

# REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF TYNWALD COURT (QUESTIONS)

---

**Douglas, Tuesday, 21st May 2002  
at 10.35 a.m.**

---

Present:

The President of Tynwald (the Hon. N Q Cringle).

**In the Council:** The Lord Bishop (the Rt Rev Noël Debroy Jones), the Attorney-General (Mr W J H Corlett QC), Hon. Mrs C M Christian, Messrs E A Crowe, D F K Delaney, J R Kniveton, E G Lowey, Dr E J Mann, Messrs J N Radcliffe and G H Waft, with Mrs M Cullen, Clerk of the Council.

**In the Keys:** The Speaker (the Hon J A Brown) (Castletown); Mr D M Anderson (Glenfaba); Hon A R Bell and Mr L I Singer (Ramsey); Mr R E Quine OBE (Ayre); Mr J D Q Cannan (Michael); Mrs H Hannan (Peel); Mr P Karran, Hon R K Corkill and Mr A J Earnshaw (Onchan); Mr G M Quayle (Middle); Messrs J R Houghton and R W Henderson (Douglas North); Hon D C Cretney (Douglas South); Hon R P Braidwood and Mrs B J Cannell (Douglas East); Hon A F Downie (Douglas West); Mr D J Gelling (Malew and Santon); Hon J Rimington, Mr Q B Gill and Hon Mrs P M Crowe (Rushen); with Mr M Cornwell-Kelly, Clerk of Tynwald.

---

## Questions for Oral Answer

- |  |        |
|--|--------|
| 1. Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco Strategy – Funds Allocated (Mr Singer)               | TQ 88  |
| 2. Isle of Man National Health Service – Standard and Quality of Care (Mr Cannan)  | TQ 89  |
| 3. International Business School – Plans for Nunnery Development (Mr Lowey)        | TQ 90  |
| 4. Government Employees – Abolition of Weekly Cheques (Mr Houghton)                | TQ 91  |
| 5. Euro Currency – Introduction (Mr Waft)  | TQ 92  |
| 6. Minimum Wage (Mr Henderson)   | TQ 94  |
| 7. Mill Road, Peel – Provision of Lorry Park (Mrs Hannan)                          | TQ 96  |
| 8. Pensions, Allowances and Benefits – Weekly Payments (Mr Houghton)               | TQ 97  |
| 9. DHSS Benefits -Pink Cheque Payments (Mr Houghton)                               | TQ 97  |
| 10. Diabetes – National Service Framework (Mr Singer)                              | TQ 98  |
| 11. Noble’s Hospital – Non-Urgent Admissions Cancelled in TT Period (Mr Henderson) | TQ 99  |
| 12. Noble’s Hospital – Operations Cancelled in TT Period (Mr Henderson)            | TQ 100 |
| 13. Noble’s Hospital – Plans to Clear Cancellations Backlog (Mr Henderson)         | TQ 101 |
| 14. Abortion – Expenditure on Counselling (Mr Lowey)                               | TQ 102 |
| 15. Smoking – Ban in Enclosed Public Places (Mr Waft)                              | TQ 103 |
| 16. Housing – All-Island and Local Plans – Local Authorities etc (Mr Quayle)       | TQ 103 |
| 17. Waste Reduction – Tax on Plastic Bottles (Mrs Hannan)                          | TQ 105 |
-

18. Air Quality Standards – Compliance with Tynwald Resolution (Mrs Hannan)	TQ 106
19. Incinerator – Bottom Ash Disposal Site (Mrs Cannell)	TQ 107
20. Incinerator – Fly Ash Disposal Route (Mrs Cannell)	TQ 108
21. Waste Recycling/Composting – Kerbside Collection (Mrs Cannell)	TQ 109
22. Light Pollution – Reduction of (Mr Waft)	TQ 110
23. Peel Hill Footpath – Reinstatement (Mrs Hannan)	TQ 110
24. Court for Summary Prosecutions (Mr Waft)	TQ 111
25. Skerresdale/Ballaquine Bridge – Repair – Weight Restrictions (Mrs Hannan)	TQ 116
26. Dublin Air Route – Inadequate Service (Mr Singer)	TQ 117
27. TT Course- Provision of Public Access Corridor (Mr Houghton)	TQ 112
28. Summerland – Future Strategy (Mr Houghton)	TQ 113
29. TT Festival – Street Party (Mrs Cannell)	TQ 114
30. TT Races – Anticipated Arrivals (Mrs Cannell)	TQ 115
31. Civil Service – University Graduate Entrants (Mr Delaney)	TQ 115

### Questions for Written Answer

32. 'Fax Polls' – Legislation to Make Illegal (The Speaker)	TQ 118
33. State Retirement Age – Policy on Fixing (Mr Henderson)	TQ 118
34. TT Races – Increase in Anticipated Arrivals (Mr Henderson)	TQ 119
35. Civil Service – Training of Junior Staff (Mr Henderson)	TQ 119
36. Work Permits – Waiting Time to Obtain (Mr Henderson)	TQ 120
37. Work Permits Committee – Inability to Process Applications (Mr Henderson)	TQ 120
38. Work Permits – Process of Applying and Granting (Mr Henderson)	TQ 121
39. Work Permits System – Discrimination against Local Staff (Mr Henderson)	TQ 121
40. Noble's Hospital – Waiting Lists – Analysis (Mr Henderson)	TQ 122
41. Noble's Hospital – Outpatients' Clinics Cancelled in TT Period (Mr Henderson)	TQ 122
42. Cardiothoracic Centre, Broadgreen – Waiting-List Audit (Mr Henderson)	TQ 122
43. TT Races – Increase in Anticipated Arrivals (Mr Henderson)	TQ 123

### Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco Strategy – Funds Allocated – Question by Mr Singer

Question 1. The hon. member for Ramsey (Mr Singer) to ask the Chief Minister:

*Within your Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco Strategy, what funds have been allocated to pursue each of the three sections during the current financial year?*

**The President:** I call on the hon. member for Ramsey, Mr Singer.

**Mr Singer:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** Chief Minister to reply.

**Mr Corkill:** Thank you, Mr President. The additional funding allocated for this current year, as proposed by the Drug and Alcohol Committee, is £100,000, which is being distributed as follows: the Department of Home Affairs, Isle of Man Constabulary, Central Alcohol Unit, £75,000; the DHSS Senior Health Promotion Officer for Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco Resources, £7,500; the Department of Education, Drug Alcohol Education Liaison Officer resources, £7,500; and the Treasury, the

Customs and Excise Division, the allowance and investigation area, £10,000. And this funding is not sub-divided between drugs, alcohol and tobacco. Also this extra funding is in addition to the following identified moneys for the year 2002-03: the DHSS, £649,030; Education, £180,700; Home Affairs, £616,104; the Treasury, £92,500; the Chief Secretary's office, £146,000. And the total of those is £1,684,734. There are, of course, the additions that I mentioned in the earlier part of my answer. This sum is generally not sub-divided between drugs, alcohol and tobacco, and it is only indicative. A lot of general work done by various agencies of government in relation to law enforcement, health, welfare and education has a dimension that relates to drugs, alcohol and tobacco. No disaggregation of this total figure is possible, sir.

**The President:** Hon. member for Ramsey.

**Mr Singer:** Can I thank the Chief Minister for his detailed answer, but can I ask him: is it not a fact that the spending on the anti-tobacco strategy is considerably less than that being spent on drugs and alcohol, and that it perhaps reflects the government's attitude that promoting an anti-smoking policy on the Island is of lesser importance compared to the other two? Can the Chief Minister confirm that equal

amounts of money are spent on anti-tobacco, and if not, should they not be?

**The President:** Chief Minister.

**Mr Corkill:** Thank you, Mr President. I think the hon. member strikes at the very heart of the issue that the Strategy Committee is dealing with: that is that we have drugs, which are illegal substances, and we have alcohol and tobacco, which are legal. Nonetheless, the community at large experiences problems with all of these substances, and therefore one might see a strategy, perhaps, of a single nature, dealing with all three. The drug and alcohol strategy was set up by my predecessor, Mr Gelling. A lot of that work produced a strategy, which is being delivered, and can I say tobacco is close on its heels. We are not at a position, as I will say in a later question, to say too much about it at the moment, but can I say that, certainly from a personal point of view and from a government point of view, the health effects from tobacco are considered to be most serious.

**Two Members:** Hear, hear.

---

### Isle of Man National Health Service – Standard and Quality of Care – Question by Mr Cannan

Question 2. The hon. member for Michael (Mr Cannan) to ask the Chief Minister:

*Are you completely satisfied by the standard and quality of medical care provided to the residents of the Isle of Man by the National Health Service and, in particular, the standard and quality of primary healthcare?*

**The President:** I call on the hon. member for Michael, Mr Cannan.

**Mr Cannan:** Mr President, I ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** Chief Minister to reply.

**Mr Corkill:** Mr President, I am very proud of the service that we are able to offer to all the people of the Isle of Man through the National Health Service, and I believe it compares very well with the standards available through the National Health Service in the United Kingdom.

**The President:** Mr Cannan.

**Mr Cannan:** Is the Chief Minister aware that, while he says he is happy with the standards of healthcare in the Isle of Man, half the primary healthcare facility in Kirk Michael ceased on 31st March, when the Peel group practice closed its surgery after more than 60 years, notwithstanding that the population of Kirk Michael has increased by more than 150 per cent during that time and is increasing,

and that the only medical facility remaining is a three-day a week surgery operated by the Ramsey group practice, who refuse to take any more patients residing in the Kirk Michael area? And does the Chief Minister consider this is a satisfactory state of affairs in respect of primary healthcare?

**The President:** Chief Minister.

**Mr Corkill:** In my original answer, Mr President, I said that I was proud of the service that we actually deliver to the community of the Isle of Man. Having said that, I am sure myself and everyone in this Court continues to strive for improvements and progress in that service, none less so than my colleague, the Minister for the DHSS, Mrs Christian, member of Council. I am aware that the hon. member for Michael, Mr Cannan, has indeed written to me and to the minister for health about the situation in Kirk Michael, and from what I understand, the Ramsey surgery is providing branch surgery in Kirk Michael and wishes to continue to do so, which I think is important; but there have been changes, as the hon. member has said, in relation to the Peel practice and its involvement in the Kirk Michael area. I also wish to say that there are discussions ongoing with GP practices around the Island about the future, and this exercise is forming the basis of a strategic plan for the development of GP practices right across the Island, and no doubt that discussion will include Kirk Michael, sir.

**The President:** Hon. member for Michael.

**Mr Cannan:** The Chief Minister has just said that members strive for an improvement in the services. This is not an improvement in Kirk Michael – this is a decline in services – and the Chief Minister indicates, from his first answer, that he was satisfied. Would the Chief Minister, who in his own right is a medical professional with a speciality in primary healthcare, be content if the facility of a doctor's surgery, or part of a doctor's surgery, was summarily withdrawn in his own constituency in Onchan? And can he please give me an honest answer – an honest answer, Chief Minister: Would you be satisfied for your constituents?

**The President:** Chief Minister.

**Mr Corkill:** I am tempted to answer, Mr President, on the basis of the constituent member for my constituency of Onchan, which, in fact, has two branch surgeries and does not have a full surgery of its own. Having said that, of course, Onchan is a very populated area and therefore, no doubt, GP services are assessed on the basis of population as well as geographical location. I do not think it would be wise for me to actually come to conclusions on the hon. member's comments before the meetings with general practitioners about the all-Island strategy come to a conclusion; in fact, it could probably be quite disruptive to the process that is going on between the DHSS and the GPs. Certainly, if my area was to be

left without a GP, yes, I would be making noises about it.

Can I say again that, at this current time, Kirk Michael is being served by the Ramsey group practice.

**Mr Cannan:** Half of Kirk Michael.

**Mr Corkill:** I understand that there is a commitment into the future. There are problems over the premises, which allude more to the Peel side of things which has been withdrawn, and therefore there is an issue about where the service may well operate from in future, but these issues are well known by the Department of Health and Social Security, they are very much in the mind of the minister, and they will be addressed appropriately in due course. I do not think I can add anything else to that at the moment. Certainly, I understand the concerns of the hon. member, who represents the area for Michael, about the potential for a decline in services –

**Mr Cannan:** There is a decline in services.

**Mr Corkill:** - and certainly I do not think that that is what the Department of Health and Social Security will be satisfied with. I am sure they will not wish to see a decline to be a permanent issue.

---

### **International Business School – Plans for Nunnery Development – Question by Mr Lowey**

Question 3. The hon. member of the Council (Mr Lowey) to ask the Chief Minister:

- (1) *Are you aware that the Isle of Man International Business School is planning developments for the estate of the Nunnery;*
- (2) *has the Council of Ministers discussed this matter;*
- (2) *will you or the Council submit views to the School; and/or*
- (4) *do you agree that silence represents ‘a nil return’?*

**The President:** Hon. member of Council, Mr Lowey.

**Mr Lowey:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

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

**Mr Corkill:** Thank you, Mr President. The questions on the paper today would appear to be driven by the letter that Professor Roger Carey wrote to chief executives of all government departments, seeking their input to the process of drawing up a long-term plan for

the Nunnery estate. Such a long-term plan is a wholly proper activity if the estate is to be managed in the best interests of the International Business School and the population of the Isle of Man.

Specifically, the answers to the various parts of the question are therefore: in part (1), the International Business School are ‘not developing the estate, but are developing a plan for the estate to ensure that it is used in a matter that is most appropriate to satisfy the needs of the International Business School and the longer-term needs of a University of Man, and to take cognisance of other parties that may have a legitimate interest in the long-term future of the Nunnery estate.’ The answer to part (2) and part (3) of the question is ‘no’ to both: at this time it would not be appropriate to involve the Council of Ministers. As the plan is developed, it will be considered by the directors of the International Business School and by government departments that have a close interest in the estate – most obviously the Treasury – and at that time it will be appropriate for the Council of Ministers to express its views. The Isle of Man International Business School has purchased the whole of the Nunnery estate. One of the purposes of planning the long-term needs of the International Business School and the Nunnery estate is to identify those parts of the estate that can be seen to be surplus to even the long-term needs of the IBS; those parts of the estate can then be released for land banking, for example, on behalf of government or other agencies. Part (4) of the question: the International Business School was anxious to ensure that no ideas or interests were eliminated simply because it did not have an awareness of them. In that context, it seems not unreasonable to assume that any person not responding to the invitation did not have a perceived interest.

**The President:** Hon. member of Council.

**Mr Lowey:** As he talks about the long-term interests of the business school and the proposed university for that site, can the Chief Minister explain to the Court why the letter was dated 2nd May and replies had to be in by 14th May? Twelve days seems a very urgent review, and putting in the final paragraph that a silence would be ‘a nil return’. And is the Chief Minister satisfied that the future of the Nunnery could be resolved by chief executives? Since when have chief executives, and not politicians, been the party for ideas and future usage of publicly-owned land? I thought chief executives carried out the instructions of their ministers or departments.

