat them – or proposed services do Education believe this initiative should take precedence over if it is the only way to fund? Higher Education grants? The college grants? The Schools' Music Service? It will not be easy. We know it will not be easy because we know the Department has already got the dilemma of managing its Financial Transformation Programme so there is pressure on the budgets we know that. So what is it that will give or could give?

The largest pre-schools in the Island, so far as I can establish, are Acorn House, Melrose and Blanchelande, and of course they actually want children who can afford the fees to feed into their junior and senior schools. That is the business model. That is what they are looking for. And I wonder if that is the reason that they were not signatories to the letter to the *Press*. I do not know. But we have the dilemma that

on the one hand we are reducing funding to the colleges through the Financial Transformation Programme and on the other hand we are going to give it back to them through this policy. How does that reconcile?

So what happens next, sir? I did actually consider laying an amendment, as a number of Members around the Assembly know. In the end I decided that it would be like trying to put lipstick on a pig (*Interjection*) so I abandoned that idea. But the purpose of that amendment would have been to force this policy into the fully integrated development of the Children and Young People's Plan.

In December 2013 this Assembly passed an amendment to the debate on the Children and Young People's Plan that told those developing it to look at troubled families. And targeting children in risky family environments would very much have been a development of that Resolution.

Now, of course the Children and Young People's Plan is being led by HSSD, under the Children's Law, but it is an interdepartmental team between Home, Education and HSSD who are working on that. And Deputy Green referred to working together.

Now, Policy Council requested an additional £100,000 of funding from the Strategic Development Fund to allow the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan by January 2015, which Treasury and Resources, after considerable debate, did approve as the only route to get that plan prepared as quickly as possible. So why is the Department bypassing or ignoring that process?

Actually if you look at the mandate of Education – and again forgive me, sir, for perhaps trampling on territory which belongs far more comfortably to Deputy Fallaize than myself – in the Pink Book, or the pink pages of our books, is of course to the provision of statutory education. Well, of course this is not statutory education, unless the Law is amended, as has been referred to elsewhere. But importantly under b(ii) is:

'To contribute to the achievement of strategic and corporate objectives, both departmentally and as part of the wider States organisation, by: actively supporting and participating in cross-departmental working as part of the States Strategic Plan process and ensuring that public resources are used to best advantage, through co-operative and flexible working practices.'

I cannot think of a better reason not to work this policy through the Children and Young People's Plan.

So, sir, I think that this Assembly should reject these Propositions, not because that is the end of the matter – I do not think that should be the end of the matter at all – but I think it should be the result of that will be that it will have to come back through proper policy development, working with the other Departments through the Children and Young People's Plan where it belongs, ensuring that it is properly prioritised along with the other many demands of that plan and indeed many of the unasked questions which I referred to in my speech hopefully can be addressed as part of that process.

Deputy Gollop: Sir, –

The Bailiff: Members of the States –
Sorry, Deputy Gollop.

Deputy Gollop: Point of order. The proposals that referred to increasing the number of hours had already been taken up by the public and are not specifically targeted at the 20 or 30 people that Deputy St Pier identified.

The Bailiff: Members of the States, may I just draw your attention to the presence in the Public Gallery of a Member of the Westminster Parliament and a former Member of the National Assembly for Wales. Mr Glyn Davies, who is presently on holiday in the Island, is the MP for Montgomeryshire and has been in the Public Gallery for the last half hour or so. Welcome to you. (*Applause*)

Does anyone else wish to speak? Yes, Deputy Sherbourne and then Deputy Hadley.

Deputy Sherbourne: Thank you, sir.

[*Inaudible*]... rather premature in a way because I was hoping that my friend and colleague Deputy Richard Conder would be speaking, so I may have to modify my speech somewhat, but I do think it appropriate I speak before lunch. I think I can get it in in 10 minutes.

It will not surprise anybody here to know that I actually rise to support the proposals (*Laughter*) both as a Member of the Education Board and an ex-long-serving member of the teaching profession. But I have constantly, in the number of years that I have worked in Guernsey – worked and lived – recognised the desirability of the universal entitlement to pre-school education for our children.

Indeed our current Law, initially produced in 1970, is outdated – there is no doubt about that and will need to be replaced – provides already for the establishment of nursery education. I would like just to read a brief section from that Law. Part III of The Statutory System of Education states that:

'(2) In fulfilling its duties under this section, the [Education] Council shall, in particular have regard:
(a) to the need for securing that primary and secondary education are provided in separate schools,'

And, secondly:

‘(b) to the need for securing that provision is made for pupils who have not attained the age of five years by the provision of nursery schools or, where the Council considers the provision of such schools to be inexpedient, by the provision of nursery classes in other schools,’

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1970!

I arrived in the Island in 1968 and I have been constantly aware of the support for our leaders to provide nursery education here from the time that I arrived in this Island.

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I have worked with colleagues who provide early years provision. I was a secondary specialist, therefore you would think I would know absolutely nothing about early years education, but in fact I was very fortunate because mid-career I actually worked at the Guernsey Teachers’ Centre where we provided all the in-service training and developmental opportunities for all of our Island States’ schools. And I was very privileged to actually work in every single primary, infant and junior school during the eight years that I was at the Teachers’ Centre. I was so in awe of my early years colleagues and what they were actually

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providing that I got very close to them professionally. I was very fortunate later in my career to head St Anne’s School in Alderney – very privileged, for a short time. All age schools are pretty rare and therefore I am one of the lucky people in our profession to have experienced that provision from early years through to secondary education. It has been a privilege, but what it has done is to open my eyes to the importance that those early years practitioners have in establishing, if you like, the life opportunities for our children. I was proud to be a secondary specialist but, my word, in terms of pedagogy, in terms of what those early years teachers were providing our children as a foundation, was absolutely tremendous.

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As many of you know, I finished my career as headteacher at St Peter Port School... very privileged to be there because I taught there as a young teacher for 10 years. So during this intervening period of an enjoyable career in the education service mainly in the secondary schools, it was a great privilege to work with our young teenagers to raise expectations, to lift their expectations and to witness so much talent and ability. But sadly for many of my students, due to poor early years experiences – not just in education, but in home and in the community – it was an uphill struggle and many failed to benefit from the early intervention and a quality pre-school experience.

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Evidence abounds that missed opportunities in early years are hard to make up, even in later life – as I think you will hear from Deputy Conder later.

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This Island is alone within the UK and further afield for failing to provide structured pre-school provision as part of its educational offer to the community. Today you have got an opportunity to put this right. Thankfully, in the intervening 45 years since that 1970 Law, the vacuum has been partially filled by the gradual growth of early years provision provided by private providers.

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The biggest problem, as far as I have seen during that period of time, is that there has been an inconsistency of provision. We have some really good examples – as Deputy Fallaize mentioned earlier – but it is more than patchy. Some of our provision is basically child minding. It is not an educational provision. And there is not the monitoring that we would require in a modern world. That has already been mentioned. The proposals before you include educational quality control.

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We at the Education Department face claims that we are attempting to jump the gun regarding funding priorities, and it has been mentioned in several speeches today that 15 months ago this Assembly agreed to the direction of travel of the Education Department unanimously. We took that as a green light for us to come forward with our proposals which we promised to do. And, yes, you are right, Deputy Fallaize, we are late – we are two quarters late – and so I apologise for that, but there has been a lot of work going on to get to where we are today. The negotiations with the GPLA and the private providers have been a lengthy affair, but they are totally behind us.

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We have heard about the concerns of individual members of the CYYP. Now, I am a Member of the CYPPB – the Board – which is a political oversight, and I can assure you that we are working very hard to provide that co-ordinated holistic approach towards the nought to five provision in this Island. But, as has already been said, it is inconceivable that the Report will not include recommendations that we are putting forward to you today, simply because our proposals are the most pragmatic possible. They are not just snatched out of the air. We live with 45 years of States’ neglect of the failure of previous Boards, even though they nailed their colours up to the mast in terms of debate and discussion. They did not bring the proposals to this Assembly. We are. And we are asking you to let us get to that next stage, to agree in principle. To me the term is an unpleasant one, but it is a ‘no brainer’. We need universal entitlement in this Island. We have needed it for years and now we have an opportunity to move to that next stage, to sit down with the other Boards – HSSD and SSD – to ensure that we have that holistic co-ordinated nought to five policy.

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But our proposal to you is actually only asking you to extend by one year what you already provide. Those early years practitioners that I am talking about – our reception teachers, the salt of the earth, marvellous people – they welcome this because they know that the received wisdom of early years foundation programmes, which are a two-year programme, they have to pack in to one year. So it is obvious that they are going to support our proposals that put that wrong right.

We are asking for a two to two and a half year lead up to implementation. That is not an attempt to jump the gun. We have met all the requirements of this States since our appointment in April/May of 2012. We have done the spade work with regard to an overhaul of an outdated educational system, the outcomes of which you have got a taste of today with my colleague Deputy Le Lièvre's statistics and data that he has actually offered you. It is something that I have known, as a member of the teaching profession, for years and it was right and proper that Deputy Le Lièvre gave you that information rather than me because you know where I stand on most of these secondary issues.

Deputy De Lisle is quite right, it is a selection issue. It is also very much a pre-school issue and I think we need to recognise that those early years are so substantially important for our young people. The people that I taught at St Peter Port that have had a difficult start in life. It was made much more difficult for them and I admit some of them are my friends now many of my ex-students are sort of in their 50's, some early years are in their 60's. *(Laughter)* That really does date! But those people, many of them missed out in opportunity. And it has been my, not my life's work – working in our States' schools has been a real privilege... but trying to put right those wrongs is the reason why I am standing here in front of you today. I have known there are things wrong for years and years and years.

Previous Assemblies have made no attempt – even in times of real wealth in this Island... have made no effort to provide that even playing field or a more level playing field. They have spent money – not always wisely – but they would rather put it away for a rainy day. And as I often say to my friends now, I notice it is raining. It is raining. Let's use that money that should have been invested years ago **(A Member: Hear, hear.)** and should in 1970 have resulted in nursery classes being provided in all our schools. That did not happen and so we have got to make the best of a bad job.

I would ask you today to listen to what I consider to be convincing arguments, that moving to the next stage is right and proper.

So please, please, support both Resolutions.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: We will rise now and resume at 2.30 p.m. *(Applause)*

*The Assembly adjourned at 12:34 p.m.
and resumed its sitting at 2.30 p.m.*

XV. The Introduction of a Universal Entitlement to Pre-School Education – Debate continued – Propositions carried

The Greffier: Article XV. Continuation of debate. Education Department – The Introduction of Universal Entitlement to Pre-School Education.