**The President:** Chief Minister.

**Mr Corkill:** In answer to the first comment, Mr President, about the period of consultation time – 12 days, I think the hon. member said – I am sure that if any person who received that letter had, in fact, replied and said, ‘Yes, there may be an interest’ or registered some sort of holding letter, then that, in effect, would extend the consultation period. It was a trawl through chief executives of other departments of

government to find out what the thinking in other areas was. So, I am quite sure that the period of time that the hon. member alludes to was not a guillotine that would, in fact, cut off input from all other departments, but maybe it was an incentive to get people to think about the subject.

With regard to the function of chief officers, yes, I certainly agree with the hon. member: it is politicians who decide policy; it is politicians who make the decisions on policy and finance issues in this hon. Court. And I am sure that when a scheme or when a series of ideas - a strategy - for the Nunnery estate is arrived at, produced by officers of government, produced by the International Business School, it will be there for politicians to consider, to throw out, to amend or to change, depending on what hon. members say at that time. So, I certainly only see the chief officers' interest in all of this as a tool to help us make those decisions for the people of the Island.

**The President:** Hon. member of Council.

**Mr Lowey:** Would the Chief Minister not agree that the Nunnery estate and adjacent lands are not just another piece of real estate that is ripe for development? And I am alarmed to hear the Chief Minister say that the International Business School at the Nunnery then has its own requirements met. The rest of the estate, implicit in his reply, could be broken up into nice, neat little parcels and be land banked and ripe for development. If that is the view of the Chief Minister, then I think the sooner we have a debate in this Court to find out the proper use of that estate and adjacent lands the better. Would you not agree that the Nunnery is a special case and is not just another piece of real estate ripe for development?

**The President:** We have tried to avoid the debate with succinct supplementaries, if we can. Chief Minister.

**Mr Corkill:** Mr President, I, like many people, I suppose, on this Island, do think of the Nunnery estate as a special place. I am very pleased that it is no longer in private ownership, because we are now in a position to start talking about some of these issues that the hon. member has raised. We should be aware, of course, that certain current planning approvals do exist on the estate that were put in place by a previous owner, so in relation to planning issues there are some current planning permissions that are valid there and they may play a part in the thinking of the International Business School, but certainly the largest part of the estate is truly open space, it is wonderful parkland, and it has a great amenity value to the people of the Isle of Man, even if it is only visual, and so there are issues also regarding access to that open parkland. I hope that the chief officers are putting together the options - putting together some potential visions - for the whole Nunnery estate that, in due course, members of this hon. Court will be able to deliberate upon. And it is no further down the road than that. So, I hope the hon. member of Council,

Mr Lowey, does not think that something behind closed doors is going on here; the whole process will be very open and transparent, sir.

---

**Government Employees –  
Abolition of Weekly Cheques –  
Question by Mr Houghton**

Question 4. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Houghton) to ask the Minister for the Treasury:

- (1) *Does your department intend to abolish the weekly issuing of green cheque payments to government employees which currently permits the option of encashment at a Post Office counter; and*
- (2) *if so, why?*

**The President:** The hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Houghton.

**Mr Houghton:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name, sir.

**The President:** On this occasion, I call on the Minister for the Treasury, Mr Bell, to reply.

**Mr Bell:** Mr President, the Whitley Council, after extended and extensive negotiation, has agreed that payment to Whitley Council employees should be made on a monthly, rather than a weekly, basis. The consequence of this will be that after a date, which has yet to be finalised, weekly pay cheques will no longer be issued to existing employees covered by the Whitley Council Agreement. From 1st April 2002, all new employees covered by that agreement will be paid monthly by the Bankers' Automated Clearing System. This agreement does not cover all weekly-paid employees, and therefore it is not the intention of the Treasury, at this time, to abolish the weekly issuing of cheques for weekly pay, but it will review the position periodically, taking into account the steps taken by the other negotiating bodies in relation to the movement of staff from weekly to monthly pay.

**The President:** Hon. member Mr Houghton.

**Mr Houghton:** Thank you, Mr President. Can the hon. Minister for the Treasury explain whether, in fact, his department has consulted with those employees themselves, not just through the Whitley Council body, and if so, what was the result, sir?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mr Bell:** Mr President, it is not the rôle of Treasury to interfere in negotiations with the Whitley Council and those people it represents.

**The President:** Hon. member for Ayre.

**Mr Quine:** Is the Treasury minister aware whether or not there has been any consultation with the Post Office in respect of this matter? Obviously, if these type of payments are not to go through the Post Office, there is going to be a deficit on the social balance for Post Office activities.

**Mr Houghton:** Hear, hear.

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mr Bell:** I am not aware of any negotiations with the Post Office, Mr President.

---

### **Euro Currency – Introduction – Question by Mr Waft**

Question 5. The hon. member of the Council (Mr Waft) to ask the Minister for the Treasury:

- (1) *What government systems are now in place which will provide for the introduction of the euro into the Island;*
- (2) *how many banks are presently offering euro accounts;*
- (3) *what discussions have taken place with the business sector with regard to the impact of the euro;*
- (4) *under what terms and conditions will the Island join the euro;*
- (5) *what information and education does the government intend to make available to the public prior to the introduction of the euro;*
- (6) *will the Island be producing its own euro notes and coinage for use on the Island;*
- (7) *what will be the lead-in time for acceptance of the euro; and*
- (8) *what effect will the resulting inability of the United Kingdom to control its own interest rate have on the Island?*

**The President:** Hon. member of Council, Mr Waft.

**Mr Waft:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** Minister for the Treasury, Mr Bell, to reply.

**Mr Bell:** Mr President, my predecessor announced in his March 1998 budget speech that government's internal accounting arrangements had been changed so as to make it possible, in many cases, to pay in euro to settle amounts due to government,

with effect from 1st January 1999. Since then, euro notes, euro cheques and euro bank transfers have generally been accepted; euro coins are not accepted because the banks will not allow them to be paid across their counters – a banking policy common to all foreign currency. The present accounting treatment of any euro transactions reflects the euro's status as a foreign currency, and to ensure the consistency of treatment across government, the arrangements, together with government's daily euro currency exchange rate, are displayed in the corporate public folders of government e-mail systems.

In addition to various papers and briefing sessions in July last year, Treasury issued a 53-page euro reference handbook to all boards, departments and statutory boards for their guidance. At the same time, an internal euro computer project was initiated to sweep up any existing or proposed computer applications that are not already being addressed. Amongst many other matters, the Treasury euro reference handbook advises that where computer systems are being upgraded, all departments will build in euro compatibility where that represents value for money. All government departments have an officer with whom contact is maintained regarding the euro. It is for each department to ensure euro compatibility within the policy guidelines for each of their systems, be they electronic or manual. Treasury is currently proceeding with the development and phased installation of a new accounting and management system to replace legacy systems installed in the mid-1970s. Treasury has ensured that the new systems' functions extend to beyond just treating the euro as a foreign currency: if the UK Government proceeds to phase three of monetary union, the new systems will allow for dual currency accounting for any transitional period after exchange rates between the euro and sterling are locked and for the full operation of the euro as the principal currency of government financial systems thereafter. That reflects our present position. Whilst the UK's adoption of the euro awaits determination, we are ensuring that we do all we can, consistent with value for money, to ensure that government is fully prepared.

Although the exact number of banks presently offering euro-denominated accounts is not known, following an impromptu survey of the main high street banks, it has been established that the majority of banks on the Island provide deposit accounts in euro, and that a small number provide current account facilities with cheque book and debit cards. There are also a great many licensed institutions on the Island providing private banking services, and these will often have provision for euro accounts for saving and investment purposes.

The euro has been a transacting currency for several years now and has been a subject for discussion between government and business, both formally and informally, for several years longer. Members will recall the Treasury report of March 1998, 'A Review of European Economic and Monetary Union and its Implications', which dealt with the issues of interest to the business community. The introduction of the euro

has gone smoothly. Our own private sector has clearly dealt with its introduction very well and made the necessary changes to business systems, settlement systems, invoicing methods and so on. Obviously, should the euro replace the pound, then there will be much more for business to do and much more to discuss formally with business and, indeed, other sections of the community to build up to its introduction.

Should the Island at some stage in the future adopt the euro, it will be because the UK has done likewise; the Isle of Man would not be joining monetary union as a separate political entity, so I am not clear as to what the hon. member has in mind when referring to terms and conditions of entry.

It is anticipated that much of the educational and information materials for the Island, should the euro come into being here, would be that made available from the UK Government and related sources. There exists already a team of officers within Treasury keeping abreast of all aspects of economic and monetary union in Europe, and this team would take a lead rôle in the information dissemination process. Precisely what would be undertaken has yet to be formulated, but public seminars, leaflets, brochures, the Internet and media campaigns would all feature prominently. The Republic of Ireland has already undergone this process, and their approach and use of different media for the dissemination of information have already been noted by our Treasury team, and the lessons from their successful campaign will be invaluable.

My predecessor announced in his March 1998 budget speech that Treasury had approved a set of six denominations of euro government notes, available, if needed, at short notice, to replace the existing Manx Government notes. Precious metal Manx commemorative euro coins have been issued in the past, and if it is economic to do so, no doubt base metal versions, for use in daily circulation, will be readily available when needed. Whilst I am talking about our currency, I would like to take the opportunity to clarify one financial aspect. The present Manx currency - our notes and our coins - is simply a form of substitute sterling: it displaces UK sterling which would otherwise circulate here in the Island. We are not in a position yet to obtain all necessary approvals to ensure that we can, in future, issue Manx euro as a form of substitute euro which would otherwise circulate here in the Island. This is simply because of the UK Government's present stance on the euro at stage two of monetary union, and we cannot progress the matter until they move to stage three. If the UK were to adopt the euro and we issued Manx euro, we are in the fortunate position of being able to redeem all of our sterling-based Manx currency. The issue proceeds of any Manx euro issue would, just like the present sterling issue, stay here to be invested by Treasury to provide for the issue's ultimate future redemption. Countries within monetary union would, no doubt, have different arrangements, but those arrangements would only apply to the 'in' countries, and not to us with our substitute euro issue.

On the matter of lead-in time, I can advise that there is no set time for transition; however, an illustrative changeover timetable has been produced by the United Kingdom Treasury, which the Isle of Man Treasury accepts as being credible. This period is some 34 to 40 months from the date the United Kingdom Government decides to hold a referendum, and can be broken down into: 4 months' preparation for the referendum in the United Kingdom; 24 to 30 months post-referendum and transition, allowing government, business and residents time to prepare; and up to 6 months' dual circulation of currencies.

As the final part of the question recognises, adoption of the single currency means the loss of national control of monetary policy and hence interest rates. Arguably this is the biggest cause of concern for opponents of the euro. For the Isle of Man, which does not have control over interest rates, the change is one wherein one external determining authority is replaced by another. The issue then is whether this will produce better or worse monetary policy from a British and, if different, an Isle of Man perspective. The answer is not an easy one to provide. One could argue, for instance, that UK monetary policy has often led to interest rate levels that were not particularly suitable for local economic circumstances; so would a rate set by the European Central Bank necessarily be any less appropriate? So many considerations come into play here as to make a definitive response impossible. So much would depend on the proficiency with which the European Central Bank conducts monetary policy and how convergent our own economy is with those of the key economies of Germany, France and the United Kingdom. This matter of convergence is, of course, the key on which the United Kingdom has said it will base its ultimate decision on when to hold a national referendum on whether to adopt the euro.

**The President:** Hon. member of Council, Mr Waft.

**Mr Waft:** Thank you, Mr President. Thank you, minister, for that comprehensive reply. Just a couple of small queries. With regard to the Manx euro note, I am conscious of the fact that the European euro has a number of security features built into it, which are quite comprehensive, to avoid forgery et cetera; I wondered if we were to have the same securities built into our note. And what has been the overall cost up to now for the introduction of the euro on the Island, and what does he envisage?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mr Bell:** Yes, Mr President, it is almost certain that the structure of any Manx euro note, should it come into play, will be based exactly on the security standards which exist for the euro throughout the rest of Europe. As to the overall cost, Mr President, I do not have that figure to hand.

**The President:** We turn, then, to question 6, and I call on . . . Hon. member for Douglas West, Mr Downie, still relating to question 5.

**Mr Downie:** Yes. At present, within the European Community and those countries who are signed up to the euro, the note is common; it is only the coins that differ from country to country. This has been an issue that has been under much discussion and, in fact, could the Treasury minister confirm that: if the UK were to go into the euro, the British pound as it was would disappear altogether; there would be no identity on the notes; and there would only be an identity of that country's involvement with the euro on their coinage?

**The President:** Minister.

**Mr Bell:** Yes, Mr President, that is clearly the case at the moment, and I think I did touch on the point during my reply that whilst that is the situation right throughout Europe, and obviously will apply to the United Kingdom, we have yet to get clarity and confirmation that the Isle of Man, in effect, will be able to step outside that agreement and have a locally-based Manx euro.

---

### Minimum Wage – Question by Mr Henderson

Question 6. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the Minister for Trade and Industry:

*In the light of the UK national minimum wage increase will you be –*

- (1) *reviewing the Manx situation; and*
- (2) *looking at ways of phasing in, over a period of time, a £5.00 per hour Isle of Man minimum wage?*

**The President:** Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

**Mr Henderson:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** This time the answer is in the hands of the Minister for Trade and Industry, Mr Downie.

**Mr Downie:** Thank you, Mr President. The United Kingdom's Minimum Wage Act came into force in April 1999, and the Isle of Man Minimum Wage Act at the beginning of this year, on 1st January 2002. Both Acts provide for a range of minimum wage rates to be set by regulation, but the groups to which rates apply differ between the two countries: for example, the main adult rate in the United Kingdom only covers workers aged 22 and over, but in the Isle of

Man the adult rate applies from the age of 18. The adult rate of minimum wage in both the Isle of Man and the United Kingdom is currently set at £4.20 an hour.

In April 2001, the UK Government announced the rates which were to apply from October 2001 and also a further increase to come into effect from October 2002; these latest increases will involve an extra 10 pence per hour on existing rates. In terms of consideration of changes to the Isle of Man rates, the Act requires that any amendment requires the Treasury and ourselves to consult with a minimum wage committee, which is to consist of an independent chairman and four members drawn equally from both employer and employee organisations. We shall be taking steps shortly to establish this committee, but in the meantime it would not be appropriate for me to prejudice their work by anticipating any recommendations they may make. I would, however, say that in my opinion it would not be fair to employers if we were to raise our minimum wage rates before even 12 months have expired, nor without giving them a certain amount of notice.