The Bailiff: Just before we rose for lunch I was about to call Deputy Hadley. I do not know whether he still wishes to speak.

Deputy Hadley, do you wish to speak?

Deputy Hadley: I am afraid so, sir. *(Laughter)*

In fact, I regret having to start on a rather sour note by saying that I deprecate the way in which the Minister has manipulated the proceedings of this debate, because yesterday he told us he could not deliver his speech before the end of proceedings and quite clearly this morning his 20-minute speech could have done so, and a number of us will want to get away from the Assembly as early as possible. *(Laughter)*

Deputy Sherbourne said in his speech –

Deputy Sillars: Sir, point of information. Point of fact. Point of something!

A Member: Point of order. *(Laughter)*

Deputy Sillars: As I say, I did have a long speech and it had a lot of information in it but, having had the evening to understand where we were all going – as I started off by saying and apologising – I felt that less was more. So thank you for that.

1710 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Hadley.

Deputy Hadley: Deputy Sherbourne said in his speech that the need for early years education is a no-brainer. I agree. I did not benefit from early years education and believe that had I done so I would have achieved more academically. Having said that, I would have probably been a chemist not a pharmacist, would not have developed a passion for health issues, would not have met my wife and would not have come to Guernsey! (*Applause*) (*Interjection and laughter*)

1715 As I said, Mr Bailiff, Deputy Sherbourne said in his speech that early years learning is a no-brainer and I agree. I agree, absolutely. Also, Mr Bailiff, I think that providing an affordable primary health service for all people who cannot afford it is also a no-brainer. I think that improvements to children's social services, support for vulnerable parents that is a no-brainer.

1720 Now, we discussed this issue during the last Parliament and at that time I met some of the staff from the Health and Social Services Department to talk about the provision of early years learning for children and was told that they identified people in social housing that would benefit from early years education and that this was given.

1725 Indeed, in his speech, Deputy Le Lièvre referred to the failure for people to achieve – people that were in social housing. Now, it really would seem to me that we should ask the question about how many people in social housing receive early years education at the present time, how many have done so in years past and how effective has this early years intervention been? All of that is missing from this Report.

1730 In the last Parliament – as I say when this was discussed – we again came across the problem that what we would be doing, we would be spending several million pounds for a small increase in the number of children receiving early years education and that was one of the reasons, I believe, that it never progressed in the last Parliament.

1735 And one of the worries in this Parliament is that we would be spending around about £2 million and we may only be getting 20 or 30 more people educated at an early stage in pre-school education. Indeed, it might not be that because some of those children will have parents who do not want them to go home and I know it may seem strange to those of us who have had children or got children but there are some parents who like to keep their kids at home as long as possible. I think they are mad, but there you go, they do. So in fact what we are doing is providing an awful lot of money for this nursery provision.

1740 The other thing that worries me about this is that what they are advocating is universal provision, because Deputy Sherbourne tells us that the provision currently being provided is not universally good. And yet the Billet is asking us to approve the Education Department going into partnership with the very people who, in the words of Deputy Sherbourne, are not providing a first class service.

1745 Now, I think that a good road for this would seem to be to progressively reduce the age at which children go to school. They have actually said that the best way of doing this this will probably be to attach the provision to each of the primary schools, but that would damage the private sector. Well, we are not in business to prop up the private sector, we are here to provide the best provision that we can for the children of this Island.

1750 I really empathise with a lot of what Deputy St Pier said – that we have to look at the whole way we are looking after people and we should be dealing with this when we deal with the Young People's Plan. It could be that providing £2 million to get a few more people educated at an earlier stage is not money that will do as much good as improving social services on this Island, and the support for parents who find it difficult to deal with their children.

So I would urge Members to vote against the recommendations.

1755 **The Bailiff:** Does anyone else wish to speak?
Deputy Langlois.

Deputy Langlois: Thank you, sir.

1760 This will be a very much shorter speech, thanks to the Treasury Minister's earlier intervention – most of which I totally agree with.

Now, I speak briefly albeit today as an ex Member of Education from the years 2000 and 2009. Sorry, we got it all wrong because we have been told enough of that today, but this initiative certainly was in embryonic form long before the present Board took it up and are trying to run with it.

1765 I also speak as an ex-member of the teaching profession – a qualified teacher and some 15 years in further education. And in further education, particularly in the era I am talking about, you met a very wide range of educational backgrounds and people who had had all sorts of experiences in their earlier education

and, like Deputy Sherbourne, I subscribe 100% to the idea that pre-school education is valuable. There is no doubt about that, but let's not get mixed up between whether you subscribe to that as a professional ideal or as an educational ideal and whether then voting against this Report means that you have changed your mind and you do not subscribe to it. We must not get carried away with that mix up today, because it would be so easy for people to start interpreting a vote against this Report as not believing in it.

We heard some confessions from Deputy Gollop today about his early pre-school education. I had never actually realised that tucking your shirt in was part of the core curriculum for pre-school, but obviously if he missed that (*Laughter*) then he does on occasion still have to catch up. But thank you for being so frank John – sorry, Deputy Gollop – about your early experiences.

I am afraid that the Report is simply not good enough in terms of its justifying its demand for cash. That is the weakness here. It has gone off in a particular direction. It has gone with a crusading tone. It has gone with a highly researched tone. Although bear in mind in all educational research – as Deputy Jones would say – you do need to check whether the researcher was a *Guardian* reader or not and there are certain aspects of it which will be more accepted by some than others about its validity.

We need a joined up provision. We need a more imaginative – was what Deputy St Pier said – provision. We need pre-school services which cover all sorts of things.

I did some recent professional work with the Children's Centres in England and, although they have again taken a bashing in certain areas because it is never easy to set up a very joined up service of that sort, the link between health and housing and education on those children's centres is impressive – and I do not very often say that about UK public services.

We need that sort of approach, data sharing, to target the help to the children who need this. And that is where the weakness of this lies, alongside the weak case made for the money.

The Children and Young People's Plan is under way. I think many of us were not quite aware of this allocation of funds to it very recently by T&R and that in itself to me is enough to persuade me on this occasion to say let's leave this one, let's park this one, let's reject it whilst having all the words on record that we totally accept the value and need for pre-school education and then let's integrate it into the wider plan.

If we pass this today then I would equate it to... I expect some of you shop on Amazon for one item or another despite your support for the local retailers in all sorts of areas. There are certain occasions when you shop on Amazon and there is a button there that says, 'Add to wish list' and if we pass it today that is all we are doing. We are adding it to our wish list and then we will have a big bust up when we get back here saying, 'Well, we really wanted to do that but now we look at it in the bigger picture, in the round, we cannot afford it anyway.'

So wait for the opportunity to look at it in the bigger picture, extend the regulation, find a funding way which will target it to the right people, but I am afraid I cannot support this Report today.

The Bailiff: Deputy Spruce.

Deputy Spruce: Mr Bailiff, Members.

I will keep this brief because we have covered just about everything so far. Even though I support the principle of pre-school education, because I – like Deputy Langlois – sat on the last Education Board and this Report, even the number for financing it, is the same as the Report we discussed four years ago. I have two concerns which I wish to highlight.

I ask you firstly to look at the executive summary of this Report on page 1105. Clause 2 highlights the Department's view that compelling evidence exists that supports the value of enhancing pre-school education for all three and four-year-olds through the universal entitlement of 15 hours pre-school education for 38 weeks per year.

Now, Clause 1.1 of the introduction section on the following page also makes the case for pre-school education as part of the Department's Vision document, Today's Learners, Tomorrow's World. Now, that is all well and good and generally I agree with these statements, but my first point of concern is the statement in Clause 3 of the executive summary that,

'The Department does not intend to make pre-school provision mandatory. The Department argues strongly that the proposals have the single aim of providing the best possible life for all children.'

That statement is the central plank of these proposals, but they leave it optional on whether parents choose to send their children to pre-school or not. Now, if this policy is to get those youngsters from social housing in to pre-school, an optional choice will not solve the problems Deputy Le Lièvre made so much of in his speech. He also failed to advise us how these pre-school children will be transported to a pre-school and what the cost might be of that.

The thrust of this strategy aims to provide all children who are currently unable to benefit from parentally funded pre-school education, the opportunity to join primary school having benefitted from early years discipline and learning. So again I say why not make it mandatory? Every child should surely join primary school at a similar level. In fact it would be less destabilising to the classroom if all children took advantage of pre-school education and joined primary education at a similar level.

My second point of concern is the fact that these proposals seek to jump the financial prioritisation queue. They seek to ignore our financial discipline rules and they seek in-principle support for funding a new service without establishing how the proposals will be financed.

As I have already said, I support the principles enshrined in this Report but I am disappointed that the Education Department felt unwilling to accept T&R's offer of support and our suggestion that these proposals could form part of the Personal Tax, Pensions and Benefits Review.

These proposals will be a significant new service benefit to the many families who currently fund their children's pre-school education, but the £1.9 million funding just does not exist. I therefore cannot support the introduction of a new service without firstly identifying where the money will come from.

As I have said, this Report is good in parts and attractive in principle but sadly it fails to meet even the most minimal financial discipline or provide adequate evidence in a local context.

Members, I ask you to reject the Propositions.

The Bailiff: Deputy Lowe.

Deputy Lowe: Thank you, sir.

I too, like the rest of us, support pre-school education. I think it is a given. If anybody did not agree with that I would have to question why, because the children do benefit.

I am not quite sure though that the lack of nine months' pre-school universal, right across, will make a huge difference to how many children will end up at Grammar School or the college. I think that was a little bit OTT. And also on social media. According to social media, there are children currently that are at the colleges or Grammar School that actually did pass the 11-plus. So I am not quite sure whose statistic is right, but I really do not believe that nine months having universal pre-school will make that much difference.

It has been said as well this morning about... I mean I have to say straight away my concern is about the funding and I have spoken to the Minister and indeed to the other Members of Education Board about that – it is about the funding and I think most of us share that concern.

My concern of supporting this today, if I did support this today, would be the point that has been alluded to by Deputy Langlois. If we support this in principle, how many times have we supported an in-principle and when the Report comes back we do not actually support it because we cannot afford the funding or it is a lot more expensive, and then we are accused as the worst States ever because we have done yet another U-turn. That is the difficulty that you are going to face because this Report really should have had the funding in it and had the whole package. It also should have the biggest thing that is missing for me: if it is that important and that vital why isn't it compulsory? This is the biggest thing for me. If it is so important for the children – and we all agree pre-school is great and certainly does help the children... I am not quite sure of the percentage of how many children go five days a week because usually it is Tuesday and Thursday for the first year and then Monday, Wednesday and Friday replaces that for the year before they start school. I do not know actually the percentage of how many do currently go five mornings a week right across all the pre-schools.

But nevertheless the information that we had this morning from the Minister of T&R... I really wish he had spoken earlier and we had had that information, but nevertheless better late than never and I thank him for that. We are talking 23 children here – 577 already go – 23 children, according to the data that he has been given. That is just under £100,000 per child annually that this Report is about – if the information that the Minister... is shaking his head and I am sure he is going to put me right. I can only go by the information that we have been given this morning, Deputy Sillars, and I am sure you will come back on me on that one.

But, regardless of that, if we are actually talking 23 children I would still rather it was targeted at those children that have been unable to go or have chosen not to go because do not think these 23 children are necessarily children that cannot afford to go. It could be the parents' choice. There are many parents who actually like to have their children at home, teach them themselves before they actually start going to big school.

And it was said this morning about the fear of the transition that those that actually go to pre-school, it helps with the transition. I do not know if it helps that much, bearing in mind it does not matter what age group you are, the children when they leave pre-school and they go into big school, they are going to be fearful in the same way as those who perhaps did not go there, in the same way that those who leave primary school and go to secondary school are fearful. That is life. You get fearful when you start a new

job. Fear is part of living. Fear is part of life. It is part of an experience. If we can eliminate that of course that is absolutely wonderful but I do not think so much play should be made on that this is the best thing since sliced cheese that will eliminate that because it will not eliminate that. It did not eliminate it with my children and it did not eliminate it with my grandchildren either. All of them went to pre-school and had a wonderful time and they learnt an awful lot at pre-school, but when you are moving out of your silo where you are comfortable it is no different if you move from Brownies and you go to Guides and suddenly it is new again and it is a new fear that you have to face, because you are coming out of that comfort zone.

So, yes, I believe in it. What am I going to do? At the moment, unless I hear anything different, I am going to be voting reluctantly against because I am concerned about the funding. We do not have any money. We had it said to us again yesterday about how we are struggling to find the budgets for all of the current Departments. We are told outside by the public get your house in order and I totally concur with that. But I cannot sit comfortably knowing that there are already 577 who are already paying and we are having £2 million for near enough 23 who are not. I just do not think that is the best way of spending our money or the taxpayers' money, who we are custodians to look after in a reasonable manner. I am not that sure that this is the way to go. I would have loved it to come back saying, 'Yes, it is going to be compulsory', and if somebody put an amendment there or if somebody else wants to put an amendment I will even lead it, because if it is that great it should be compulsory. Never mind about the Law. You can go along with dealing with a lot quicker than actually is being said or implied in this Assembly today.

So I do not want the message to go out that if I vote against I do not support it. I do support pre-school but I do not –

Deputy Soulsby: Point of correction here, sir –

The Bailiff: Deputy Soulsby.

Deputy Soulsby: Deputy Lowe speaks about 570 children in pre-school education but they are not all having 15 hours a week and they are not all in so-called pre-school education –

Deputy Sillars: Sir, can I continue that theme as well, please, sir? *(Laughter)* There are 23 children who have nothing and we do not know why they do not go. There might be a reason. 60% have very little or none. 39%, the figure that Deputy –

Deputy Lowe: Can I just interrupt you? Would you actually use hard numbers because percentages are just –

Deputy Sillars: I am, it is what –

Deputy Lowe: – worth nothing.

Deputy Sillars: – it is actually.

Deputy Lowe: Can you tell me whether you are talking 10, 15, 300?

Deputy Sillars: I will get there if you allow me to. *(Interjection)* The 39% is of the 44% who did reply. So out of 600 we are talking about 100 actually. So it is the 500 children that are left that we are looking after and protecting.

Deputy Lowe: I think the sooner we get away from percentages in all Reports the better. *(Laughter)* We are talking about. It is ridiculous. You have got people listening on the radio, they do not know if we are talking about 100,000 or 100 people. Let's get away from percentages and let's get factual numbers because we heard factual numbers now from the Minister – which I thank you for Deputy Sillars, for that.

And, yes, I did actually say, Deputy Soulsby, before I gave way to you that I did say that a lot of those actually choose to go Monday, Wednesday and Friday and it is their choice because they do not wish their children to go five mornings a week. So there are many that actually do not go for five mornings a week. And will they go in future? I do not know. I do not know the answers. I am sure even the Minister of Education will not know the answers because there is nothing in the Report to say how you are going to get those people to ensure their children will go five mornings a week.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Burford.

Deputy Burford: Sir, I attended one of the presentations at the Education Department on the pre-school proposals. It seemed to me that the presentation was primarily designed to convince its audience of the merits of universal benefits.

1950 Now, I have no doubt that I am in a minority when I say I support the concept of universality. For some, at first glance it might seem a strange position to take – giving money or a benefit not just to those on low incomes but to those on six figure salaries too – but I believe that the tax system is the place to claw back such benefits from the much better off. The reason is this: universality binds everyone into the system so that one section of the community does not resent another section's entitlement. It removes the idea of the deserving and the undeserving because every family gets it. It prevents stigmatising a group of people. So clearly I was sold on that concept at the outset, but here is the rub: Education does not say how their proposal will be funded, but there seems to be an idea floating around that the universal benefit that is family allowance may be a source, and I could question how you can argue the case so strongly for universal benefits when in order to pay for it you may be considering raiding another universal benefit.

1960 Turning now to page 1107, paragraph 2.2 in the Report, and I quote:

'Guernsey's Education Law requires children who reach the age of five before 1st September in a particular year to attend school from the start of the next academic year.'

Well, no, it does not. There is no Law that requires children to attend school and for that I am very grateful.

1965 What the Law actually says is this:

'It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude either by [attending at school or otherwise].'

School is not compulsory, education is. School is merely the dominant model of education.

1970 This is not semantics. While the Report does say that pre-school will not be mandatory, I get the sense that the word 'yet' might have been missed off the end of that sentence in some people's minds. But if school is not compulsory, despite what the Report says, neither should pre-school become compulsory.

This leads me on to another point: it is quite possible that overall, and subject to the pre-school provision all being of a high standard – which I think will be difficult to achieve – then pre-school can be beneficial, at least when measured by the chosen metrics such as key stages.

1975 However, I am concerned that parents who actually would prefer their children to be at home will be judged by the arguments in the Report to be doing a disservice to those children. I think that happens to a degree already and I think it is extremely unfortunate.

1980 One other aspect of this debate which has not really been raised in the Report and was not raised at the presentation is the effect of the proposals on the primary carers of children, the vast majority of whom are women. And actually it is this single issue which might make me support these proposals. I would like those carers to have the opportunity to have the 15 hours afforded by their child being in pre-school to do whatsoever they wish. It might be work, it might be study. It will frequently be doing something for someone else, but it might just sometimes be having a few hours to themselves.

1985 I would also like those carers who elect to keep their children with them at home to receive a similar financial benefit to those who avail themselves of free pre-school, but I know that will not happen. But what I would not wish to see happen is for those people to lose their family allowance should that become the source of funding, because they prefer to look after the children themselves.

So, with those caveats, I will support the Report today.

1990 **The Bailiff:** Deputy Brehaut.

Deputy Brehaut: Thank you very much, Mr Bailiff.

1995 Sir, Members have recently received information outlining – and I appreciate it is a very brief outline – how, in practical terms, HSSD is to discharge its responsibility to prepare a new Children and Young People's Plan. It is primarily as Chairman of the inter-departmental political group that is overseeing the plan, that I am now speaking.

2000 Progress with the implementation of the original Children and Young People's Plan is patchy at best and the States suffered a loss of credibility with the lack of progress and I cannot stress that enough – to roll over the plan for another period was far from ideal. It has to be said also with political changes and virtually having a revolving door at HSSD it does not help from time to time.

However, following the States' approval in December to roll over the current Plan for a short period, there is strong political and public expectation for an improved new version to start delivering on its objectives.

Although political responsibility for the Children and Young People's Plan is vested in HSSD, the plan itself requires all States' Departments, third sector organisations and private sector bodies with responsibility for any aspect of the service delivery to work together towards common aims and objectives in respect of children and young people.

A good and positive start has been made in combining professional input from the States and third sector to design a plan that we intend to make a step change in how services to children and young people are received and delivered.

All of those involved consider it inconceivable that pre-school education would not be an essential component of the new plan, and there is plentiful evidence of the contribution that pre-school provision makes to the life chances of children and young people and ultimately to their contribution to society in adulthood.

There is also acknowledgement that pre-school education proposals have been in gestation with the Education Department for some time and therefore the fact that they have come to this stage should at least merit a modest round of applause.

Further, as pre-school education was included in the Vision agreed by this Assembly, presented by the Education Department to this Assembly last year, the fact that these proposals are here today should not really come as any surprise to anybody.

Nonetheless, those of us involved in the new plan do need to recall that, while we support its introduction, the details of what pre-school education should cover and how it should be delivered must be informed by the research that we are currently undertaking into all of the needs of children and young people. More importantly, pre-school education cannot and should not be considered in isolation and must be considered alongside other initiatives as yet not quite identified.

With that in mind, there has been criticism from some quarters that these proposals from Education are somewhat jumping the gun. The Children and Young People's Plan Board do not subscribe to that view. We can say that these proposals come forward while we are still gathering the evidence upon which we will base our priorities for all children and young people in the Bailiwick for the next five years.

Consequently, we would ask the Education Department to give a commitment that, assuming the in-principle agreement is forthcoming, it will fully involve those who are working on the Children and Young People's Plan in the detailed design work, to ensure that pre-school education is embedded, integrated and supports what will undoubtedly be the main focus of our work in the months ahead – mainly investment and early intervention and early years provision.

We also want to be involved in all discussions about sources of funding for pre-school education because one of the things the plan will do is explore the potential for service developments to be funded from improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of how we currently deliver services to children and young people.

The new Children and Young People's Plan is not intended to be a charter to spend lots more money. Yes, we will be considering gaps in provision and will need money but we will also be looking at duplication provision and whether what we are doing now needs to be done in future. I give you an assurance that all efforts will be prioritised, integrated, co-delivered, measured and reported.