**The President:** Hon. member for Douglas North.

**Mr Henderson:** Thank you, Mr President. I thank the minister for his answer, but would he agree with me that, seeing that he is so concerned about boosting employee confidence these days, announcing a review of our minimum wage in the light of the UK increase would be a good way forward, and that in fact I am not seeking to have it introduced right away, but even a signal that a review was under way would be good? Also, would he agree with me that this committee should be formed as soon as possible, and that one of the first tasks incumbent on it should be with regard to reviewing our minimum wage currently?

**The President:** Minister.

**Mr Downie:** Yes, I am pleased to inform the hon. member that the minimum wage committee is in the process of being established, and this was introduced into our legislation which was put through by the hon. member of Council, Mr Lowey, while the Bill was passing through Legislative Council. So that is the mechanism for looking at this issue, and the recommendations will be coming to Tynwald Court at the appropriate time, with a view to having our new minimum wage introduced by January of next year.

**The President:** Hon. member of Council, Mr Delaney.

**Mr Delaney:** Thank you, Mr President. In the initial answer, the minister indicated his unwillingness to upset employers by looking for an increase before 12 months were up, and the unfairness it might create. Would the minister, like me, have concern that in the answer he has given already, the minimum that the lowest paid workers in this Island can expect as a

guaranteed income would only be less than £4 a week, working on a proposed British - if we follow them like we did the last time - 10 pence per hour increase? Less than £4 for an increase in the basic wage of the lower paid: would that give the minister concern? And would he have concern for the employees generally, as well as the employers?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mr Downie:** I fully take on board the comments that the hon. member has made, but this is a decision that was made by Tynwald Court; this is the procedure that we now follow -

**Mr Delaney:** By *some* members in Tynwald Court.

**Mr Downie:** Well, the majority rules, I am afraid, hon. member -

**Mr Delaney:** I agree with that.

**Mr Downie:** Here we have to stick to the majority.

**Mr Delaney:** The majority. . .

**Mr Downie:** That is the process that we must go down. We are looking at putting the committee together now and making the necessary recommendations to this Court at a later time.

**Mr Delaney:** Look forward to it.

**The President:** Hon. member for Michael, Mr Cannan.

**Mr Cannan:** Mr President, thank you. Notwithstanding the arguments about the amount of the minimum wage, will the minister give an unequivocal assurance that his department is able to process and administer claims already submitted under the current minimum wage rate?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mr Downie:** I have no idea what claims have already been submitted, hon. member, but if you will be kind enough to forward them to me, I will be more than pleased to investigate them and get back to you on that issue. I am not aware of any claim that is pending. *(Interjection by Mr Cannan)*

**The President:** Hon. member for Onchan, Mr Karran.

**Mr Karran:** Eaghtyrane, would the minister not agree that when we state that we believe in a caring and prosperous society, and that we are going for a society that is inclusive, not exclusive, it is a liability on us every member of this hon. House when we think that it is quite all right to have a minimum wage of less

than £5 an hour (**Mr Delaney:** Hear, hear.) which does not even reflect what we have to pay in the private sector for accommodation as far as rental is concerned, working a 40-hour week? And will he go back to his department and see, as a matter of urgency, that it is put up, in order that we have an inclusive, not an exclusive, society that only looks after the one section of the community?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mr Downie:** As I indicated in my earlier answer to the hon. member of Council, Mr Delaney, this issue is now covered by statute; there is a proper process that we must go through. My own personal view, and not one of government, is that I believe in a free market, and if you see what is happening in the workplace at the present time, it is the free markets that are attracting the people. I do not really believe that there are significant numbers - or many numbers - of people who are actually being paid the minimum wage. It was introduced in line with the UK as a safety net, as it were, but we know - we heard in the preceding debates when the legislation was going through - that there are some people on the Island who would be happy to work for a minimum wage rate, particularly those working in a rural environment where their employment is very much on a friendship sort of basis and where they are looking after the corner shop for a couple of hours. The other thing I would say to hon. members is that we need to be very, very careful that we do not go down a particular route where we are determining rates of pay here that are not really achievable. So we have agreed, under legislation, to set up this committee; my wish is that we get on and get the committee set up, we let them have dialogue and consultation with the various bodies, and then the new minimum wage can come back onto this floor. And I am sure it is going to be another very interesting knockabout debate, Mr President.

**The President:** I appreciate the interest, hon. members, but let us try not to get into a debate. Hon. member for Rushen, Mr Gill.

**Mr Gill:** Thank you, Eaghtyrane. Will the minister accept that following the introduction of the minimum wage, there was no evidence of widespread loss of jobs as had been predicted in some quarters?

**A Member:** Hear, hear.

**The President:** Minister.

**Mr Downie:** Yes. Well, I would just like to remind the hon. questioner that I was not the minister at the time, and I am prepared to look at it with a fresh view when the committee reports at the end of the year.

**The President:** Hon. member of Council, Mr Lowey.

**Mr Lowey:** Thank you. Would the minister not agree that the Treasury figures – the statistics of low pay – show that there are 1,600 people earning less than £4 an hour on the Island (**Two Members:** Hear, hear.) and there are 3,000 people – which is a significant number – earning less than £5 an hour? And that is from the Treasury's own statistics.

**Mr Delaney:** Figures.

**The President:** Minister.

**Mr Downie:** Yes, I can assure the hon. questioner that those figures will be taken into account when the committee is assessing the situation and coming forward with its recommendations.

**The President:** Hon. member of Council, Mr Delaney.

**Mr Delaney:** Mine deals with part (1) of the question: when he takes into consideration the matter raised by my colleague, Mr Lowey, on the numbers of people on the minimum wage in the Isle of Man, will the minister also bear in mind that a number of those people live in council houses and have already been notified virtually that the increase in their council rents is going to be more than what they can expect from the minimum wage income?

**The President:** Minister.

**Mr Downie:** Yes, I take on board what the hon. member has said, but I would also ask him to accept that if you do go out into the jobs market, you will see that there are very few people, in real life, actually being paid the minimum wage.

**Mr Delaney:** You have just had the number from my colleague.

**Mr Downie:** Well, I would take issue with the hon. member. We will wait and see –

**Mr Delaney:** They are government figures.

**Mr Downie:** – what the committee looks at; the jobs market and what people are paid is a moving feast. We have only got to see what a new company that was heralded as coming into the Isle of Man – an eating house – was advertising for staff in the newspaper, and my understanding of the situation –

**Mr Delaney:** Kentucky Fried Chicken.

**Mr Downie:** – is that it was difficult for them to get staff because they were not paying what was thought to be the going rate in the Isle of Man. So –

**Mr Delaney:** So they are going to ship their workers in.

**Mr Downie:** – we will have to look at this situation and as I said, the minimum wage provides a safety net; it does not provide a basis for all employees in the Isle of Man for their pay.

**The President:** I return for a final supplementary to the original questioner, Mr Henderson.

**Mr Henderson:** Thank you, Mr President. Would the minister agree, though, that in figures recently circulated to this parliament from my questions earlier this year, the situation with the low pay and minimum wage is actually worse than what has been alluded to this morning, and that in fact 60 per cent of Isle of Man employees are paid below the government's average wage figure, and that indeed a review of the whole situation is needed? And can he confirm what he said earlier about a review for next January, because if that is correct, then that is good news for the low-paid of this Island? And also could he confirm that, at present, the current minimum wage will only allow somebody £164 or so a week?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mr Downie:** Yes. I cannot confirm the amount to the hon. questioner; I think that would be inappropriate at this time. I would just ask the hon. member to support the spirit of the legislation. Let us get the committee set up, through his own organisation, the Transport and General Workers' Union (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) and other people involved; they will have an opportunity to discuss these issues and then, when the final figure is announced, I am sure it is going to make a very interesting debate on the floor of this hon. Court.

---

### **Mill Road, Peel – Provision of Lorry Park – Question by Mrs Hannan**

Question 7. The hon. member for Peel (Mrs Hannan) to ask the Minister for Trade and Industry:

*Will you provide a lorry park on the land that is in your ownership off Mill Road, Peel?*

**The President:** Hon. member for Peel.

**Mrs Hannan:** Thank you, Eaghtrane. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** Minister for Trade and Industry, Mr Downie.

**Mr Downie:** Thank you, Mr President. I have to advise the hon. questioner that the only land in the department's ownership off the Mill Road in Peel has already been developed and is the site for four small industrial units, which are all occupied; thus the department does not own any land off Mill Road, Peel, that would be suitable for use as a lorry park.

**The President:** Hon. member for Peel, Mrs Hannan.

**Mrs Hannan:** Thank you, Eaghtyrane. Could I ask the minister: there is land between the power station and these units, and the story is that this land belongs to the Department of Trade and Industry, and if it does not, who does it belong to?

**The President:** Minister.

**Mr Downie:** Well, I am pleased to advise the hon. questioner that from our inquiries we understand that the undeveloped land in the area to which Mrs Hannan is probably referring is in the ownership of either the Department of Local Government and the Environment or the Manx Electricity Authority. The hon. member for Peel, Mrs Hannan, queried land ownership in this area when she wrote to the department in July 2000. At that time she was also looking for a site in Peel that would be suitable for use as a lorry park. She was provided with a plan showing the extent of the land owned by the department, on which we had just completed our four industrial units. The department has met recently with the commissioners, and they were asked if there was a need or a demand for a lorry park in Peel, and their priority, it would seem, was to have some economic development in Peel and possibly more units. Now, I would respectfully suggest to the hon. member for Peel that perhaps this issue would be better pursued between the Department of Transport and ourselves, who really are in a better position to provide lorry parking, which I think would be beneficial to the environment of Peel.

---

### **Pensions, Allowances and Benefits - Weekly Payments – Question by Mr Houghton**

Question 8. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Houghton) to ask the Minister for Health and Social Security:

*Does your department intend to continue payment of retirement pensions, allowances and benefits by weekly order at Post Office counters?*

**The President:** Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Houghton.

**Mr Houghton:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name, sir.

**The President:** On this occasion, I call on the hon. Minister for Health and Social Security, Mrs Christian.

**Mrs Christian:** Mr President, the straightforward answer to the hon. member for Douglas North is, 'Yes.' I am sure he is well aware that the department is committed to offering two payment options to suit the needs of its long-term customers,

and weekly orders encashable at the Post Office are one of those options. I can reassure the hon. member that the department has no intention of discontinuing that payment method; indeed, it is estimated that in the current financial year the department will issue over 810,000 orders with an approximate total value of £60 million, demonstrating, I am sure the hon. member will agree, a huge commitment to this payment method.

**The President:** Hon. member Mr Houghton.

**Mr Houghton:** Thank you, Mr President. I am very grateful to the hon. minister for her encouraging response this morning.

**A Member:** Hear, hear.

---

### **DHSS Benefits – Pink Cheque Payments Question by Mr Houghton**

Question 9. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Houghton) to ask the Minister for Health and Social Security:

- (1) *Does your department intend to abolish the issuing of pink cheque payments to social security beneficiaries in the future; and*
- (2) *if so, why?*

**The President:** Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Houghton.

**Mr Houghton:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name, sir.

**The President:** Yes. Minister for Health and Social Security.

**Mrs Christian:** Mr President, again I can assure the hon. member that my department has no plans to abolish the issuing of cheque payments to social security beneficiaries. This method of payment will allow customers the flexibility to cash their cheques either at the bank or the Post Office, and in the last year was used by over 17,000 people, involving in excess of 180,000 cheques, the amount of benefit being paid by this method being just under £23.5 million.

**The President:** Hon. member.

**Mr Houghton:** Thank you, Mr President. Once again I am very grateful on behalf of the many communities in the Island which we all represent. Can I ask the hon. minister if she will kindly state whether her department would be willing to promote this service to encourage more users of Post Office counters throughout the Island, sir?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mrs Christian:** Mr President, the department's position on the use of the cheques and how they are cashed is neutral. We believe that it is up to the department to offer options to our customers and it is up to them to determine how they want to obtain their benefits. The hon. member, I know, has an interest in the promotion of the Post Office. The department's policy on both orders and cheques is, as I say, neutral. The department is conscious of the value of community Post Offices, and if government policy were to determine that my department should have other than a neutral stance, then obviously we would have to take that into consideration.

**The President:** Mr Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you, Mr President. As the minister has indicated, there is a departmental policy, and not an overall government policy, in relation to these matters. Does the minister, when determining the department's policy, take into account the impact of a change of policy on ensuring that Post Offices throughout the Island survive, as the present policy is striving towards centralisation? And could the minister advise whether or not that issue is an overriding issue with regard to their department? In other words, the issue of helping to sustain the infrastructure of Post Offices (**Mr Houghton:** Hear, hear.) throughout the Island, which then has a knock-on effect of sustaining the individual retail sectors throughout the Isle of Man and other sectors in those areas outside of Douglas.

**Mr Houghton:** Hear, hear.

**The President:** I will allow that supplementary to be added, but I would point out that it is not really attached to the question on the order paper. Mrs Christian.

**Mrs Christian:** Mr President, perhaps I was in error in introducing the opportunity; however, I will answer the question. The department's policy is currently neutral. I am conscious that the Post Office has had discussions with the Council of Ministers and no doubt will come back to the Council of Ministers with its proposals for the future. At that time the whole issue will be reconsidered.

---

**Diabetes –  
National Service Framework –  
Question by Mr Singer**

Question 10. The hon. member for Ramsey (Mr Singer) to ask the Minister for Health and Social Security:

*Has your department formulated a diabetes national service framework? If so, when is it to be introduced?*

**The President:** The hon. member for Ramsey, Mr Singer.

**Mr Singer:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** Again, the answer is in the hands of the Minister for Health and Social Security.

**Mrs Christian:** Mr President, the hon. member will be aware of a number of national service frameworks being developed by the Department of Health in England which incorporate standards covering the prevention, identification and management of specific conditions for different patient groups and care settings; one such framework is that relating to diabetes. In terms of formulating the equivalent of a diabetes national service framework for the Isle of Man, this has been the subject of detailed discussions involving the consultant diabetologist and one of our public health consultants. The view has been taken that, for the immediate and medium term, the important and relevant aspects of the framework and, indeed, other evidence-based resources, as they would apply in the Isle of Man, should be identified and implemented. A working group to discuss these issues is in the process of being established. Whilst I am not in a position, at present, to advise when a locally-based framework is likely to be introduced, it is recognised that certain aspects of the national framework have already been addressed in provision of this important area of healthcare on the Island.