To conclude, we are ambitious for the children and young people of our Island and therefore we support the proposed introduction of pre-school education as fulfilment of part of that ambition. However, if we are really to have a truly joined up plan going forward then we must all work together on proposals such as this and recognise that there are many Departments and third sector organisations that have much to contribute to further development of these proposals so as to achieve the integrated services we all spend so much time talking about and which the public expects us to deliver.

Well, that is the form of agreed speech from the Children and Young People's Plan Board. As you can guess it is a script and I agree with the script, I agree with the content of the speech entirely but I will just make a couple of observations personal observations.

We constantly refer to the third sector, whether we believe that to be charitable, whether we believe that to be the Church, whether we believe it to be non-governmental whatever that is, we need to decide what the third sector is and exactly what we mean by engaging with the third sector. You could argue that the third sector could run an ambulance service, couldn't they? Well, actually, perhaps they cannot.

So the expectation... There is a whole grouping of people out there willing to take on work that is done previously, historically, by Governments, there will be governance implications for them, there will be resource implications for them and this is something of an experiment and we cannot afford to get this wrong, we need to get it right. So before we establish firm working relationships with third sectors we really do need to button that out and fully understand what we mean by that.

With regard to regulations and standards, I have to say from a personal perspective, when our children needed child care I saw it as child care, I did not see it as nursery education. When you have a young family, you have a high mortgage to pay and you both need to go back to work, the question is: where do

your children go and actually – and I do not wish to offend any grouping of people working with children, but – you feel that this is a child care provision but not really nursery education.

So I think that is where the focus needs to go – and I am sure it exists now but – if we are to formalise this nursery education process in this way we must ensure that we move, presumably, from the role of carer, child-minder with NVQs, or whatever qualification people have, to becoming... these people presumably need to become educators which is a slightly different role I should imagine.

Just rewinding the clock back a little bit further, scrutiny some years ago did research into school exclusions and what that report demonstrated very clearly was that – well, showed very clearly – some nursery schools did hand over packs to the reception teacher. So some children were going in to reception with a very well-understood... effectively, an assessment from the pre-school that they had attended or the nursery placement they had been at it – was handed over to the reception teacher and the teacher had some appreciation of the child's abilities or otherwise. Now, I would like to think that happens in every case but clearly it does not.

In our own example as a family, I think my young son's needs became apparent in Year 2... the year after reception – I am still not good with school years, it used to Junior and... (*Interjection*) Yes, so Year 1 – then the problems became apparent and I thought it was unfortunate that my child had been in a – 'facility' is not the right word, I am sure you will understand – it been in a placement where you would have thought people working closely with a child may have picked up some of these issues. But anyway that was that.

So I am supportive. This represents an absolute enormous challenge. We need to get it right but because several people have mentioned the Children and Young People's Plan, it is a mistake to believe that the Children and Young People's Plan is so narrow that it can only focus on nursery education. It is much, much bigger than that and I hope Members will support these proposals in principle.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy Dorey.

Deputy Dorey: Thank you, Mr Bailiff.

HSSD is responsible for the regulation of Early Years Services, including pre-schools. It is important that the Vision and regulation of services remains separate. So if these proposals are supported, HSSD will remain responsible for the regulation of pre-schools and the Department will work closely with Education to expand the regulatory framework to include educational measures. The quality standards framework, as proposed in this Report, is something that Education and HSSD will need to work on together and which will ultimately be implemented by HSSD.

This will of course have resource implications for HSSD's small early years team, as they will need additional training in order to regulate a wider range of issues. Also if these proposals significantly increase the amount of pre-school provision available there will be a direct impact on to the workload of the early years team and more staff will be required as a result.

The Department has been assured that these have been factored into the £1.9 million estimated cost of these proposals. This will of course need to be worked out in more detail in the next stage, if these proposals are accepted and HSSD would hope to be involved in that work.

HSSD has had initial discussions with the Education Department about these proposals and recognises that Education is totally committed to achieving better outcomes for the Island's children. Whatever the outcome of this debate, HSSD hopes to continue to work constructively with Education at political and officer level through the Children and Young People's Plan Partnership Board – which Deputy Brehaut has spoken about, as he is Chairman of the Board – to ensure that the best possible services and support are in place for very young children in the Bailiwick.

I would also like to add some of my own comments. I do support the principle of universal pre-school education, but of course it has to be funded when we have a deficit and I expect that we will still have a deficit in 2015 when the Report comes back – assuming that it is supported.

In my view, the key question is how will it be funded? I do not support reducing Family Allowance for children attending pre-school to help finance this. Family Allowance is used by families to cover such things as clothes, medical, housing, food and many other things, and I think it would be totally wrong to use Family Allowance. If you use Family Allowance to finance pre-school or reduce it for children who are at pre-school then why don't you reduce it for all children at school, which would be totally wrong in my view.

I accept the point that means testing is not the ideal way of funding, but I want to ensure that those who are above the levels that have access to the welfare charity schools can afford 15 hours per week. I do not support GST which I believe will have a disproportionate effect on the poorest, and I would rather have a means tested system than GST.

I have been disappointed by some of the comments made about the system that we have for Higher Education because I think we have a system which I and others fought against loans so that we could continue with the grants scheme and I think it works very well. I fully accept it is not ideal and I accept it would not be universal because it would be means tested, but I would support a system used for Higher Education loans to be used for funding of pre-school education.

I believe that the levels are set higher than supplementary benefit so it means that those who are what is called the 'working poor' or those who are on low incomes will get the support and of course it is tapered so as people get higher levels of income they get less support. I would ask that it is considered as a viable option in Proposition 2 when they Report back to the States in September 2015.

Deputy Fallaize spoke about various previous Reports which have all mentioned about pre-school education, and really that is the problem and Deputy... had also spoken about other Reports and other revenue expenditure. Deputy Stewart mentioned some in relation to Commerce and Employment. It is a prioritisation of revenue projects that is ultimately the challenge, I believe, for this Assembly. We have a system of prioritising capital projects but we really do not have a system for prioritising new revenue projects, and I think ultimately that we are going to have to look into a method of doing that.

Something that has been mentioned about social division and about the whole point of a universal system is ensuring that there is a social mix at various pre-schools if this system goes ahead. As I understand it, the range of prices currently for pre-schools ranges from £4.33 an hour to £7.56 per hour. So we have a big range and I am sure that if we have a scheme then we still have the option for parents to send their children to some pre-schools and pay a premium above the standard rate, but I would be pleased to hear what the Minister has to say about that.

There will no doubt be higher demand for some pre-schools than others and, without a geographical system of you attending the nearest one, we could perhaps go back to some of our transport problems of parents taking children in various directions over the Island, because perhaps their nearest one is full because we do not have a system of geographical location to the school that you go to.

I also am sympathetic to the points about mandatory pre-school education and I think if you are going ahead that would be the best way forward.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Anyone else? No. In that case I will –

Deputy Storey. I was just about to invite Deputy Sillars to wind up.

Deputy Storey: Thank you, sir.

Sir, what I want to say, to start with, is that I agree with the general proposals in this Report – the objectives that are being sought by the Education Department – and it is quite obvious, from the Report and from what Members of the Board have said, that the Board really enthusiastically believe in the proposals they are putting forward.

As far as I am concerned, personally, I am – and I have said before in this Assembly – passionate about achieving a high standard of education on this Island, because the standard of education that we achieve here is the future of the economy of this Island. I am also passionate about providing equality of opportunity, and I think that that equality of opportunity and an excellent standard of education is the key to social mobility.

I did benefit from some pre-school education. I do not know whether I benefited because there is no control, but nevertheless I suspect that I did and therefore it seems to me to be sensible to try to ensure that as many young children as possible get that sort of education to give them a good start in life.

One of the problems I have with the Report is that there is no data in there supplied regarding the number of extra children who would benefit from introducing these proposals. Now, to me that is a vital part of the ingredient because I am interested in getting as many extra people through that educational gateway, and I am being asked to approve a Report which does not tell me what it is going to achieve in that direction, and to me that is a big failing.

One other point I would like to bring up in passing is the fact that, if the Education Department are as enthusiastic as they say they are, why did they not provide some short-term assistance to the Daisy Chain Pre-School facility, because that pre-school was in fact providing a service to socially and economically disadvantaged children and it has been forced to close through lack of funding only a few weeks ago? That concerns me because the Report says that you are going to deliver a lot of this service through that sort of facility. So perhaps the Minister could address that point when he replies to this debate.

Now, sir, I am in a bit of a dilemma here because I am in favour of the outcomes that are being sought from this Report, but I have a problem with the recommendations at the end of the Report because to me they do not really marry up. Part of my problem is to do with finance.

Now, I have said before in this Assembly most of us sitting here today had in our manifestos at the election a determination to balance the books, (*Interjection*) and then subsequent to that, in support of that objective, we as an Assembly agreed not to introduce any new services until the books had been balanced.

Now, as far as I can see this is a new service. It cannot be anything but a new service. So is the Minister telling us that he has got a crystal ball that tells him that we will balance the books by 2016? Because recommendation 1 says that this service will be introduced with effect from September 2016, and if it is going to be introduced at that point then we are going to have to decide in 2015 that we have got enough money to allocate to this sort of new service, and, well, I will leave it at that.

To me this is a new service. *When* we get to a point where we are prioritising new services then this should be part of that prioritisation service. We should not be going on to a first-come, first-served basis, which unfortunately was the States operated in the past. (*Interjection*)

We have agreed, I believe, that we are going to use the Government Service Plan as the basis for that prioritisation process. Now, this is not just procedural nit-picking, it is fundamental to the way we run the business of the States. We have got so much money, times are hard and we are going to have to decide how we share it out, and when we decide how we are going to share that money out we need to have all the options before us so that we can make an informed decision about which way we are going to go.

Now, in my opinion, sir, committing to support this proposal at this stage will in many ways put pressure on all of us to provide the funding for these proposals when the prioritisation process begins – whenever that is – because it may well not be in 2015 or 2016 because we may not have the money available to dole out in a prioritisation process.

The other thing that concerns me is we have already been told today in the debate that we approved the Vision that Education Department presented to us. We have approved the Vision so we cannot really say ‘no’ to these proposals in this Report.

Now, the next stage of that is going to be: if we approve this Report – and we will in effect be authorising by passing the prioritisation process if we do – we could not really say ‘no’ at the prioritisation process. So I feel as if my arm is being twisted up my back a bit here, because if we agree to something and we cannot agree to the next stage – we have got to agree to the next stage – and if we agree to that next stage, well, it will be quite impossible for us to agree to the final stage.

When we come to prioritisation, all Departments have got what we might consider to be essential projects that we need to introduce. I am sure Environment feel that they have got to spend money on maintaining our sea defences. I am sure PSD feel they have got essential projects to deal with in the Ports, and so on and so forth. We have all got essential projects that we want to be considered in the prioritisation process and I know that HSSD have such projects where people are asking for additional services which we are not currently providing.

So for me approving this Report today runs the risk of putting all the other Department’s projects further down the list, because we have already agreed that this one is in some way of a high priority.

So, sir, what I would say is when we have a limit on our resources, single policy campaigns – and I consider this to be similar to a single policy campaign provide a bit of an intractable problem. It is a case of ‘we must have’. Always in these single policy campaigns there is a problem that has to be solved and it is the States that can provide the resources to solve the problem. But, no matter what that particular problem is, they never mention what we should not have as a result of what we should have. In other words, when we have got limited resources if you introduce a new service you have got to withdrawn another service in order to pay for it, or the only other alternative is we go on a spree of tax and spend, and that is not what I was elected to do. In my manifesto it was balancing the books on the basis of our current income.

So, sir, I do not know who said this – I apologise for that – but it is rather a good and apposite quotation it is, ‘Sometimes you have to sacrifice something to get what you want’. Now, this proposal does not say where we will need to sacrifice. So perhaps again the Minister could address that problem and inform us which services he feels could be withdrawn in order to provide funding for this new service which, as far as I am aware, we cannot introduce until we have got surplus funds in our current account.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Anyone else? No. Deputy Sillars, then will – (*Laughter*)

Just in time, Deputy Conder.

Deputy Conder: Thank you, sir.

Mr Bailiff, colleagues, for me the arguments presented so far in this debate for universal pre-school education have been compelling and it is perhaps at this late stage difficult to add a further dimension to a case that has been so well made. It is so important to this Island and, when introduced, will generate significant long-term benefits in terms of social behaviours, social inclusion, economic return.

I think and hope that most colleagues in the Assembly know that I am, by temperament and political persuasion, against utilising taxpayers’ money for initiatives of dubious benefit. In these very challenging

financial times I, and I am sure all of us, need to be convinced that any proposal that is presented to us and which will require additional funding or the transfer of funding from other areas must be able to demonstrate clear and unambiguous merit in terms of social benefit, economic return and competitive advantage.

For myself, I will always resist the introduction of new taxes where savings or better utilisation of the existing resources or services can be made. Colleagues, you will not be surprised to learn that I took some persuasion to accept that the provision of universal pre-school education, at a cost of £1.9 million per year, was an imperative for this Island, but I am convinced and I stand four square with my colleagues in the Education Committee in our desire to see universal provision of pre-school education introduced in Guernsey – and soon.

In terms of funding this initiative, the Treasury and Resources and Education Department will in due course return with proposals for how this might be funded. For myself, I am an unashamed supporter of the FTP process which has realised significant and genuine savings in the cost of running our Government. I hope there will be an FTP Mark 2 because I believe that there are still significant savings to be realised in the running of the Government of Guernsey. Therefore I see no reason why this important initiative cannot be delivered through further across-the-board savings and, yes, colleagues, that includes further savings elsewhere in the delivery of our education services.

To return to the point that Deputy Trott made – my friend Deputy Trott – for myself – and I speak merely for myself – I believe that the £6 million that we currently spend on a Higher Education budget does need to be examined and addressed, but I speak merely for myself and I think these are issues, as I have said, for further down the decision-making process, if we approve this in principle today.

But Guernsey must have a universal pre-school provision if it is to come anywhere near the performance of other western democracies. Pre-school education is the foundation upon which all education is built and demonstrates and delivers improvements across all age ranges as they progress through each stage of their schooling.

Sir, in making the case for pre-school education, I will briefly refer to two seminal pieces of international research which examine the impact of pre-school education, and compare and contrast the benefits of targeted provision with those of universal entitlement.

Deputy Langlois – who is not in the Chamber at the moment – made the very good point that plenty of educational research is perhaps of not the highest repute or can give you the answer that you are looking for, but the two bits that I am going to refer to – the first is from the Institute of Fiscal Studies – which I hope Deputy Langlois will agree carries some reputation – and the second United States-based one, which is from the National Institute for Early Education Research in the United States which is part of the University of Jersey... That is funny – I have just realised what I have said – University of Jersey, I am afraid. *(Interjections and laughter)*

So the first is from the Institute of Fiscal Studies and is entitled Early Education and Children's Outcomes: How Long do the Impacts Last? Their findings were from a large sample of children from a range of local education authorities who had pre-school opportunities in the UK.

Their research demonstrated that access to pre-school education yielded large improvements in cognitive tests at age seven which, though diminished in size, remained significant throughout the schooling years up to the age of 16.

Pre-school education was found to markedly increase the probability of obtaining qualifications and for the recipients to be employed at 33. Evidence was also found of a marginally significant 3% to 4% wage gain as a result of pre-school education at the target age of 33.

The researchers' finds confirmed that pre-school education leads to consistently better test scores, both on average and separately in maths and reading at age seven. Importantly, they also found these gains persist through to the ages of 11 and 16.

Not surprisingly, it was noted that pre-school attendance appears to have more positive advantage on average for children in families with serious difficulties than those without such difficulties. Suggesting that in the early years pre-school may play an important role in protecting such children from the potentially harmful effects of growing up in a dysfunctional family environment. For example, children from families with severe difficulties benefit significantly more in terms of maths and reading tests at age seven than do other children.

Multiple benefit cost analyses were conducted on the benefits of pre-school education by the researchers at the Institute for Fiscal Studies and it was found that these programmes not only achieve important educational goals but are sound public investments, even if they serve those parts of the population with relatively less to gain than the disadvantaged cohorts.

The value of the benefits was found to be so high that even if more advantaged children gained as little as one-half or even one-tenth of the benefits disadvantaged children gained a pre-school programme is a worthwhile public investment.

2305 The research suggested that the problem with targeted benefits was that most such programmes used family income to determine eligibility. However, they found that family income is a moving target due to the transience of poverty for many families. Many families move from one side or the other of the cut-off during the school year. Some families manage to enrol their children despite having incomes above the cut-off and others who qualify are not even identified as eligible. By the end of the programme year half of those enrolled may exceed income cut off. Moreover, family income is far from the perfect indicator of who
2310 will benefit from pre-school education.

So they concluded many different pre-school programmes have shown to produce positive effects on children's learning and development but those effects vary in size and persistence by the type of programme and quality of programme. Well-designed pre-school education programmes produce long-term improvements in school success, including higher achievement test scores, lower rates of grade repetition
2315 and special education, and higher educational attainment.

Some pre-school programmes are also associated with reduced delinquency and crime in childhood and adulthood. They also found that the strongest evidence suggests that economically disadvantaged children reap long-term benefits from pre-school. However, children from other socio economic backgrounds have been found to benefit as well.

2320 Increasing public investment in effective pre-school education programmes for all children can produce substantial educational, social and economic benefits, and disadvantaged children benefit more from universal provision in comparison to those gained from target programmes that more advantaged children also receive significant benefit in excess of the investment cost.

So the United Kingdom research clearly shows that all children benefit from pre-school education. Disadvantaged children benefit more than advantaged children but advantaged children still benefit
2325 significantly above the investment cost and the investment cost outweighs in all cases. In terms of universal provision, the investment cost is less than the benefit.

I will now just turn to the research from the United States. This specifically dealt with the issue of the universal versus target debate. As I said, this came from the National Institute for Early Education. Their
2330 results were fairly succinct and they found that targeted programmes have lower costs but do not realise other presumed advantages in practice. Targeted programmes do not deliver the same as universal programmes. Universal programmes are likely to be more effective at identifying and reaching all targeted children.

School readiness – and other speakers have dealt with this – is not just a problem of the poor. Young
2335 middle income children lag behind their wealthy peers in social and cognitive skills. High quality pre-school – and 'high quality' is important here – has been found to benefit middle income children and the added benefits far exceed the costs. The United States research, in the same way as the UK-based research, shows that in universal provision the benefits far exceed the costs.

Universal programmes are found to have a larger effect than targeted programmes for the most
2340 disadvantaged children and universal programmes are likely to receive greater public support and take up, as they are both of higher quality and reach more children than targeted programmes. So they recommended that the effect of this and efficiency of investments in pre-school could be increased with a shift from targeted to voluntary universal pre-school programmes. High quality standards and benchmarking programmes for all children are required from effective universal pre-school programmes.

2345 Now, that research was undertaken in 2004 and was based upon a drive by US business, US Government, US civic leaders, in recognition that universal pre-school education was needed to improve school readiness and achievement. The rationale was based on the concern that across the nation under achievement was a widespread problem not limited to populations labelled 'at risk'. The United States recognised that its competitors in the global market place were making investment in early education and
2350 that failure to do so would dull their competitive edge.

New insights into the early development shaped those United States policy makers and, given the evidence that the foundation for literacy and other achievements laid down in the early years before children enter formal school was arbitrary, the suggestion was that beginning universal education service at
age five or six was arbitrary.

2355 Now, the American and the Guernsey public have long supported the role of free public education. The question is when should that right be given?

Sir, the proponents of universal pre-school challenged all three presumed advantages of targeting and they argued that targeted programmes are less efficient and cost the public more in the long run, are lower in quality and receive less public support.

2360 In recent years evidence has mounted that the problems of school readiness and educational failure are not strictly problems of children in poverty. Many children arrive at school less than well-prepared with respect to both social and academic skills that are important for school success. So the United States research exactly matched what was found by the Institute of Fiscal Studies in the UK. The State of

Maryland, for example, found that only 52% of those who entered kindergarten were fully ready and only 37% of fourth grade population scored below basic on the reading scales.

In addition, direct evidence has been growing that all children can benefit from high quality pre-school, including the most economically advantaged. While most experimental research has focused on disadvantaged children, at least one pre-school experiment was conducted with more advantaged children. This study found significant effects on achievement tests scored in second and third grade for boys who attended pre-school.

So, sir, in summary, all of the research both from the United States and from the UK shows that universal benefits significantly outperforms targeted benefit, that children from all types of social background will benefit from a universal provision and the economic benefits far outweigh the actual cost of investment.