**The President:** Hon. member Mr Singer.

**Mr Singer:** Can I thank the hon. minister for a positive answer, but can I just concentrate on one particular section of what would be within the diabetic framework? Is the minister aware that probably 10 per cent of diabetics require treatment for diabetic retinopathy every year and that this condition can cause blindness because of retinal detachment? Is the minister also aware that if detected early enough, the condition is preventable using laser treatment? If so, would the minister agree that a national framework for diabetics, when it is introduced on the Island, should have a very early commitment – in fact, perhaps that commitment could be made before the framework is adopted – and that it should ensure that every diabetic over 12 is targeted for retinal screening annually, so that the deterioration can be detected early?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mrs Christian:** Mr President, one of the main areas of concern on the Island is the issue of uniformity of screening and testing for eyesight, and I am quite sure that in the formulation of the national strategy indeed any recommendations which may come forward before a national framework for the Island is established will be in that area, and I would certainly look to the clinicians in that area for their recommendations.

**The President:** Mr Singer.

**Mr Singer:** Could I ask the minister if she knows what proportion of the Island's known diabetics are seen annually at the diabetic clinic? Does the

minister not agree with me that it is too haphazard to rely on diabetics making their own arrangements with opticians for a retinal screening and that arrangements should be made for an annual retinal screening via the diabetic clinic and Ramsey Cottage Hospital, and then the eye specialist would view the photographs of the retinal images to detect any changes and treat accordingly?

**The President:** Minister.

**Mrs Christian:** Mr President, I do not have the statistics which the hon. member has asked for in terms of the number of people who visit the diabetic clinic, but of course the diabetic clinic is not the only place where diabetics are seen and treated; they do have access to their GPs.

The hon. member has raised concerns about the screening programme for diabetics in relation to their eyesight. I said earlier, Mr President, and would simply repeat, that I believe that, in terms of coming up with the appropriate framework for the Isle of Man, these matters will be considered and recommendations made by the working group which is looking into these issues.

**Mr Delaney:** Point of order, Mr President.

**The President:** Hon. member Mr Delaney.

**Mr Delaney:** I notice in the standing orders, when circulating written answers, we are now getting two copies of answers to questions. Is there an alteration in the answer, could you ask, Mr President, or has the minister developed a stutter?

**The President:** Hon. member, I am sure that will be sorted out. At this stage I cannot tell you; I have not had the chance to look at my own papers.

---

### **Noble's Hospital – Non-Urgent Admissions Cancelled in TT Period – Question by Mr Henderson**

Question 11. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the Minister for Health and Social Security:

- (1) *Will you make a statement in relation to the cancellation of all local Isle of Man non-urgent admissions, encompassing all elective admissions, day patient appointments and any other areas that may be cancelled, to the Island's general hospital for the 2002 Isle of Man TT fortnight from 24th May to 8th June; and*
- (2) *can you confirm or otherwise that this was mainly done for 'the perception and added attention and publicity' as stated by your hospitals manager in the Isle of Man press on 10th May 2002?*

**The President:** Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

**Mr Henderson:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** Now, hon. members, before I invite the Minister for Health and Social Security to respond to this question, I would point out the similarity between 11, 12 and 13 and the written answers which have been submitted already. Be careful, when framing supplementaries, that we do not stray into debates. Minister to reply.

**Mrs Christian:** Mr President, I am happy to make the statement called for by the hon. member. I confirm that, consistent with practice over very many years, it has been determined that, during the period of this year's TT, it will be appropriate to assume that there will be a significant increase in the number of people requiring either emergency treatment at, or emergency admission to, Noble's Hospital. Given this assumption - and I am sure most people would regard it as a sound assumption, having regard to the perhaps 30 to 40 per cent increase in the island's population during the fortnight, mainly comprising motorcyclists of various nationalities - hospital management has concluded that it would be inappropriate to simply commit the facilities of the hospital in ignorance of that TT festival and its potential consequences for the hospital services. Thus hospital management has decided that elective - that is: non-urgent - admissions to the hospital should be postponed for the period of the festival. Whilst I would have preferred the decision to have been made earlier so as to avoid having to cancel pre-arranged admissions, I am nonetheless content with the fundamental principle which, as I say, simply reflects the historical position. It would be naïve, Mr President, not to say somewhat irresponsible, to expect that the unique surge in potential demand during this fortnight could be planned to be accommodated without some adjustment in the normal pattern of day-to-day hospital business. Finally, let me clarify, however, that there will be *no* disruption to the normal pattern of out-patient clinics as a result of the TT Festival.

**The President:** Hon. member Mr Henderson.

**Mr Henderson:** Thank you, Mr President. Will the minister agree that the normal practice over other years has been to scale operations down, not to cancel everything in its entirety? And could the minister also confirm that the usual practice at our Island's general hospital is that no staff leave is granted over those two particular weeks and that the hospital, in fact, runs on maximum complement?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mrs Christian:** Mr President, it depends how far one goes back in terms of what the cancellations are in terms of the TT period. I think that it is entirely

responsible of the management and the staff at the hospital to make their risk assessment as to what is appropriate for this time. The issue of whether staff cannot go on leave is commonly known. It is necessary that we make sure that we are able to provide appropriate services during this period, both for visitors and our local population, in the way that the hospital management deems most appropriate.

---

**Noble's Hospital –  
Operations Cancelled in TT Period  
– Question by Mr Henderson**

Question 12. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the Minister for Health and Social Security:

*What is the impact of cancelled operations for two weeks during the TT fortnight likely to be in terms of waiting-list management and, importantly, for those people who have been waiting some considerable time and who may be suffering severe pain and discomfort?*

**The President:** Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

**Mr Henderson:** Mr President, I had a supplementary for question 11, please, sir.

**The President:** Question 12, sir.

**Mr Henderson:** I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** Minister for Health and Society Security.

**Mrs Christian:** Mr President, patients who are classified as 'urgent' or 'emergency', as is usual, will be given priority and clinically assessed on a case-by-case basis for admission during the TT fortnight; this process has already begun. Otherwise, the following patients will be rescheduled: 66 in general surgery; 11, medical scopes; 5, ophthalmology; 9, oral surgery; 6, gynaecology; a total of 97. Of these 97, 50 are day cases. More than half of these patients have already been offered alternative admission dates in the near future; this process will continue until all postponed patients have suitable alternative dates. In general, waiting-lists, as is usual around the TT period, are likely to lengthen by a period of up to two weeks in all specialities, but this may vary in individual cases, for example where dates have already been committed in advance to other patients. I would, however, reiterate that any patient in severe pain or discomfort should seek further medical advice from his or her general practitioner in order to determine whether an urgent or emergency admission or appointment is required, in which case this will be reviewed on referral by the relevant consultant and will be actioned accordingly, Mr President.

**The President:** Hon. member Mr Henderson.

**Mr Henderson:** Thank you, Mr President. Could the minister confirm that, rather than the anticipated increase in passenger figures for this TT in fact at present they are down, and could she confirm that this move, which affects 882 local residents, is not necessary and that this is just a hysterical over-reaction that could undermine our community and confidence in the NHS?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mrs Christian:** Mr President, I do not accept the comment of the hon. member. He is not in the position of making the decision, and so it is very easy to blithely say that these cancellations should not have taken place. I would not presume to tell the clinicians in the hospital how to assess the risks in these areas. The hon. member has referred to the number of visitors who are coming; whether or not they are down, it does not alter the fact that still very considerable numbers of people are going to arrive in the Island on highly-powered motor bikes and that there is a risk attached to that. The fact is that every year this process is gone through, so it is not new. What we have to recognise and bear in mind is that it is not unusual for the processes of, perhaps, slower admissions to occur at various times of the year: this happens at public holiday times; it happens on bank holidays; it happens through the TT and Grand Prix periods. But there are other times of very intensive activity in the hospital, with the result that, for example, over the last year, there certainly has been overall a considerable increase in throughput in the hospitals, which means that people are being seen, Mr President.

**The President:** Hon. member for Ayre, Mr Quine.

**Mr Quine:** Yes. Accepting that there was no TT, of course, last year, will the minister circulate us with figures in respect of the TT fortnight for 2000, in relation to admissions to and treatment at Noble's Hospital?

**The President:** Minister.

**Mrs Christian:** Mr President, I am not sure in which areas the hon. member wishes them, but if he wants them in all areas, I will endeavour to provide that.

**Mr Quine:** Visitors in all areas.

**Mrs Christian:** I will endeavour to provide those figures, Mr President.

**The President:** Hon. member for Onchan, Mr Earnshaw.

**Mr Earnshaw:** Thank you, Mr President. Would the minister for health agree with me that, in many people's eyes, rescheduling non-urgent admissions to hospital during the TT period amounts to good

management and common sense, and would the minister also agree that, in many cases, extra efforts have already been made to deal with admissions prior to the TT?

**The President:** I think the minister will probably say, 'Yes.' Minister.

**Mrs Christian:** Mr President, I certainly will say, 'Yes.'

**The President:** Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

**Mr Henderson:** Thank you, Mr President. Will the minister admit that this is the first time ever that *all* operations have been cancelled, and further to that could she confirm or otherwise that the hospitals manager is now running the DHSS and that it is giving the impression that perceptions are running above our local patients? And does she not feel, if that is the case, that we should have some sort of disciplinary action put in place and that some of these operations could be put back?

**A Member:** Hear, hear.

**The President:** Minister.

**Mrs Christian:** Mr President, no: I object very strongly to the tone used by the hon. member. I cannot confirm that this is the first time ever, because I do not have statistics back to the beginning of the health service and the TT's relationship to it, but I would doubt that it is the first time ever. I would also object to his comment about the hospitals manager; the hospitals manager, in conjunction with other appropriate members of staff in the hospital, came to this decision. Nor do I accept his –

**Mr Henderson:** He made a big press statement.

**Mrs Christian:** - dramatisation of the situation and his reference in the media to press announcements, based perhaps on comment provided by the hon. member who seems to have access to letters which circulate in the hospital on a fairly free rein. So I am not surprised that there is press coverage, which is generated, with the assistance of the hon. member, to disturb and upset local people in connection with the TT. Perhaps the hon. member would like to decide whether or not he believes we should have TT races, and then we can all make a decision in relation to that, but whilst we do have a TT race, it is incumbent on the hospital's management, in conjunction with the medical staff and nursing staff at the hospital, to make appropriate decisions, and to pick out one member of staff and suggest there should be disciplinary action is not appropriate, Mr President, in these circumstances.

**The President:** Mr Henderson.

**Mr Henderson:** Thank you, Mr President. Would the minister agree with me that there is a better way of handling this, to support our very good TT event, and would she agree with me that, given the fact that there is maximum personnel on duty, there is a better way forward than the current management strategy?

**The President:** Minister.

**Mrs Christian:** Mr President, the hon. member has been employed by the health service and no doubt has his own views on how it should be run; I am content to leave it with those people in post at this time.

---

### **Noble's Hospital – Plans to Clear Cancellations Backlog – Question by Mr Henderson**

Question 13. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the Minister for Health and Social Security:

*What plans has your Health Division put in place to clear what could be a very substantial backlog of elective admissions and appointments to the Island's General Hospital as a result of the press announcement in the Manx Independent that all such appointments will be cancelled for the 2002 Isle of Man TT fortnight and to ensure that patient waiting lists do not become even longer as a result?*

**The President:** Hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Henderson.

**Mr Henderson:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** Minister for Health and Social Security.

**Mrs Christian:** Mr President, as I indicated in my previous answer, waiting-lists for non-urgent admissions are likely to lengthen, in general, by a period of two weeks as a result of the arrangements introduced for the TT fortnight. Whilst the impact will vary in terms of the numbers of patients affected, and depending on the speciality, the department will consider the introduction of waiting-list initiatives should waiting-list times become unacceptably long. This is a policy which is followed throughout the year. Such initiatives are undertaken from time to time across a number of specialities as a way of addressing problem areas.

**The President:** Mr Henderson.

**Mr Henderson:** Thank you, Mr President. I welcome the minister's positive response to that, especially for anybody whose condition may deteriorate substantially in the extended two weeks.

**The President:** Minister, I do not think there is a reply. If you wish to -

**Mrs Christian:** No, I will note the hon. member's comment and say that I have already said that if a person's condition deteriorates, they should take advice from their GP to see whether their admission needs to be brought forward.

---

**Abortion –  
Expenditure on Counselling –  
Question by Mr Lowey**

Question 14. The hon. member of the Council (Mr Lowey) to ask the Minister for Health and Social Security:

- (1) *How much has been spent for each of the last three years on counselling for people before and after a termination of pregnancy;*
- (2) *how many individuals have been counselled;*
- (3) *does your department deliver this service direct or does it 'farm out' these services and, if so, to whom; and*
- (4) *are you satisfied with the services provided?*

**The President:** Hon. member of Council.

**Mr Lowey:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** The Minister for Health and Social Security.

**Mrs Christian:** Mr President, it is assumed that the hon. member, in his question, is referring only to terminations of pregnancy that take place on the Island under the Termination of Pregnancy (Medical Defences) Act 1995. This Act, which came into force in the Island in January 1996, placed a requirement on the department, by way of regulations, to make arrangements for the provision of counselling services to any woman who has to consider the termination of her pregnancy. This requirement is contained within the regulations of 1995. Following an extensive consultation process, Alpha Guidelines and the department's Social Services Division were identified as bodies who would be capable of providing the independent counselling services to be statutorily available to women under the provisions of the regulations.

In answer to the first part of the hon. member's question, I can advise that the additional cost to the department of making available counselling services was £6,000 in each of the years ended 31st March 2000 and 31st March 2001, with no costs being incurred during the year ended 31st March 2002. This is due to the withdrawal by Guidelines in early 2001 because of the lack of uptake.

Turning to the question of uptake, the hon. member will appreciate that, in view of the highly confidential nature of this counselling service, with no personal details or outcome being recorded, I am not in a position to comment authoritatively on the number of individuals who have been provided with the counselling service.

In relation to the delivery of service, I can confirm that arrangements are in place for counselling to be provided, when required, by appropriately trained staff employed within the department's Social Services Division.

As regards the final part of the hon. member's question, again because of the confidential nature of this service in relation to outcome, it is difficult for me to comment on issues of quality or effectiveness. Nonetheless, on the basis that I have not actually had any concerns or complaints received from women about the counselling service, I must assume that it is satisfactory.

**The President:** Hon. member Mr Lowey.

**Mr Lowey:** I appreciate the sensitivity and the confidentiality of the subject. Would the minister confirm that her department's officers must get some training in counselling, and could she confirm that that is a negative, in the sense that pro-life or pro-abortion schools are not given due preference? The criticism that I have received recently is that pro-life seems to be the dominant factor within the department's counselling service; if that is not correct, then I would hope that the minister would be able to say so.