Sir, colleagues, I would suggest that there is incontrovertible evidence that the provision of an entitlement to universal pre-school education offers long-term societal and economic benefits which outweigh the investment costs many times over.

Our competitors, both friendly and hostile, recognised the importance of a universal pre-school education many years ago and are now reaping the benefits in terms of educational outcomes and economic return. Of course, sir, Guernsey is different, and proudly so, but I can see no reason for being proud of being different when that difference means worse educational outcomes and lifetime opportunities for our young people. Such difference is not noble, rather it is perverse.

This Assembly has the opportunity to correct a shortcoming in our educational provision which is harming lives and will, if it has not already, impact upon the long-term economic welfare of this community.

If we wish to leave a real and sustainable legacy when we leave this place in April 2016, this is one such opportunity. Colleagues, do not let this opportunity slip through our fingers. Support these Propositions and help to ensure a better and sustainable future for those young people upon whom this Island will depend and for whom we all have a collective responsibility. Please vote for these Propositions.

Thank you, sir.

The Bailiff: Deputy Perrot.

Deputy Perrot: (*Laughter*) Look, sir. I am sorry. Deputy Quin wanted to get away by 4 o'clock because Heather Watson is playing at 4 o'clock (*Interjection and laughter*) in the French Open and I had not wanted this to go on for any longer. So I apologise to him and to anybody else who wanted to watch Heather Watson playing.

I have to say that I welcomed this Report. I do not agree with it but I welcomed this Report because I do believe that there is great benefit from pre-school education. To that extent, Deputy Conder is pushing a note of law. He did not need to read out two Reports. I think pretty well everybody agrees with that.

Actually at the time when we campaigning in the 2012 Election it was something of a subject at the hustings. Certainly I remember in the civilised atmosphere of the West at least (*Interjections*) that we were asked whether we were in agreement with the concept of pre-school education and the word at the time, the Report at the time I think was the Detroit Report or the Detroit ... – which Deputy Conder will absolutely certainly know all about that – that, for every one dollar invested, one saved \$14 subsequently because of antisocial behaviour. So I am all for that.

But if there is benefit from pre-school education, everybody ought to be able to benefit, and that actually is not what is being proposed. If everybody benefits of course actually what would happen in practice is that the education age would simply be brought forward, it would be brought down to three or four years old and it would be compulsory for children to have 15 hours of whatever the education would be called at that time – pre-school education – and that would happen for absolutely everybody. It seems to me that that is something to which we really ought to aspire.

I would not wish to take away the childhood of a child. I think there are limits about when you do start educating children, but if all of the experts in this field are saying three to four is fine, okay, I will go along with that and say we ought to have a school age of three to four – that they go to school when they are aged three to four for 15 hours a week or whatever it is.

So why don't we do that? Well, we do not do it because we cannot afford it. The Education Department accepted that we cannot afford it. Certainly, if it did not accept it then Treasury and Resources would soon tell them that they cannot afford it now. But it is something to which we should aspire.

The problem about this Report – which, as I say, I welcome because it has brought it into the open there is public debate on it – is it is fudge. There will be, according to the Report, universal entitlement to education but not universal compulsion to that education. So that means that the unfortunate child locked into a family which does not value education and therefore does not take up what is being offered, *that* child is being left out. It is probably *that* child which will cause the difficulties later on.

2425 Now, true to form, that doughty tribune of the people, Deputy Le Lièvre – unfortunately he is not here at the moment – sees this as an exercise in bringing forward equality of opportunity, and he sees this as demonstrated by the fact that few or no people at the colleges, according to him, or the Grammar School come from social housing, as he puts it. He puts forward his statistic as somehow demonstrating that those in social housing do not get to the colleges or the Grammar School because they do not have the benefit of pre-school education, but there are two problems with that argument. He is wrong I think on two counts.

2430 One is that those who are on supplementary benefit *are* able to benefit from pre-school education for their children and it is quite clear to everybody with an eye to see and an ear to hear that it is parental support – okay, I may not be able to hear so well but I can hear when I want to (*Laughter*) but it is quite clear (*Interjection*) that it is parental support – and encouragement which drives children forward. (A Member: Hear, hear.) If there is a culture within a family to the effect that education is to be sneered at then that child is likely to go nowhere so far as education is concerned.

2435 People at the Education Department are not the only ones who talk to school teachers. I talk to school teachers and I am sure we all talk to school teachers. And if you do, you will hear that within some families – more than that – actually within some communities there is a culture which is against education.

2440 I wish Deputy Le Lièvre were here because I would like him to hear me saying that if he thinks that people in social housing are, of necessity, poorer and that they have less disposable income in their hands which they can then put towards pre-school education, you can also say that for those in private sector accommodation. It is not those just in social housing. The real problem always is to do with whether families are willing to encourage their children into Further Education or not.

2445 I was going to say more. I do not think that there is much merit in it because the compass has been boxed on every side here in respect of all of the arguments which are being brought forward, but I will end with this: that I think that the Department is trying to bring this in by the back door so far as funding is concerned. It is improper for a service, however laudable, to be approved for funding on a first-come, first-served basis. It is not a question, as Deputy Lester Queripel might put it, of denying people what they need, 2450 it is a question of prioritising. We have all got our pet schemes but if we all were able to put our pet schemes forward where on earth would be so far as funding is concerned?

We have heard a great deal, a huge amount of noise, by those who are jumping on to a band wagon in relation to consumption tax and we have heard it noised in the twitter sphere and elsewhere that that consumption tax might be as much as 5% if it is brought in. But, heavens, if we bring in this little scheme 2455 for £1.9 million a little bit of overspending somewhere else, we could be talking about GST in the region of 10% and not 5%, and nobody wants that. (*Interjection*)

We have financial rules and those must be observed. Although I am not going to be supporting this Report, if the Report were not to be accepted – I rather think actually that the atmosphere is such that it will be, I do not think it ought to be but I think it ought to be but I think it will be – I would certainly welcome revised proposals to come back from the Education Department.

2460 The Education Department talks about working with Treasury and Resources. That is fine. It will work with Treasury and Resources at the moment until it does not get its way and then it brings this sort of thing forward. I think that what ought to happen is that there ought to be a proper collaboration between Treasury and Resources and the Education Department and that is *not* the basis upon which this Report has been brought.

2465 **The Bailiff:** Is there anyone else who wishes to speak? No.
In that case I will definitely call on Deputy Sillars to reply to the debate.

2470 **Deputy Sillars:** Thank you, sir.

I will sort of start in roughly reverse order.

Deputy Langlois, pre-school is all about fitting in to society, as you know. We are already going to wait more than two years. How long do we want to wait? And we are fully committed to the CYPP.

2475 Deputy Spruce wants mandatory attendance. Well, we have heard several say that but we are not for that.

We are not jumping any queue and that is why we are waiting for the Benefits and Pension Review which we are told will come to the States early next year. That is why we are being corporate.

2480 Deputy Lowe, I will cover that by summing up some other bits and pieces, but the evidence that universal entitlement will encourage 95% to attend for 15 hours: your points and other points that Deputies have made about these 23 mythical children – that is not the point. You have missed the point, those who go on about 23 children.

2485 Deputy Lowe wants some figures. Well, I will try and get some rounded figures rather than percentages. We are looking at something like 500 children out of the 600 who do not attend pre-school for 15 hours. Now, 15 hours: as Deputy Fallaize said – it is not about being a maximum, it is actually the minimum. And I covered Jersey who have actually got 20 hours. But it is not about 23 children, it is about 60% of the

children and it is about the 44% who replied but, as I said, in round figures it is 500 children we are talking about in one year. So it is a large number.

Deputy Burford, thank you for your support. Pre-school is not planned to be compulsory. Let me re-iterate that. And actually I do agree with you totally that it is about choice and if mother or father do not want to go back to work or they want to go and work in some charity or they want to stay at home or whatever it is, it is all about that choice. So they will not be disadvantaged. So those who want to go to work will go to work, those who have to will have to, but those who do not want to will not have to.

Deputy Brehaut, thank you very much for your support. We at Education – again I will repeat it and I will probably say it several times – are very supportive of the CYPP. We will fully work together with all stake holders, States' Departments and, yes, the CYPP.

Deputy Dorey, we look forward to working together and coming up with a great pre-school provision for all our children.

Deputy Storey, the SSD support two schools for children already and I do not want to say too much but as far as the Daisy Chain is concerned there is work going on behind the scenes to see if anything can be done. There are no promises there but there is work being done.

We will know by September 2015 where we are financially so I do not actually need my crystal ball. So we will know where we are by that date. We have been told that the Government Service Plan will be coming to us by the beginning of next year and the Benefits, Pension Review will be here by the end of the year or early next. Pre-school will then be discussed in that process. So we are being corporate.

Deputy Perrot, I agree we should all aspire. I could not agree more with you. Universal entitlement – that is the practice around the world – shows that you will end up with a high rate of attendance and, yes, we at Education must work with HSSD and get to those parents who do not engage.

Funding, again, I will come back to later.

Pre-school is not a pet scheme. The scheme is a serious proposal which can benefit the whole future of our Island.

I thank my fellow Board Members and other Members for answering questions raised during the debate. I do not propose to repeat these again in my closing speech.

Deputy De Lisle questioned our entry arrangements in comparison to Jersey and the UK. I can confirm our entry arrangements are the same, in that children start school in the year of their fifth birthday. So some children are four when they start in reception but all will be five when they start Year 1.

He suggested that we only provide education for four-year-olds if there was space. Well, we have not turned any four-year-old away so far.

Deputy Adam, I believe Deputy Green responded to the issue of why not make it compulsory. I would add that the experience of the Republic of Ireland was that their voluntary universal scheme raised participation from 50% to 95% of children receiving 15 hours of quality pre-school over a four-year period. This was done by promotion encouragement and cross-departmental collaboration.

We are looking at the new Education Law. It is highlighted as a priority in the Vision, but it has had to slip down the order as it will require significant resources, both within the Department and at St James's Chambers. But I would like to assure the Assembly that we are committed to reviewing the Law but at the moment it does not prevent us from making changes we want to help us improve standards as quickly as possible.

I thank Deputy Lester Queripel for his support.

Deputy Louis Jean, I am pleased to still see you, so thank you very much for staying both Alderney Representatives and we appreciate your support. We are conscious that the same issues are prevalent in Alderney as in Guernsey and we know there is an appetite there for the introduction of this entitlement.

Deputy Soulsby, I agree with what you said and reassure you again that we are not just limiting our work on early intervention to three and four-year-olds. As I have said, we believe the early intervention from birth to three is equally important but this cross-departmental work does not require additional funding and we are doing this through the CYPP, of which we play an active part.

Deputy Gollop, I thank you for your support and agree that means testing is not the answer. Universal entitlement does encourage use. I absolutely agree that this is the beginning of a universal child and children's strategy, and we must make sure that it is so.

I thank Deputy Fallaize for his supportive speech and agree that pre-school is part of the solution to social issues, but it is a very important part. It is a complex problem at the core of social policy and this is one element. We agree with him that pre-school is a universal service and not a benefit. I am also grateful to him for illuminating his historical perspective on the pre-school issue. Yes, we have been waiting a long time. This is no surprise so now let us get on with it.

I would like to thank Deputy Green for his support. I can reassure Members that we will be measuring the impact of the introduction of the universal entitlement to quality pre-school. It will take time to realise the benefits but we cannot wait any longer to get this important foundation to learning introduced.

In response to Deputy Trott – my friend Deputy Trott... (*Laughter*) Good afternoon – as I explained yesterday in my response to the Treasury Minister's statement, we are on track to meet our FTP targets, although there is no denying it is difficult, but our savings will flow through our cash limits over time. For example, the savings realised by the closure of the two primary schools will only be fully reflected in the Department's 2016 financial budget.

The Education Board will scrutinise and continue to scrutinise all expenditure across the Departments, but we are together in agreeing that we will not make decisions that will adversely affect our children's educational outcomes. We anticipate that we can identify genuine efficiency savings through rationalisation of sites, such as consolidating the CFE onto as few sites as possible and vacating the Department's offices at The Grange.

In short, I can tell you Deputy Trott that all aspects of the Department's services will be considered and we will work with T&R and all other Departments to identify how we can contribute towards the cost of pre-school entitlement. Remember it takes a village to raise a child.

He asked: where does this sit within our priorities? Well, as I said in my opening speech, pre-school education and our entire strategy rests on the foundation of high quality pre-school education. We will work again with T&R and key stake holders to devise funding options and identify a recommendation to bring back to this Assembly for its consideration.

For Deputy Le Clerc, we have partners willing and ready to work with us – Every Child our Future: ECOF – that are keen to work with us on training staff, existing staff from pre-schools are already keen to access training that Education Department currently provides in their own time. All of this will be part of the planning over the next two years, when we will be working closely with the GPLA and HSSD to develop the final scheme for implementation.

Deputy Stewart, I do not believe this is an issue that requires higher taxes or GST to pay for it. Deputy Stewart is forgetting this is an investment to save money in the future. We are proposing to do things differently. Yes, we will look at our spending and service provision, but as a Government we need to take a holistic view. All the evidence points to a return on this investment of anything up to £7 for each £1 invested in pre-school. We must take a more long-term view as this was, I think, highlighted by Deputy Fallaize. We are trying very hard, Deputy Stewart, to supply an educated work force for all the new jobs you are going to be providing in the future. (*Laughter*)

Deputy Le Lièvre, as my Deputy Minister, wears his social conscience on his sleeve. Yes, as a Board, we all unanimously support his passion about delivering equality of opportunity for all our children.

This will take slightly longer – the response to Deputy St Pier. Deputy St Pier has made a predictable speech and raised a number of criticisms that I am compelled to rebut strongly.

He said there was no detailed analysis of costs only covered in a few sentences. Well, that is because it is very simple. The cost estimate is based on the average hourly charge multiplied by 15 hours, multiplied by 38 weeks, multiplied by the number of children and then adding an additional £100,000 for the quality framework and training. It is that simple. I can only apologise that we have not had to complete a 100-page outlined business case for this States' Report. No doubt that will come once we start working with you, (*Laughter*) if we approve the Resolutions today.

He has referred to the HSSD numbers, but what he has failed to consider is the quality and number of hours attended by the children. That is why we had to ask parents of reception children to give us the best available information which is far more comprehensive than the HSSD figures.

We have been criticised for not working corporately – an accusation I find staggering. As Deputy Fallaize has said earlier today, pre-school has been an objective of the States and included in various strategies submitted by Policy Council in 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2013 by the Education Department.

The Education Department has been at the core of helping to get the Children and Young People's Plan Implementation Group and Partnership Board up and running, and we are desperately keen to work with other Departments to help produce an effective Children and Young People's Plan.

We have been accused of ignoring nought to three years. I do not know how many times I have to say this, but we are absolutely not. Pre-school is one element and, by Departmental working, we can build on the work we are doing with other Departments. There is much good work we are already doing below the radar on parental partnerships through passion and enthusiasm of dedicated staff in Education and HSSD working together. We can do more and we will do more.

We are being pedestrian copy-cats apparently because we are catching up with the rest of the UK. Well, if implementing best practice, which is proven internationally to work... then, yes, we are copy-cats. Are we complacent and only want to do this? Absolutely not. We are going to leapfrog other jurisdictions and interventions of nought to three years but pre-school is a core foundation.

We should be looking to schools as community facilities and think more creatively about how we use our estates. Well, I agree and I am delighted that Deputy St Pier has read the Department's strategic outline case for the redevelopment of La Mare de Carteret Schools, as that is exactly what we would like to do. It is a shame that T&R chose to not nominate a political representative on to that Board though. (*Interjection*)

Apparently we do not have the capacity in the private sector to accommodate all the children. Yes we do. The GPLA are extremely confident that they will be able to meet the demands and they have two years to plan for this. If there is any shortfall we expect it to be minimal and we need to provide and will be able to accommodate a very small number.

We are protecting private providers apparently. No, we are working in partnership with the private sector that is able to meet the demand more effectively than the public sector.

Why haven't we regulated the private pre-school providers in the past? Well because we do not have the authority, as HSSD has a limited mandate for pre-school regulation. By approving these Resolutions, the Education Department will have that authority and we look forward to working closely in partnership with our colleagues at HSSD on doing just that.

Like Deputy Trott, you asked where this fits in the Board's overall strategy? As I said at the outset, it is core and is the foundation upon which our education Vision rests. So what does it take precedence over when we are forecasting an overspend? Well, I have explained our budgetary position in our response to your statement yesterday. Which I think you agreed with me, to the first part of my question, in that we have done exceedingly well to get this far. So thank you.

But you were silent on the lack of performance on the cross-cutting projects in delivering savings, which is not in our gift and so subsequently we have had to find a further £2 million to try and hit our £7.3 million target, on which we are now only £800,000 short.

We will be reviewing all expenditure to see how we can make contributions to the required funding, but we will be opposed to any changes which adversely impact on our children's educational outcomes. But I think it is important to note that since 2009 I understand that Education's Department budget has in fact fallen – sorry, it is a percentage – by 4.5% whilst inflation has increased by over 11%.

Deputy St Pier also quoted the largest three pre-school providers as Melrose, Acorn and Blanchelande. There are not the largest. Acorn is actually the third largest. Blanchelande and Melrose could be considered the smaller pre-schools in comparison with other private providers.

So, in summary, we have engaged in a sober and important debate today, we have balanced so many different elements, the benefits which pre-school education promises for our children, our families, our schools, and our communities, against understandable concerns about the costs and financial viability. But the real question facing this Assembly today is not can we afford to support pre-school education? The question is can we afford not to?

It is a fact that our Island stands apart in the developed world in not funding any kind of pre-school education. In most of the nations which make up the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development more than *three quarters* of four-year-olds receive early childhood education.

The latest report from the Programme of International Student Assessment concludes that students who have enjoyed pre-schooling perform better. They are the equivalent of a full academic year ahead of children deprived of a pre-school experience.'

It states:

'A serious focus on the education and health of children from birth to age five, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, can lay the foundation for achievement in school, college, career and life.

Look around the globe and you will find mighty nations and tiny jurisdictions alike investing in their future in the same way, via pre-school education, because they know that it is a pre-requisite for sustaining a competitive work force.'

In Singapore 99% of children have at least a year's free pre-school education. In Finland each municipality has to provide free pre-school education. Sweden – they state that pre-school provision for all children must be fun, encompass play and education. Coming closer to home, France – 24 hours a week free pre-school education. England – 15 hours a week free pre-school education. Scotland is increasing its provision to 15 hours a week free pre-school education. Wales up to 25 hours a week free pre-school education. And just over the water, dear old Jersey – 20 hours a week of free pre-school education. (*Interjections and laughter*)

Across the world Governments are united in the belief that pre-school education is the best possible investment that they can make in the future of their nations, big and small.

In the USA President Barack Obama has pledged to make pre-school education his priority for the last two years in the White House. In the States of the Union address this year he pleaded with Congress, with political leaders from all parties and with business leaders to join him in leaving a priceless legacy for future generations.

The President said:

'Research shows that one of the best investments we can make in a child's life is high-quality early education. In States that makes it a priority to educate our youngest children... studies show students grow up more likely to read, do [mathematics] at grade level, graduate high school, hold a job, and form more stable families of their own. [We know this works.] So let's do what works and make sure that none of our children start the race of life already behind. Let's give our kids that [great] chance'.

Compared to those examples, our provision is shamefully zero. Pre-school education in Guernsey and Alderney is available only to children whose parents are comfortably off. To the rest we say, 'You are on your own.'

2665 Many of us sitting here today put education as a priority in our manifestos and many of us indicated our desire for a pre-school education. We stood in order to make a difference to help our children develop their potential and achieve the best they can.

2670 Last July the Assembly unanimously voted for the Education Department's Vision which included our commitment to come to the States with this Report. We always said we would come back with the flesh on the bone for the States to consider. Well, here we are.

We now have the ability to make a transformational change to our education system by setting firm foundations within the early years stage and which will deliver benefits for all our children and future generations by giving them better educational outcomes and life chances. Today we have an opportunity to convert the words into actions.

2675 A number of colleagues during this debate have questioned why pre-school education should be a universal entitlement. They argue that it would cost the States less if Government simply targeted the provision of pre-school education. In our Report my Board explained that many leading jurisdictions either opted for universal entitlement from the start or have moved from targeted provision to universal entitlement, simply because it is far more effective and has better outcomes for our children.

2680 Knowing colleagues concerns on this specific point, I approached – please forgive me if I get the name pronounced wrong – Naomi Eisenstadt from Oxford University, one of the leading authors of the World Health Organisation's Effective Provision of Pre-school Education Report, for an insight.