**The President:** Minister.

**Mrs Christian:** Mr President, the people who provide a counselling service have to be qualified counsellors and therefore understand how to take a neutral stance. To my knowledge, certainly, it is not an instruction from the department that there should be anything other than a neutral stance in terms of counselling; however, if the hon. member is able to provide me with any detailed information outside of the Court I would be happy to take on board his concerns.

**The President:** Hon. member Mr Gill.

**Mr Gill:** Thank you, Eaghtryrane. Can the minister confirm that counselling services so provided are by women counsellors only?

**The President:** Minister.

**Mrs Christian:** Mr President, I take note of the hon. member's comment. I imagine they are, but I could not confirm that that is the case. I cannot imagine that men would be used in these circumstances, but if they are trained counsellors, I do not see why they could not be -

**The President:** Hon. member for Douglas South, Mr Cretney.

**Mr Cretney:** Yes. Could I ask the minister: does she plan any initiatives, in the future, in terms of prevention of pregnancy in the first place?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mrs Christian:** Mr President, the department is obviously concerned in relation to family planning services. It has recently taken over the family planning services, whereas it contracted them in the past. Also, in terms of the strategy for the future, I am quite sure that teenage pregnancies will be an issue which is going to be one of the key markers and key areas for consideration. So, yes, the department is concerned about advising, as I think is the Department of Education, in terms of sex education and the appropriate counselling for young people - and older people - in relation to pregnancy. Clearly, what we want is pregnancies which are welcomed.

**Mr Delaney:** Hear, hear.

**The President:** Hon. members, before turning to the next question, the point raised by the hon. member Mr Delaney: I am told that the texts of those two answers are identical. The confusion has been caused by certain answers being supplied late, and it was thought that they had not been copied with the first batch, hence the duplication.

---

**Smoking –  
Ban in Enclosed Public Places –  
Question by Mr Waft**

Question 15. The hon. member of the Council (Mr Waft) to ask the Minister for Health and Social Security:

*In the interest of public health, when do you intend to introduce legislation banning smoking in enclosed public places?*

**The President:** I call on the hon. member of Council, Mr Waft.

**Mr Waft:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** Now, hon. members, I call on the Chief Minister to reply.

**Mr Corkill:** Thank you, Mr President. I know the hon. questioner is interested in this issue. The issue of the preparation of a tobacco strategy currently rests with the Drug and Alcohol Strategy Committee of the Council of Ministers, and the issue of smoking and passive smoking in public places was referred to the committee following the report of the Special Committee of the Legislative Council. The strategy, which will include a consideration of the issue of smoking in public places, is currently in draft; unfortunately I am not at present able to indicate

exactly when we will be in a position to bring forward the strategy. Perhaps it would not be appropriate, in this answer, for me to anticipate what the strategy might propose, but the draft *is* currently being worked on by the appropriate health officials, and I hope the committee will be able to move forward with the tobacco strategy in the near future.

**The President:** Hon. member Mr Waft.

**Mr Waft:** I thank the Chief Minister for his reply.

---

**Housing –  
All-Island and Local Plans –  
Local Authorities etc –  
Question by Mr Quayle**

Question 16. The hon. member for Middle (Mr Quayle) to ask the Minister for Local Government and the Environment:

- (1) *What is the current timetable for implementation of the All-Island Strategic Plan and the Braddan Local Plan;*
- (2) *what is your department's definition of 'affordable homes' and 'local', particularly in relation to the planning context, and what criteria have been considered; and*
- (3) *will your department support those local authorities who wish to purchase land to provide adequate public sector housing to meet the needs of their areas?*

**The President:** The hon. member for Middle, Mr Quayle.

**Mr Quayle:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name, sir.

**The President:** Now we turn to the Minister for Local Government and the Environment, hon. member for Rushen, Mrs Crowe.

**Mrs Crowe:** Mr President, in answer to part (1) of the question, the draft strategic plan was published for public consultation in July last year. Extensive consultation was undertaken within government departments, local authorities and organisations representing all aspects of life on the Island. A series of public meetings was held at various locations around the Island. Such was the response that an original consultation period was extended until September. The timetable is now as follows: the department will consider a report on the representations received and review the draft strategic plan; once this has been done, I would hope that a public inquiry can be scheduled towards the end of this year to consider the draft strategic plan and any modifications; the department will consider any recommendations in the inspector's

report to determine whether to formally modify the draft plan; interested parties will then be notified of the proposed modifications; and after considering any comments, the department would then move to adopt the plan, which would be placed before Tynwald for approval. The position in respect of the Braddan Area Plan is similar: the draft plan was published in April 2001 and underwent extensive public consultation; this has now been analysed and the department will consider modifications to the draft plan; it is then intended that a further public inquiry will be scheduled towards the end of the year, and the process will then be similar to the one I have just outlined for the strategic plan.

In answer to part (2) of the question regarding 'affordable housing', in planning terms the provision of affordable local housing follows the context set out in the central policies of the government, which were presented to Tynwald in October 2001, and these recognise the need to balance the quality of the environment with the needs of residents on the Island. Proposals for development must ensure that the individual character of our towns and villages is protected and enhanced. The housing section of the strategic plan considers the provision of affordable housing in more detail. The department, as a housing authority, intervenes financially and otherwise to provide affordable housing. As a planning authority, the department's rôle is to ensure that opportunities are created for the provision of the right number of new houses, of the right sort, and in the right places and at the right time. I reiterate that the planning directorate is there to act as a facilitator.

Housing policy states that where there is a demonstrable need for affordable housing of a particular nature the department will, in the preparation of design briefs within an area plan, have regard to that need and, in the determination of planning applications in respect of appropriate land which is zoned for housing development, we require, by condition, that there should be an element which would meet that need, at least in part. However, as in my reply in respect of the strategic plan and Braddan Area Plan demonstrates, it takes time to prepare these plans and take them through the formal processes set out in the Town and Country Planning Act of 1999, and it was in recognition of this that I moved a resolution on affordable housing in January this year. Since then, the department has made considerable progress in clarifying the extent of the need for local affordable housing, from the review of both the first-time buyer register and the local and department housing waiting-lists.

In planning terms, the definition of 'affordable' is: any property which could receive support through a government assistance scheme, house purchase assistance scheme or public sector rent. The definition of 'local' need is more complex, particularly given the size of the Island. Whilst there would be a wide range of housing available throughout the Island, it is generally accepted that new housing should only be located where it can be properly and economically serviced, where it does not involve excessive travelling to or from work and amenities, and where it does not damage the character, appearance or ecology of the

Island. For planning purposes, 'local' would be defined as: having an association with a particular locality through family or work connections. I do recognise the need to find suitable sites to meet specific local need for affordable housing, and that is why the department is currently examining a wide range of potential sites, as the Chief Minister explained in another place last week.

With regard to part (3) of the question, hon. members of this Court will be well aware that I have asked all local authorities to bring forward any parcels of land that they might feel would be suitable for housing development, and as was stated last week, we are currently investigating or having feasibility studies on over 50 parcels of land, some of which have been brought forward by local authorities. I can therefore assure the hon. member that the department will support the purchase of land for public sector housing, subject, of course, to the planning process and the availability of government funding.

**The President:** Hon. member for Middle, Mr Quayle.

**Mr Quayle:** Thank you, Mr President. Can I thank the hon. Minister for Local Government and the Environment for such comprehensive replies, but could I ask her, in relation to the Braddan plan, which began in May 2000 and, as I understand it now, will be reviewed and is going forward until the end of December 2002: would she agree with me that this is an unacceptable delay? It is having a serious financial impact on residents of the parish who, for example, own a property which presently abuts land which is proposed to be zoned for development. This is having an impact on the value of their properties, as, obviously, prospective purchasers have been informed that areas of land may be zoned for development - which is fully acceptable - the period that we are talking about is going to be an unacceptable delay. Could I ask her, then, if she would agree with that?

**The President:** Minister.

**Mrs Crowe:** Thank you, Mr President. I would agree that maybe the length of time that these plans take to progress is rather too long, but I do know that the consultation is extensive and the work done in the department is extensive. I am trying to progress the Braddan Area Plan as swiftly as I possibly can, and as for the mention of persons being disadvantaged by the fact that there may or may not be development close by, I would not necessarily say that development close by any property would devalue it.

**The President:** Hon. member for Middle.

**Mr Quayle:** Thank you, Mr President. Further to the answer that has just been given, and in reference to the All-Island Strategic Plan, after taking into consideration the comments made by Mr William Gale QC, who chaired the inquiry conducted into the Port St Mary Village Plan, that - and I quote - 'I accept that it

is for the local area plan process to identify sites to accommodate new-built residential development, but in my opinion the strategic plan should provide clear and informed guidance as to the extent of the housing allocation which an area plan has to locate and accommodate', would the minister agree with me that when the draft All-Island Strategic Plan is issued this will be subject to a public inquiry and it will address this very serious principle that the draft strategic plan will then identify the extent of housing land that the local area plans will then have to accommodate as and when they are reviewed? Further, in relation to the definition of 'affordable housing', could her department ensure that land which is specifically zoned for this particular regard will be of sufficient size to just be for affordable housing, so that we are not going to be in a situation where land that is zoned will be for far more expensive houses?

**Mr Delaney:** Good question.

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mrs Crowe:** Regarding the strategic plan, yes, I do take into account all the points that the hon. member for Middle has made, and indeed these plans are becoming unwieldy at the present time. The whole issue of area plans is, at this present time, under review, and certainly the strategic plan is something that we are working towards bringing to the Court as soon as we possibly can. With the land zoned for affordable housing, I do think it is quite appropriate to have a mix of housing on a development, and not necessarily just one particular type. What we are looking for is that we get enough affordable housing within that mix of properties, and so yes, indeed, I take on board both points. Thank you, Mr President.

**The President:** Hon. member for Peel, Mrs Hannan.

**Mrs Hannan:** Thank you, Eaghtyrane. Could I ask the minister if these plans are still within the timescale of the legislation - because I know for a fact that Peel was withdrawn because it was outside the timescale within the legislation - and is it within the resources of her department to progress these plans?

**The President:** Minister.

**Mrs Crowe:** Well, it quite clearly is quite onerous upon the resources in the department, which is why I dare say there is some delay in bringing these plans forward. As far as I know, it is within its legislative period, but I would say that we do need to look at the whole of the way in which area plans are brought forward, and certainly we must, to begin with, look at the strategic plan and see how quickly we can get that to the floor of this hon. Court.

**The President:** Hon. member for Ramsey, Mr Singer.

**Mr Singer:** Can I ask the minister to explain a little bit further part of her original answer, when she was talking about the definition, I think, of 'local' and the various criteria. Taking into account that people now travel regularly from north to south - and south to north - to work, what did she mean when she used the term 'travelling excessively for work' under the terms of the criteria?

**A Member:** Jurby to Douglas.

**The President:** Minister for Local Government.

**Mrs Crowe:** Yes, at the present time there are a number of discussions within the department. The housing directorate has quite clearly identified what they consider to be 'local', whereas in planning terms that is a slightly different matter, and the answer I have given you is what might be made in a planning statement which would accompany planning approval. I do take on board precisely the point you are making: with people travelling in from the south or the north of the Island, it is very difficult to define, in a 45-mile radius, what is not 'local'. It is a difficulty, but for planning terms, not housing terms, we have to more closely define the term 'local', and that is being worked on at the present moment.

---

### **Waste Reduction – Tax on Plastic Bottles – Question by Mrs Hannan**

Question 17. The hon. member for Peel (Mrs Hannan) to ask the Minister for Local Government and the Environment:

*As part of your policy on waste is to reduce its production, will you propose a tax on plastic bottles as well as plastic bags?*

**The President:** I call on the hon. member for Peel.

**Mrs Hannan:** Eaghtyrane, I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** Again, I call on the Minister for Local Government and the Environment, Mrs Crowe.

**Mrs Crowe:** Thank you, Mr President. My department is monitoring the outcome of the plastic bag tax in the Republic of Ireland, and I would have no hesitation in suggesting such a scheme for the Isle of Man if, indeed, it proved successful. Now, with regard to the second part of the question, I believe it would be quite difficult to impose a tax on plastic bottles; however, I am very keen to see that all plastic containers - bags and bottles - are recycled. We hope to introduce a pilot scheme with one authority to collect these containers separately, and we will also be introducing a bring scheme for all plastic containers shortly.

**The President:** Hon. member for Peel.

**Mrs Hannan:** Could I ask, Eaghtyrane, of the minister: is it not a fact that plastic bottles are as much a problem around the lanes and the streets, as plastic bags are in hedges and trees?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mrs Crowe:** I would totally agree. After being on a beach clean, I would think the majority of what we collected was certainly plastic bottles, and indeed they take up a great deal of space. So, yes, I do think it is most important, but as nearly all plastic bottles are imported to the Island, I am not sure how the imposition of tax would be possible. However, it is something that we could most certainly look at, and I am not averse to doing so.

**The President:** Hon. member for Peel.

**Mrs Hannan:** Is it not a fact that this government's policy is 'the polluter pays', and therefore, if people are producing more and more plastic bottles - that we would have great difficulty moving to wherever, even if we are going to recycle them - at least if they were glass bottles they could be recycled successfully? Would the minister not continue to keep this in mind when speaking to the Treasury to try to reduce some of the waste about the place?

**The President:** Minister.

**Mrs Crowe:** Yes, I think it is most important that we reduce all waste and recycle as much as we possibly can. We are hopefully looking at a recycling initiative for plastic bottles and plastic bags as well. So, I do totally agree, and the sooner we can introduce more and more of these schemes the better.

**The President:** Hon. member for Ramsey, Mr Singer.

**Mr Singer:** Would the minister not agree that whilst there might be justification in the case of plastic bags, the use of plastic bottles is probably for a safety reason in many cases, in not using glass, and therefore the two things have got to be viewed separately?

**Mrs Hannan:** Indeed not.

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mrs Crowe:** They may well have to be viewed separately, but I take on board the point. Plastic bottles do create a great deal of nuisance and they create a great deal of litter, and I do think if we can in some way avoid the use of, or find, certainly, a good recycling system for, plastic bottles, then we would hope to achieve that.