2685 By way of background, Naomi has been active in policy and practice in the field of early years education for over 30 years. She has dedicated her working life to researching and shaping public policy on education, childcare, parenting policy and extended schools.

2690 Her comments were enlightening and of huge relevance to our own situation in Guernsey. She said, firstly, targeting has its own costs of bureaucracy for entitlement and people move in and out of eligibility, and secondly, universal provision tends to be higher quality and the EPPE Report found that all children benefited from early education and improved school results are still apparent through to the age of 14 between those children who had early education and those who had not.

As Education Minister, I can say that the Political Board believes that the arguments for universal entitlement are compelling. George Bernard Shaw said that:

'For every complex problem there is a simple answer which is... [usually] wrong.'

In our view, targeted provision is the simple wrong answer to a complex problem.

2695 Several of you have expressed concerns about the funding for universal provision and we understand those concerns. That is why we are proposing a two-year lead which gives us the opportunity to plan the practicalities for a quality framework and, most importantly, to work with Treasury and Resources to look at the funding options after the Tax and Benefits Review.

2700 By September 2015 we will have the opportunity to debate the funding arrangements and the funding resources in order to implement the main Resolution. You will be able to look at this in the round with other competing demands on general revenue. We are not jumping the gun. That will be a debate for another day and, in a sense, you will have another bite at the cherry at that point.

2705 I sense that many States' Members want to support pre-school education as you know it is the right thing to do. Do not use funding as an excuse to vote against pre-school. I urge you to work with us to make this affordable.

2710 As we know, Guernsey and Alderney can only survive in their international markets by attracting individuals with uncommon skills that cannot be easily sourced at home. I have to tell you the absence of affordable pre-school education is a serious disincentive for many people considering a move to our Islands. Not when other places offer more attractive options in early education. These individuals are looking elsewhere and we are missing out.

We have heard today about the positive cost-effective impact universal pre-school education has on children themselves, on their parents, our schools and our communities. There is no longer any doubt about the long-term benefits of such a policy.

2715 Respected independent global organisations, like the OECD and the World Health Organisation, recognise the benefit it brings. Educationalists, academics, child care professionals are loud in their support.

It is no longer acceptable or tenable for Guernsey and Alderney to stand against the provision of universal pre-school education any longer. Every year that we ignore this fact is another year where we fall behind our neighbours and rivals on the world stage.

2720 I also want to emphasise that universal pre-school is a key element of intervention in the nought to fives. It is a central element that we will be working with other Departments in the crucial nought to three years.

The Education Department is committed to working with the CYPP to come forward with a new plan for this Assembly to consider.

2725 We will be supporting Deputy Brehaut, who is the Chair of the CYPP Partnership Board, to transform the delivery of services for our young people and the nought to fives in particular. Already we are seeing the CYPP changing behaviours and cultures, as demonstrated by closer interdepartmental working, engagement with the third sector, data collection, data sharing. So the signs are good.

2730 I am delighted that Deputy Sherbourne is the Education Department's representative on that Partnership Board with Deputies Brehaut and Wilkie and that they, of this Assembly, will be considering an inspirational transformation of CYPP next year. I hope you will join me in wishing them well in this vital area of social policy.

It is an enduring source of shame that we are unable match – or more accurately because we refuse to match – the efforts and achievements of other countries, other islands, on such a fundamental issue.

2735 This Assembly has the opportunity today to make a radical transformation to the foundation of our children's education and their future lives. We have the opportunity to lead Guernsey into the 21st century and give all our children the best possible start in their education. Support this policy today, not just for the sake of our children, not just for our schools or our families – although, as we have seen, they all stand to gain incalculably from it.

Support this policy because it restores Guernsey's credibility in an area where we limp behind the rest of the world. Support this policy so we can look our neighbours and rivals in the eye once more.

2740 Declare with passion that we are proud to invest in the future of our children, the future of our society and the future of our Islands. Support this policy so that we can hold our heads high, not shirk the responsibility we have for our children's future.

This States was elected on a mandate for change it was elected to shape a better future for our citizens. Let us leave a legacy we can be proud of. Be bold and today let us make a difference.

2745 Thank you. (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.) (*Applause*)

The Bailiff: Deputy Trott.

2750 **Deputy Trott:** Sir, my good friend the Education Minister certainly gets an A star for answering question number one that I posed to him. However, he will remain unclassified unless I am able to get an answer to questions two and three. Would it help if I repeated them?

Deputy Sillars: Yes, please.

2755 **Deputy Trott:** Thank you.

Please provide an example of a viable option for funding pre-school education? Those words are of course taken from Proposition 2.

2760 **Deputy Sillars:** Do you want to do question three as well?

Deputy Trott: If it is helpful, yes. Question three was: what service or services are the Department willing or able to cease providing in order to release nearly £2 million per annum necessary to fund this service? There was a loose answer around that but nothing specific.

2765 **Deputy Sillars:** Thank you, sir.

I did try to answer that. I made a quote about how a village creates their children, so the point I was trying to get to – may be not very subtly – was actually it is all about us all working together.

The question is coming from a silo mentality in this one instance. Of course we see this as not a silo. We are not just Education on our own we see it with HSSD with Home with SSD all working together.

2770 Now, when we speak to T&R and T&R talk to us, it has been alluded to that we will be asked: where could we make some savings and where we can contribute? Now, we will be very happy to have that discussion.

2775 There are areas that Deputy Conder said. We could look at – I am not saying that we are going to, because it was a personal view he quoted, but it is an example – the grant funding. Now, whether we as a Board would agree with that, I do not know but it has to be looked at the balance. But actually it has got to look at the balance across the whole of the States.

2780 It is not just Education who will make that benefit; it is the whole Island will make that benefit. C&E will have some educated people coming through in years' time for their work force, the jobs they are creating. There are so many people in the prisons. The whole Island will benefit so we need to work with the whole island. So, whilst it is not a direct answer to your two questions, I hope you can see that it is in round. We have to work together to get that.

Thank you.

The Bailiff: Deputy De Lisle.

2785

Deputy De Lisle: Sir, can I ask for some clarification from the Minister through you, sir, just with regard to the first Resolution that we are going to vote on?

With respect to Resolution 1, sir, there is an indication in there of a reference to Section 9 and when I look at Section 9, the last bullet point on page 1124 on Section 9 talks about,

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‘Admission to private providers would be funded through a universal Education Grant.’

I would like to ask whether the universal educational grant refers to the £1.9 million? Is that what that is going to be, because it is all a matter of affordability from my point of view in support of this pre-school Billet paper?

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The Bailiff: Deputy Sillars, can you provide that clarification?

Deputy Sillars: I was just wondering if there was some more.

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Deputy De Lisle: No.

Deputy Sillars: No, okay.

If we go to the cost, number 10.1 says that,

‘[It requires] an annual commitment of approximately £1.9 million.’

2805

We see that as being the total cost. We have obviously got to work through what that is going to be.

As I said in my closing speech, there is about £1.8 million if you take the various averages. There is £100,000 built in there for training and working with the GPLA and the providers and there is £100,000 as well that SSD currently pay for supporting the two schools that we have not built in to this figure at all.

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The Bailiff: Well, Members – Yes, Deputy Stewart.

Deputy Stewart: I just wanted clarity on the answer you gave me, because it is not clear.

The Bailiff: I did not give you any answer. *(Laughter)*

2815

Deputy Stewart: Well, he did, a bit –

The Bailiff: No, you said the answer I gave you. I did not give you any answer. *(Laughter)*

2820

Deputy Stewart: Oh no, no, sir. Not you, Mr Bailiff, but I am sure if you would have given me an answer it would have been clearer than the one the Minister gave me. You mentioned –

The Bailiff: No, through me please Deputy Stewart, not direct. We have had too many –

2825

Deputy Stewart: Sorry, sir, it has been a long day.

The question I asked of the Minister was: do you believe in this strategy enough – because I have been round the Minster long enough when he has said he has pared everything down to the bone... we closed two schools last year to save the money to reach the FTP target, we still have not got to the cash side of it yet, they will overspend this year – that if you cannot find the money from savings that you believe it will be worth raising the money from extra taxes such as GST to fund this? Do you believe it enough?

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Deputy Sillars: Sir, –

The Bailiff: Is this through me?

2835

Deputy Sillars: – through you, I wish he had listened to my reply. It would have been a lot easier than having to stand up now.

I said, 'No, I do not believe in GST or raising higher income.' I never have. I have been a businessman all my life as well. I do not believe in raising those taxes and I have covered it in my answer. (**Several Members:** Hear, hear.)

The Bailiff: Members, we come to the vote on the Propositions.

Two Members: I call for a recorded vote, please, sir?

The Bailiff: A recorded vote. There we are.

There are two Propositions. Does anyone want the two Propositions to be taken separately? No, in which case both Propositions will be taken together and we will have a recorded vote.

There was a recorded vote.

Carried – Pour 27, Contre 15, Ne vote pas 0, Absent 5

POUR

Deputy Harwood
Deputy Brehaut
Deputy Robert Jones
Deputy Le Clerc
Deputy Gollop
Deputy Sherbourne
Deputy Conder
Deputy Lester Queripel
Deputy Gillson
Deputy Ogier
Deputy Trott
Deputy Fallaize
Deputy David Jones
Deputy Laurie Queripel
Deputy Le Lièvre
Deputy Collins
Deputy Duquemin
Deputy Green
Deputy Dorey
Deputy Le Tocq
Deputy Wilkie
Deputy Burford
Deputy Soulsby
Deputy Sillars
Deputy Luxon
Alderney Rep. Jean
Alderney Rep. Harvey

CONTRE

Deputy Kuttelwascher
Deputy Domaille
Deputy Langlois
Deputy Storey
Deputy St Pier
Deputy Stewart
Deputy Le Pelley
Deputy Lowe
Deputy Spruce
Deputy Adam
Deputy Perrot
Deputy De Lisle
Deputy Inglis
Deputy Quin
Deputy Hadley

NE VOTE PAS

None

ABSENT

Deputy Bebb
Deputy Paint
Deputy James
Deputy Brouard
Deputy O'Hara

The Bailiff: Well, Members, the result of the vote on the Education Department's Propositions in relation to the Introduction of Universal Entitlement to Pre-school Education is 27 votes in favour and 15 against. I declare them carried. (*Applause*)

That concludes the business for this sitting of the States and, as I understand it, Heather Watson's match has not yet started, so those who (*Laughter*) wish to can go and watch it.

The Assembly adjourned at 4.34 p.m.