## **Air Quality Standards – Compliance with Tynwald Resolution Question by Mrs Hannan**

Question 18. The hon. member for Peel (Mrs Hannan) to ask the Minister for Local Government and the Environment:

*Why has the resolution of June 2001 relating to air quality standards in sections 89 and 90 of the Public Health Act 1990 not been complied with?*

**The President:** I call again on the hon. member for Peel, Mrs Hannan.

**Mrs Hannan:** I beg leave, Eaghtyrane, to ask the question in my name.

**The President:** Minister for Local Government and the Environment, Mrs Crowe.

**Mrs Crowe:** Thank you, Mr President. The production of the Environmental Protection Strategy is dependent on a study into air quality by Cambridge Environmental Research Consultants. The report on this study was due to be concluded in autumn 2001; however, for a number of reasons, including the difficulty in obtaining essential data on the current pollution. The report has been delayed, although a first draft has now been produced. This first draft also highlighted some additional work that required to be undertaken. The final report, which will include the additional work, is expected in autumn 2002. It is also anticipated that, through the British-Irish Council, the environmental sector group of which I am a part, there would be a considerable input from the UK in developing climate change scenarios for the Isle of Man. This is yet to happen, due to a slight hiatus in the British-Irish Council process during 2001; however, the project is now back on line, and I expect a report from officers to the May department meeting, which is 'Way Ahead for the Isle of Man in respect of Climate Change.'

In recent months, a closer working relationship with Public Health in the DHSS has developed, and it is evident that the health improvement strategy being developed by Public Health will have strong links to the environmental protection strategy, particularly in connection with air quality standards. The Director of the Environment, Safety and Health is keen to see these two important documents develop in parallel; however, he does recognise the need to produce the environmental protection strategy sooner rather than later. Since taking up his appointment in October 2001 the director has reviewed the situation and is of the opinion - and it is one that I endorse - that a document of this importance should be subject to public consultation before it is put forward to hon. members to consider. To try and progress these matters more satisfactorily, the director has now decided to take responsibility for preparing the first draft of the public consultation document, with a view to the document being available later this year.

Mr President, I trust the hon. member for Peel will agree with the proposed way forward, as it is imperative that we have an environmental protection strategy that is suited to our Island and has been developed in partnership with all stakeholders.

**The President:** Hon. member for Douglas East, Mrs Cannell.

**Mrs Cannell:** Thank you, Mr President. Can the hon. minister provide an explanation for hon. members on why no essential data on current pollution levels has been available? And would she further agree with me that such findings and continued monitoring for a good period of time, are essential as a prerequisite to the operation of the mass burn incinerator?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mrs Crowe:** I did not say that no information had been collected; I said that further information was required, and this will be available, as will the report, before the energy-from-waste facility comes onstream.

**The President:** Hon. member for Peel, Mrs Hannan.

**Mrs Hannan:** Yes, Eaghtyrane. While the minister answered the question, could I ask her why the Department of Local Government and the Environment, in moving an amendment on 21st June 2001, has not applied that amendment, which they successfully gained through this Court, whereby they would report here in April 2002? Not one mention in the minister's response, I would respectfully suggest to her, has been given as to why the resolution was not complied with. (**Mrs Cannell:** Hear, hear.) Could I also ask the minister: does the Department of Local Government and the Environment not take seriously a motion that is resolved to report at a sitting, when there has been no comment made in her response as to apologising for the lacunae on the part of the Department of the Local Government in not reporting in April of this year?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mrs Crowe:** Yes, I do apologise, Mr President, for that omission. I was involved with other matters within the department. I was not aware that there was a resolution in June 2001 that the department was mindful of this decision. However, what I would say is that I will get this report to the Court as soon as I possibly can, now that the Cambridge Environmental Research consultants have completed their report.

**The President:** Hon. member for Peel.

**Mrs Hannan:** Thank you, Eaghtyrane. Does the Department of Local Government and the Environment have a chief executive, and would it not be the chief executive that put together, with the then minister, the

amendment to the air quality motion at the June sitting of Tynwald?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mrs Crowe:** It is perhaps unfortunate that this matter was not mentioned to me.

---

### **Incinerator – Bottom Ash Disposal Site – Question by Mrs Cannell**

Question 19. The hon. member for Douglas East (Mrs Cannell) to ask the Minister for Local Government and the Environment:

- (1) *When do you intend to inform the public of your preferred landfill site option for the bottom ash expected from the newly proposed incinerator; and*
- (2) *what contingency do you hold should this site fail during the planning process?*

**The President:** I call on the hon. member for Douglas East, Mrs Cannell.

**Mrs Cannell:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** Again, the reply is in the hands of the Minister for Local Government and the Environment, Mrs Crowe.

**Mrs Crowe:** Thank you, Mr President. There will be a presentation to members of Tynwald at lunchtime today, as to the preferred site for the new facility. This will be followed by presentations to the local authorities and to neighbours around the proposed site, and then, after that, the media. My department also intends to hold a public exhibition, in order that as wide as possible a debate on the proposed site and its location can be carried out.

The selected site has been chosen following consultation with all parties likely to be called upon to give an opinion during the planning process. It has been the subject of an extensive and fully justifiable investigation. Should this site fail at planning, then one of the other sites which has been considered but not yet applied for will be the subject of an application. The Island cannot continue its normal existence without a landfill site, and my department has prepared a well-reasoned case over a two-year period to address the Island's needs as sensitively as possible.

**The President:** Hon. member Mrs Cannell.

**Mrs Cannell:** Thank you, Mr President. I sincerely hope the hon. minister has been fully briefed by her officer before I put my supplementaries. Am I correct in assuming that what the minister has said is that, when she talks of consultation, there has been a selective process of consultation in respect of this site?

Yet, despite this, we learned about it in the media, as opposed to a letter from the minister. In terms of the actual site, is the minister aware that the EU is considering a directive which prevents bottom ash being mixed with any other aggregate? And is it her intention to bury the bottom ash selectively or to actually mix it with some sort of rubble? Is she aware that that may well be outlawed by the European Union?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mrs Crowe:** Well, all of these questions will be answered in full at the presentation, but what I can say to you from my own knowledge and not necessarily briefed by officers, is that bottom ash is now used throughout Europe by recycling, and we would hope to do that. We do not wish to landfill bottom ash unless it is absolutely essential. I would also say that the full public consultation will take place once the planning application is brought forward. That will be a time for full public consultation, not only on the site; after that will follow full public consultation on the licensing of the site. Everyone will have an opportunity to voice their views.

**The President:** Hon. member Mr Anderson.

**Mr Anderson:** Thank you, Mr President. Can I ask the minister how many sites have been fully evaluated for a bottom ash disposal site, please?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mrs Crowe:** Over a two-year period, the consultants considered the whole of the Isle of Man and, in fact, I think 19 sites have been investigated, some more fully than others.

**The President:** Hon. member for Douglas East, Mrs Cannell.

**Mrs Cannell:** Thank you, Mr President. Is the minister aware, from my previous supplementary to her, that the recycling or the use of bottom ash mixed with an aggregate of whatever for the purpose of roads, building blocks, materials for building and construction purposes is currently being reviewed by the EU, which is considering a directive to outlaw such practices? And further, in terms of the contingency, the minister said that she would revert to one of the other sites: am I correct in saying, therefore, that this department has no contingency other than to start from a blank sheet of paper in considering another site? If I am correct in assuming that, can the minister advise, if the possible scenario is that this planning application should fail on this particular site, how long from that point it would take her department to work up the same sort of situation in consideration of another site? And how will that impact upon her waste management strategy on the operation of the mass burn incinerator?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mrs Crowe:** Thank you, Mr President. I am fully aware of any EU directives regarding energy-from-waste facilities. No decision has been made and, indeed, a great deal of research is going on in Britain at the present time into the use of bottom ash, bearing in mind that there are 47 energy-from-waste facilities at present in the planning process for the adjacent isle. With regard to the other sites that were mentioned, no, it is not the case that we have no contingency plan: I just said one of the other sites would take the planning application through. We have three sites that have been fully investigated, any of which could start the planning process tomorrow.

---

### **Incinerator – Fly Ash Disposal Route – Question by Mrs Cannell**

Question 20. The hon. member for Douglas East (Mrs Cannell) to ask the Minister for Local Government and the Environment:

*Have you identified a safe disposal route for the fly ash expected from the newly proposed incinerator?*

**The President:** Again, I call on the hon. member for Douglas East, Mrs Cannell.

**Mrs Cannell:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** Minister for Local Government and the Environment to reply.

**Mrs Crowe:** Thank you, Mr President. The preferred option by the department, and the operator of the energy-from-waste facility, is to dispose of the air pollution control residue, which contains the fly ash, at a special waste landfill site in Lancashire, and at the present time we are preparing a case for a duly motivated request to the United Kingdom Environment Agency, which is required before we can export waste to the United Kingdom.

**The President:** Hon. member for Douglas East.

**Mrs Cannell:** Thank you, Mr President. Is it not a fact, hon. minister, that you will need to acquire a licence to be able to landfill the Island's fly ash in Lancashire, in a specially constructed landfill site? And is it not also a fact that such a licence will only be issued for one year at a time? And is it further not true that, at any time, the United Kingdom can withdraw, or not renew, that yearly licence? And what will the Isle of Man do in that situation, then?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mrs Crowe:** Thank you, Mr President. Yes, I duly note we have to apply for a licence. As I have just suggested, it is not timely at the moment to do so; when it is time, the licence will be applied for, and it is expected that, within two months, we would have a

licence for that operation, which has been fully discussed. As regards the fact that the United Kingdom could withdraw, that is quite correct: indeed it could. But whilst, as I say, energy-from-waste facilities will become more and more common throughout the United Kingdom, a great deal of research is being done. Currently, Sheffield University has developed a thermal treatment plant for fly ash that will treat all the residual ashes from the energy-from-waste facility, and what I could say is that United Kingdom waste facility plants are trialling this new system at the present time, and extensive tests have shown results are exceptionally encouraging.

**The President:** Hon. member for Douglas East.

**Mrs Cannell:** Thank you, Mr President. Can I put it to the hon. minister again: what will happen if the United Kingdom refuses to renew the licence for transporting the fly ash off Island? Has the minister got a contingency whereby she can accommodate the fly ash on-Island and, if so, will she please advise?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mrs Crowe:** As I have said, at the present time we are in negotiation with the United Kingdom, we fully expect that they will take the residual air pollution control ashes, and we do not expect to have a problem. If, indeed, we do need to look at it, we do have contingency plans, and landfill in specially engineered sites will be the disposal method.

---

### **Waste Recycling/Composting – Kerbside Collection – Question by Mrs Cannell**

Question 21. The hon. member for Douglas East (Mrs Cannell) to ask the Minister for Local Government and the Environment:

*Do you intend to introduce a pilot 'kerbside collection' of waste for recycling and/or composting?*

**The President:** Again, I call on the hon. member for Douglas East, Mrs Cannell.

**Mrs Cannell:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** Minister for Local Government and the Environment.

**Mrs Crowe:** Mr President, my department is involved in discussions with the commissioners for Port Erin with regard to the feasibility of introducing a trial kerbside collection scheme to recycle plastic bottles. These items were selected because presently there are no recycling arrangements for them on the Island, and it will allow the department to gauge more accurately the effectiveness of the scheme. The recycling initiatives presently in place are based on the

bring system. More than 300 recycling bins are presently in place on the Island, both at civic amenity sites and other bring-points, many of which are adjacent to supermarkets and other public buildings, which enable people to deposit glass, paper, aluminium cans, batteries et cetera for recycling, without having to make a special journey to do so. Following completion of the proposed Port Erin trial, the department will assess how successful it has been and, if appropriate, investigate means by which the introduction of kerbside collection facilities could be implemented. This will involve, by necessity, discussions with the local authorities on the Island, who are responsible for the collection of waste within their area and its delivery to the department's facilities for disposal.

The hon. member will also be aware that my department has recently advertised for contractors to operate the green waste composting process which is being incorporated within the extension of the Southern Civic Amenity Site. This facility will accept all green waste delivered to it from the Island's other civic amenity sites so that it can be composted and put to good use in providing soil conditioning.

**The President:** Hon. member for Douglas East.

**Mrs Cannell:** Thank you, Mr President. Can I ask the hon. minister why there has been a delay in getting this kerbside collection pilot scheme under way, bearing in mind that this hon. place received a report some eight months ago which recommended that we should undertake such a pilot scheme? Why has it taken so long, in view of the fact that it ought to have started in spring of this year, which has passed us somewhat? And further, in terms of the pilot scheme that she is embarking upon for Port Erin - notably her own constituency - can she advise how long it is to run for and who will make the assessment? And what has happened to the kerbside initiative that was undertaken in Onchan some time ago for compostable materials, which was a great success? Has the department considered re-introducing that, as the local commissioners would have liked?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mrs Crowe:** It is entirely coincidental that Port Erin has been chosen; they offered to take part in this pilot scheme, so it is entirely coincidental that it happens to be my constituency, although I will do my best to help the process along. And I would have considered that eight months was quite a short time to introduce a pilot scheme of this type, involving every household in the area. With regard to the Onchan composting scheme, I was explaining that the compost will be collected from all areas of the Island and will be taken to the central green composting site, and it is at that site that it will be used for land regeneration.

### **Light Pollution – Reduction of – Question by Mr Waft**

Question 22. The hon. member of the Council (Mr Waft) to ask the Minister for Local Government and the Environment:

*Will your department undertake to work with energy conservationists, light engineers and the public to limit the amount of wasted light causing light pollution from unshielded lamp-posts, advertising hoardings and other public illumination?*

**The President:** I call on the hon. member of Council, Mr Waft.

**Mr Waft:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** Minister for Local Government and the Environment.

**Mrs Crowe:** Thank you, Mr President. There are two issues here, one of energy saving and one of light pollution, and it is the former which is more important in environmental protection terms. There is no reason, though, why both issues cannot be considered at the same time. It is unfortunate that I could not refer this matter to the energy adviser at the MEA as I believe the post is no longer in existence, with the previous post-holder having been moved to other duties; however, it is my department's belief that government needs the services of a full-time energy advisor with the authority and the budget to develop energy-efficient programmes and undertake work necessary in that regard, particularly in government-owned buildings. The department also believes that the creation of such a post would pay for itself by reducing energy costs as well as protecting the environment. However, until such a post exists, light pollution will be given a low priority, as officers in my department, quite rightly, concentrate their efforts on controlling pollution throughout the environment which is potentially a greater threat to the environment and public health. In the meantime, I will ensure that the issue is raised in the department's proposed public consultation on an environment protection strategy for the Isle of Man, and I will also raise the matter with local authorities in respect of their rôle in delivering their local Agenda 21. Thank you.

**The President:** Hon. member of Council, Mr Waft.

**Mr Waft:** Thank you, Mr President. I have noted the concern about the manpower staffing within the department. With regard to the percentage of reduction of energy used by lighting, if it is directed onto the roadway, for instance, and the correct shields are in place, there can be a 30 per cent reduction, and I would just ask the department, when they are considering the provision of estates around the Island, to realise that there can be light pollution from roadside lighting but

also from public lighting as well. I did show the minister, earlier on today, a picture of the Island from a satellite; it does equally show the light pollution around the UK, and the Isle of Man is certainly there in all its glory. So, I hope the minister will take that on board and, with the existing staff that she has and the jurisdiction that she has, perhaps attend to it a little bit more keenly in the future. Thank you, Mr President.

**The President:** Minister.

**Mrs Crowe:** Thank you, Mr President.

**Mr Delaney:** They can see you from satellite as well.

**Mrs Crowe:** My plea to the hon. member of Council was not in his rôle as the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission as, indeed, the energy advisor post would be outwith my department, but I would urge that we do, in fact, get an energy advisor post, because I think it is most important, and the likes of light pollution and all those environmental issues in which we waste energy continuously on the Isle of Man should be addressed.

---

### **Peel Hill Footpath – Reinstatement – Question by Mrs Hannan**

Question 23. The hon. member for Peel (Mrs Hannan) to ask the Minister for Home Affairs:

*(1) Has your department developed an environmental package for the reinstatement of Peel Hill footpath; and*

*(2) if not, why not?*

**The President:** The hon. member for Peel, Mrs Hannan.

**Mrs Hannan:** I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** Minister for Home Affairs, Mr Braidwood.

**Mr Braidwood:** Mr President, my department is fully committed to the reinstatement of the access track to the new emergency services' radio site on Peel Hill. (**Mr Henderson:** Hear, hear.) Condition 4 of the planning approval issued on 27th November 2000 for the development of the new site and removal of the existing building and mast states: 'Any access tracks created for construction purposes, or ground disturbed around the construction site during construction, must be restored to a natural condition within six months of the completion of the development.' I would advise that the work on the existing access track was necessary to protect it and to enable the construction works to be carried out with due regard to health and safety issues surrounding access for construction traffic.

In addition, and as advised to the hon. member for Peel in a letter to her dated 9th October 2001 from the Director of Planning, in accordance with planning approval, there was no requirement for the submission of a method statement for the construction works; however, prior to any works being commenced, full consultation took place with the staff of Peel Town Commissioners, as custodians of the hill, and agreement was reached with them on the works and methodology to be used. It was further agreed that, on completion of the site works, the existing site and the access track would be restored to the original state or to any additional requirements of the commissioners. The methodology to be used for the reinstatement will, as previously advised to the hon. member, be determined by a working group comprising staff of my Communications Division, officers of Peel Town Commissioners and an adviser from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry. I am also aware that an invitation has been extended to the hon. member to participate in these discussions.

Mr President, the construction works on Peel Hill, together with development works at Crookall House and Cronk yn Arrey, which were due for completion in mid-March this year, have been unavoidably delayed. Hon. members will be aware that the company with which my department contracted for the supply of the new radio system and associated civil works was placed in administration on 26th February, resulting in the contracts being terminated by the department on 22nd March. Until all legal and contractual matters are resolved we are unable to progress the completion of the works and reinstatement of the access track. I can assure hon. members that everything possible is being done to expedite this matter. I would also assure hon. members that both Peel Town Commissioners and the hon. member for Peel have been, and will continue to be, kept fully informed of the situation. Mr President, as I stated at the beginning of my answer, my department is fully committed to the reinstatement of the Peel Hill access track, and this will be done at the earliest opportunity.

**The President:** Hon. member for Peel.

**Mrs Hannan:** Eaghtyrane, would the minister not agree that the reason for putting down this question was that I was not kept fully informed about what was happening? And would the minister also agree that this contract was for 14 weeks and therefore should have been completed some time in the region of January of this year? Would the minister also not agree that this land has been exposed to the elements for well over six months now, with no timetable for reinstatement, because his department is waiting on the completion of administration of this company before anything could be done, so it could be years before this reinstatement takes place, as long as it is done within six months of the completion?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mr Braidwood:** I apologise if the hon. member for Peel has not been kept informed, and I can only apologise for that, but I have been given assurance that you have been kept informed of what has been happening by the Technical Division of the Communications Commission. Also, Mr President, I am very conscious of the need to complete the works, and in actual fact, my department is in consultation with the Treasury to come up with proposals that the works can be completed, which will take about two weeks, by the sub-contractor who was employed with Simoco, and once those works have been completed, the reinstatement of the access track will be completed.

---

### **Court for Summary Prosecutions – Question by Mr Waft**

Question 24. The hon. member of the Council (Mr Waft) to ask the Minister for Home Affairs:

*In the Court for Summary Prosecutions –*

- (a) *during the past year, how many cases have been dismissed on a technicality;*
- (b) *how many cases were wrongly dropped without any analysis of the reason for the decision;*
- (c) *how much has been paid in court costs because the cases have been thrown out; and*
- (d) *are you satisfied that the decision whether to prosecute or not and whether the evidence justifies a prosecution should be left to the police, or should it be left to lawyers who are entirely divorced from the evidence-gathering process?*

**The President:** Hon. member of Council, Mr Waft.

**Mr Waft:** I beg to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** Mr Braidwood.

**Mr Braidwood:** Mr President, the constabulary does not hold data which would specifically indicate how many cases have been dismissed on a technicality, and it would be impracticable to conduct a manual search of records to ascertain this. However, the number of cases dismissed for this reason will be low, as it is unlikely that a case that is technically flawed will reach the summary court, as it would not satisfy the guidelines that the constabulary operates to.

The constabulary is of the opinion that no cases have been wrongly dropped; all decisions on whether to prosecute are made to a strict set of guidelines.

In the last financial year, April 2001 to March 2002, there were five cases where costs were awarded

against the police. The total amount of money paid was £5,721.37.

The Isle of Man Constabulary's prosecution department comprising an inspector and three sergeants conducts all summary prosecutions for the police. Conducting prosecutions is a complex matter and, to be successful, must be of high quality. The standard of proof in criminal cases is 'beyond reasonable doubt'; this is an exacting standard. In instances where there is a prima facie case, a conviction will not necessarily follow. Cases are occasionally withdrawn for a number of reasons, including alternative charges being brought or witnesses withdrawing their support and refusing to give evidence. Decisions to prosecute offenders are made on the basis of guidelines which take a number of factors into account, including the public interest and the likelihood of a successful outcome. As a result of the constabulary's planning processes, it is intended that an advocate will be employed in the near future to oversee the prosecution of summary cases. In England and Wales, the police service has not been involved in conducting prosecutions since 1984, when the Crown Prosecution Service was set up. Legislation now exists locally in the form of the Criminal Justice Act 2001, which enables summary prosecutions to be conducted by the Attorney-General, and the constabulary would strongly support such an initiative.

**The President:** Hon. member Mr Waft.

**Mr Waft:** Thank you, Mr President. I am delighted that an advocate is going to oversee prosecutions. I just wondered, minister: are you aware that the first annual report of the independent inspectorate in the United Kingdom which monitors the prosecutions revealed that 11,000 prosecutions were wrongly dropped, causing real distress to the witnesses and victims involved? Will your department undertake a closer examination of our own systems to ensure that this situation will not occur on the Island?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mr Braidwood:** Mr President, I stated in my answer initially that in the UK it is the Crown Prosecution Service, but in the Isle of Man, on summary convictions, it has been the police and I am well aware that the police, would welcome that all summary prosecutions be undertaken by the Attorney-General's Chambers, where advocates can be employed who are professionally qualified.

**The President:** Hon. member Mr Singer.

**Mr Singer:** Can I ask the hon. minister: is it not the case that the present police prosecution service is weak and inefficient and that the defendant is, in fact, getting a better deal than the person who is offended against? Through his department, can he not demand that the Chief Constable urgently reviews the standard and quality of the service that is provided to prevent these injustices taking place? And does he honestly

believe that an advocate is going to solve all the problems that are presently there?

**The President:** Minister to reply.

**Mr Braidwood:** Mr President, no, I would not agree with the hon. member for Ramsey that the police prosecution service is weak and inefficient; however, I did say that the police would welcome advocates taking over the summary prosecutions because they are more qualified than police officers.

**The President:** Hon. members, I propose to leave 25 and 26 for the time being; we will turn to 27.

---

### TT Course – Provision of Public Access Corridor - Question by Mr Houghton

Question 27. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Houghton) to ask the Minister for Tourism and Leisure:

*In respect of your department's foot-and-mouth prevention strategies –*

- (a) *have you completed the survey and costings of providing a public access corridor within the rural area of the TT Course; and*
- (b) *if so, what is the cost and when will the scheme begin?*

**The President:** I call on the hon. member for Douglas North, Mr Houghton.

**Mr Houghton:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name, sir.

**The President:** I call on the hon. member for Douglas South, Minister for Tourism and Leisure.

**Mr Cretney:** Mr President, at the October sitting of Tynwald, the then Chief Minister, the hon. Donald Gelling, Member of the House of Keys, made a statement to Tynwald advising that departments, including my department, would be putting in place a series of measures and contingency plans to ensure that the 2002 TT races would be able to go ahead regardless of the foot-and-mouth disease situation on the adjacent islands. One of the measures identified was the erection of a second line of fencing around rural areas of the course to enable the creation of livestock-free corridors. Obviously, the statement made in October was in the context of the situation current at that time and the very real fear that the United Kingdom foot-and-mouth crisis might run on into 2002.

Since that time, departments have kept matters under review and it has become apparent that the crisis in the United Kingdom is well and truly over, as stated by government veterinary advice. Our focus has, therefore, been on ensuring that we have in place

contingency measures to deal with any problem that might occur in the future. Whilst we have done some preliminary cost assessments, which suggest a likely cost of around £1 million if the whole of the rural parts of the course were to be fenced, we have decided that, in the prevailing circumstances, it was not necessary, not value for money, and unlikely to be agreed by the individual landowners. We are, however, undertaking a small section of new fencing between Bungalow Bridge and the Bungalow, where there are identified benefits for both the races and the tenant. This work has been undertaken by the landowner and will be completed before TT 2002.

**The President:** Mr Houghton.

**Mr Houghton:** Thank you, Mr President. I thank the hon. minister for his answer, but could he just explain to this hon. Court what contingencies he does have in place in order to deal with the circumstance that could have arisen right on the doorstep, right at the time this TT was likely to take place, in order to allow it to continue to operate, sir?

**Mr Cretney:** I think the arguments have been rehearsed in the past, Mr President, in relation to contingencies that would be put in place, and these would be cross-departmental contingencies, not solely with my department.

**The President:** Mr Houghton.

**Mr Houghton:** Thank you, Mr President. I do have to press the hon. minister on this. Could he explain: what contingencies, sir?

**The President:** Mr Cretney.

**Mr Houghton:** What are your plans, if not this?

**Mr Cretney:** I think it is quite clear to hon. members who have watched the situation as it occurred last year and were aware of what could be in place at the ports of entry and around the course, and we obviously would seek the appropriate government veterinary advice on a cross-departmental basis if the situation were to arise.

**The President:** Mr Houghton.

**Mr Houghton:** Thank you, Mr President. So, thanking the hon. minister for that, can he confirm that that would mean, then, the cancellation of the TT races?

**The President:** Minister.

**Mr Cretney:** No, I cannot confirm that.

### **Summerland – Future Strategy – Question by Mr Houghton**

Question 28. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Houghton) to ask the Minister for Tourism and Leisure:

*Why do you not have a future strategy for Summerland?*

**The President:** The hon. member Mr Houghton.

**Mr Houghton:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name, sir.

**The President:** Minister for Tourism and Leisure.

**Mr Cretney:** Yes. Unlike the question which says 'Why do you not have a future strategy for Summerland?', can I say quite clearly my department *does* have a comprehensive strategy for the Summerland site, once the building is effectively superseded by the refurbished and redeveloped Villa Marina. As hon. members will be aware, when the government acquired the Summerland site, including the Aquadrome, in 1987, there were already major structural problems. The medium-term strategy was that the sports facility should be replaced by the new National Sports Centre and that the entertainment facility should be superseded by a revitalised Villa Marina. Unfortunately, for reasons which are well documented, the two elements did not proceed in parallel - in fact, it contributed to my hair going a bit grey before it should have done. (*Laughter*)

With the completion of the Villa Marina refurbishment, which is now moving along very well, we will have completed our strategy. Summerland is scheduled to close at the end of 2003 and at that point the site is available for re-use. The department is involved currently in detailed discussions with a potential developer who is interested in a multi-faceted development of the site, which would, amongst other things, incorporate the proposed 'TT Experience' and a household-name hotel. I am hopeful that these negotiations will result in a highly beneficial, multi-million-pound redevelopment of a landmark site. There is, however, some way to go before that is achieved, and any proposals for the redevelopment of the site will, of course, come before this hon. Court for approval at a future date.

**The President:** Mr Houghton.

**Mr Houghton:** Thank you, Mr President. I thank the hon. minister for his comprehensive reply and, of course, I wholeheartedly support the efforts with the wonderful works at the Villa Marina and also at the National Sports Centre; however, does he not agree that Summerland itself offers facilities for many functions which would be lost to the people of this

Island if the Summerland complex itself is done away with? Therefore, could he reconsider his decision and promote the use of this building, particularly for the youth of the Island, even if he offered it to the Department of Education for their use, say in conjunction with the Department of Education, for the use of youth and all those youth activities that it presently provides, sir?

**The President:** I appreciate the point which the hon. member is making, but that is inviting us to go down the road of a debate into the future strategy of Summerland, and I do not think that is necessary.

---

**TT Festival – Street Party –  
Question by Mrs Cannell**

Question 29. The hon. member for Douglas East (Mrs Cannell) to ask the Minister for Tourism and Leisure:

*Are you proposing to hold a Mad Sunday Street Party as part of the TT races festival; and, if so –*

- (a) where will this be held;*
- (b) has consultation taken place with residents and hoteliers who may be affected by such; and*
- (c) what was their view?*

**The President:** I call on the hon. member for Douglas East, Mrs Cannell.

**Mrs Cannell:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** Minister for Tourism and Leisure.

**Mr Cretney:** Thank you very much, Mr President. I would have been happy to respond to the last one. This year's Mad Sunday Street Party will be held in the area from the Bottleneck car park, next to the Sea Terminal, to its junction with Regent Street. As hon. members will be aware, there are no hoteliers or residents in this designated area. It is an area which has traditionally been used for TT events for a number of years and, as such, any concerns raised have been addressed, hence consultation has not been undertaken this year with residents, except for the liaison with other government departments and relevant agencies. I would stress, however, that this area is traditionally used in the TT period for these events, and we are therefore satisfied that any concerns that may have been raised over the years have been fully addressed. The consultation has been extended to Douglas Corporation, the Department of Transport, the Police and Fire Service, and the Department of Local Government and the Environment, all of whom have made a contribution and a number of suggestions, which have been taken on board by the team organising

the event. Had it been necessary to move the street party from its traditional location, a more detailed consultation exercise would have been undertaken, as was the case when it was held at Strathallan Crescent and on the Quay.

This year we are again bringing live musical entertainment to the Island for the fans and locals alike. On Saturday 1st June at the Bowl, Douglas, Toploader will be in concert, supported by local band Gasp. On Sunday 2nd June, again at the Bowl, the 'Here and Now' touring show of live 80s bands, starting at 4.30, will take place. This concert includes T'pau, China Crisis, Belinda Carlisle, ABC, Curiosity Killed the Cat, and Toyah, and will conclude by 9.30 p.m. in the evening. We hope people will then join the street party when the concert concludes. At the moment, an early booking discount applies for the concerts and tickets are selling very well. The street party entertainment, which will be available between Thursday 30th May and Thursday 6th June, includes a big screen, minimoto, the Purple Helmets, stunt riders, street entertainers and new features, including go-peds and a novelty racing event in specially-built cars on the horse tram tracks. On the promenade footway will be a reverse bungee, a traditional bungee, simulators and a food court. We will once again be promoting the Red Arrow displays on Tuesday 4th June and on Thursday 6th June. A firework display will take place on Sunday 2nd June at 11 p.m. in Douglas, opposite the Villa Marina, which, I am sure, will live up to everyone's expectations and conclude a very special day of entertainment.

**The President:** Hon. member Mrs Cannell.

**Mrs Cannell:** Thank you, Mr President. I wish to place on record my sincere thanks to the hon. minister for his resumé of all the things that we enjoy during the TT period, but can I ask him, in terms of the actual question on the question paper, bearing in mind that where he is proposing to have the street party there are businesses about, has any consultation taken place with the businesses? Also, taking into account the problem sometimes caused by live music, with a rebound situation from the microphones, can he also advise at what time it will start and what time he is proposing it will diminish?

**The President:** Mr Cretney.

**Mr Cretney:** We are talking specifically about the music of the street party, not at the Bowl? Because at the Bowl the music will finish no later than 9.30; the street party on the Sunday will finish no later than 10.30. The nearest adjacent business is the Royal Bank of Scotland, and my understanding was they were a little disappointed the Red Arrows were otherwise engaged when they were supposed to be available . . . They are somewhere else, somewhere in the United Kingdom.

**Mr Delaney:** The Jubilee.

**TT Races – Anticipated Arrivals –  
Question by Mrs Cannell**

Question 30. The hon. member for Douglas East (Mrs Cannell) to ask the Minister for Tourism and Leisure:

- (1) *Are the anticipated passenger arrivals for this year's TT races favourable; and*
- (2) *if so, how do they compare with the years 2000 and 1999?*

**The President:** Hon. member, Douglas East, Mrs Cannell.

**Mrs Cannell:** Mr President, I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** Minister for Tourism and Leisure.

**Mr Cretney:** Yes, thank you, Mr President. Following the cancellation of last year's TT races due to the outbreak of foot-and-mouth in the United Kingdom, it has been my department's aim to ensure there was no lasting damage to both the races themselves and the festival, hence my department has done all it can to encourage both fans and competitors to return to take part in our world-famous TT festival. It therefore pleases me to be able to report that indicators suggest the anticipated passenger arrival figures for this period are favourable, and it looks likely that numbers will be close to the record-breaking figures for 2000. That said, it is still very difficult, at this stage, to predict what the final figures will be, as last-minute bookings can vary significantly from year to year; in fact, TT 2000 in particular saw a significant number of last-minute bookings. Using the most up-to-date booking figures from the Isle of Man Steam Packet, arrivals for the period 24th May to 6th June reflect an approximate decrease of 11 per cent on 2000 for motorcycles and 14 per cent for passengers at this stage. As I stated previously, 2000 was a record-breaking year and so, in relative terms, I believe that we are likely to see arrivals lying somewhere in excess of 1999 levels, but perhaps a little short of TT 2000's exceptional levels. Mr President, following difficulties placed on us as a result of external events and the subsequent cancellation of last year's TT, I am sure we are all pleased that current forecasts on visitor arrivals for TT 2002 are looking favourable, and I am sure we all want TT 2002 to be as successful as ever.

**Mrs Cannell:** Hear, hear.

**A Member:** Hear, hear.

---

**Civil Service –  
University Graduate Entrants –  
Question by Mr Delaney**

Question 31. The hon. member of the Council (Mr Delaney) to ask the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission:

*At what level does a candidate with a university degree enter the Civil Service?*

**The President:** I call on the hon. member of Council, Mr Delaney.

**Mr Delaney:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** Chairman of the Civil Service Commission, Mr Waft.

**Mr Waft:** Thank you, Mr President. The Civil Service has used, for a number of years now, a more open recruitment process, whereby positions in all disciplines and at all levels are advertised externally. Gone are the days when you could generally only join the Civil Service at administrative level or in a specialist rôle; therefore, the candidate with a university degree can enter the Civil Service at any level, in a job for which the qualification and skill requirements can be met. Furthermore, the commission is actively considering the ways in which it might increase the level of graduates within the Civil Service as part of its strategy for developing a modern Civil Service. A recent survey of new recruits revealed that about 21 per cent of appointees are graduates, spanning the unified Civil Service. A survey and other research undertaken on behalf of the commission suggest that a range of measures will be needed to increase the proportion of civil servants who are graduates; therefore, the commission will be considering issues such as the marketing of the Civil Service to both young –

**Mr Delaney:** Hear, hear.

**Mr Waft:** - and more mature graduates, the potential for work placements of Manx students undertaking relevant degree programmes, the development of existing civil servants, and the ways in which we can ensure a challenging and stimulating environment. Thank you, Mr President.

**The President:** Mr Delaney.

**Mr Delaney:** Thank you, Mr President. I am delighted to hear that we are going to take steps to encourage our Manx students. Can I ask the following supplementaries? Will the Chairman of the Civil Service Commission, who has given us this undertaking, make sure that it is done as an urgent matter? It is of great concern to public representatives in the Isle of Man that Manx graduates are not being encouraged to join the administrative bloc of government, and we may finish up having to bring

---

people from outside, as we have done in the Health Service to man our Civil Service, if we do not do it as a matter of urgency. Can I also ask the chairman, bearing in mind the need the British Civil Service, on which our Civil Service was traditionally based, has found to encourage people with university degrees to join particularly the Exchequer of the British Civil Service, that we make sure that the gamekeepers, which our civil servants are, are as good as the poachers out there, particularly in the finance sector. May I ask the chairman as an urgency to do it?

**The President:** Chairman to reply. Mr Waft.

**Mr Waft:** Thank you, Mr President. I fully concur with what the member has said with regard to our present employees. For our present employees who want to undertake a degree, there is an 80 per cent help with the fees and 50 per cent for books and equipment. I think, perhaps, the member is referring to fast-track civil servants, and we have not actually got a fast-track situation in at the moment.

**Mr Delaney:** No, we have not.

**Mr Waft:** There is something of a divisive situation with regard to fast-track civil servants; we have a loyal workforce who have spent a great deal of their lives in the service, and great care would have to be taken if we were to go down that route, but I understand where the member is coming from and there will be urgent consideration given to that.

**The President:** Mr Delaney.

**Mr Delaney:** Just on that answer, Mr President, can I ask one further supplementary? Bearing in mind that I understand about our good and faithful civil servants, would the chairman - and I hope he would do - agree with me that the days have gone of pecking orders in the Civil Service? We have got to get the best.

**The President:** Mr Waft.

**Mr Waft:** Thank you, Mr President. (*Interjection*) There is a reward strategy review being undertaken at the present time -

**Mr Delaney:** Well done; yes, well done.

**Mr Waft:** - and we hopefully will be able to report back very shortly with regard to the future of the Civil Service. It is undertaken in conjunction with the Government Officers Association, Mr President.

---

**Skerresdale/Ballaquine Bridge -  
Repair - Weight Restrictions -  
Question by Mrs Hannan**

Question 25. The hon. member for Peel (Mrs Hannan) to ask the Minister for Transport:

(1) *When will the Skerresdale/Ballaquine Bridge on the A4 be repaired; and*

(2) *what is the reason for the temporary weight restrictions not being renewed after 1st March 2002?*

**The President:** Now, hon. members, the hon. Minister for Transport has not yet returned, but I understand that, in fact, provision had been made, so we can revert to question 25, and I call on the hon. member for Peel, Mrs Hannan.

**Mrs Hannan:** Eaghtyrane, I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** And the answer, hon. members, will be in the hands of the hon. member for Ayre, Mr Quine.

**Mr Quine:** Thank you, Mr President. The road bridge, sir, over the former railway at Ballaquine will be removed after the Manx Grand Prix this year, and the replacement bridge will take approximately four months to complete. The advance of the deterioration of the wrought iron joists forming the bridge deck became apparent in an inspection in 1999, and since that date there has been a succession of temporary weight restriction orders running from March 2000. Initially, the weight restriction orders limited vehicles to a gross weight of 17 tonnes, and a system of props was installed to support the bridge; however, in September 2001, there was movement of the bridge abutment, leading to cracking of the masonry, and the gross weight limit was reduced to 3.5 tonnes. The replacement bridge works were ordered in March this year, but unfortunately, at that time, the temporary weight restriction was not immediately extended, and that has now been corrected by a new order being put in place from 14th May.

I am conscious of the delay in the replacement of this bridge, which has arisen due to a combination of factors: firstly, the alternative route via Glen Helen is susceptible to weather closures during the winter period; the TT and MGP periods have to be avoided to provide an alternative routing during the closure of the TT; of course, in the year 2001, we had the foot-and-mouth restrictions; and there is also an added complication to do with bird nesting. The replacement bridge will maintain the continuity of the right of way along the former railway line and will incorporate elements of the former bridge, such as the stonework and the side girders, and it will accommodate all anticipated future traffic on this route from Peel to Kirk Michael.

**The President:** Hon. member for Peel.

**Mrs Hannan:** Could I ask the member whether the order is correct, in that part of the bridge is closed and it is not mentioned in the order? I am sure the member will remember that the sea side of the bridge is, in actual fact, closed, and it has been suggested to

me that the order is deficient because it does not close part of the bridge.

**The President:** Hon. member for Ayre, Mr Quine.

**Mr Quine:** This has been raised with me. I am told by the engineers that the order is correct - or is adequate, put it that way - but it is a matter which we are looking into further, sir.

**The President:** Thank you.

---

**Dublin Air Route –  
Inadequate Service –  
Question by Mr Singer**

Question 26. The hon. member for Ramsey (Mr Singer) to ask the Minister for Transport:

*Are you aware of the considerable concern being expressed within the finance sector at the failure of British Airways to provide an adequate daily return service from the Isle of Man to Dublin?*

**The President:** I call on the hon. member for Ramsey, Mr Singer.

**Mr Singer:** Thank you, Mr President. I beg leave to ask the question standing in my name.

**The President:** And on this occasion I call on the hon. member of Council, Mr Kniveton, to reply on behalf of the minister.

**Mr Kniveton:** Yes, Mr President. I am most certainly aware of the concern being expressed at the failure of British Airways to provide an adequate daily return service from the Isle of Man to Dublin, and I am also very concerned regarding the Dublin air service as a whole. Furthermore, I understand that the existing twice-daily service, operated by a 28-seat J41 aircraft, is to be replaced by a once-daily mid-afternoon service, with a 68-seat ATP aircraft, from 19th August 2002, and thus a day's business visit to the Island - or from the Island to Dublin - without an overnight stay will not then be possible as it is now.

**A Member:** Hear, hear.

**Mr Kniveton:** This service will continue to be provided by Manx Airlines Limited, flying under JE flight numbers, until September 2002, after which date British Airways CitiExpress (Isle of Man) Limited will become the operator, with BA flight numbers.

Now, as I said, Mr President, I also very much share the hon. member's concern, especially now that the service is being reduced to this one flight a day, which is clearly inadequate for the strong market which exists between the Isle of Man and Dublin.

**A Member:** Hear, hear.

**Mr Kniveton:** However, I can assure the hon. member for Ramsey - in fact, all hon. members - that every effort is definitely being made by the department, in conjunction with the Department of Tourism and using the firm Aviation International Marketing, which the two departments have jointly engaged in order to retain existing, and create new, routes in order to encourage new incoming business and tourism traffic. Furthermore, I can assure all hon. members that Dublin is certainly at the top of the list. I believe we are succeeding in this, but I cannot, at this stage, reveal the commercially confidential and sensitive discussions which are currently taking place; suffice it to say that discussions are being held with interested parties and, as I say, I am hopeful of a successful outcome. Now, I ask the hon. member for Ramsey, who himself is a businessman, to realise that alternative airlines are not just waiting round the corner to provide a service at the drop of a hat. Generally, there are no such things as spare aircraft - and aircraft of reasonable capacity - available, especially at this time of the year, to step in, unless, perhaps, they consider there is a sensible and very profitable commercial proposition before them. Thank you, Mr President.

**The President:** Hon. member for Ramsey.

**Mr Singer:** Thank you. Can I thank the hon. member for the department for his comprehensive answer, certainly an encouraging answer in the fact that the department quite clearly appreciates the problems that are facing, particularly the finance sector in the Isle of Man. Can I ask him whether there was any consultation at all from BA with the department before they made a decision to withdraw the service - or change the service as it is now - and does he not agree with me that we seem to be getting a creeping reduction now of BA services on our important routes, and that we should be encouraging other airlines to be coming to this Island and using the routes, and that we should be giving them, therefore, as I say, every encouragement to work from this Island because BA are not to be relied on?

**The President:** Mr Kniveton.

**Mr Kniveton:** Yes, Mr President. We have many meetings with British Airways, before they make decisions and certainly after the decisions, which, on most occasions, we do not like. We have to accept that Manx Airlines, British Regional, or whatever they are going to call it, are now part of British Airways. However, I believe that we have to realise that we are caught up in the misfortunes, if that is the word, and the problems which they - British Airways - have had of recent months, certainly since September 11th. Their results of yesterday advise losses of £200 million, their worst annual results since privatisation in 1975 - that is 27 years. Essentially, they have to operate their business in the interests of their shareholders (*Interjection by Mr Singer*) not in the interests of anybody else. They have had to rationalise their business: they have had to chop out any routes

which are not . . . ‘producing’ is the word; they have had to make all sorts of cutbacks, including a 20 per cent reduction in their aircraft based in the Isle of Man. I think that is the very crux of the problem that exists today: a reduction of 20 per cent in their aircraft based in the Isle of Man. Aircraft have to work harder - they have to fly more sectors each day - and hence reliability and availability have fallen, and I can tell you, hon. members, that has caused us a lot of problems. Encouraging others: as I have answered in the first part of the question, yes, we are doing that and we are being very diligent about it. We are working hard on that one, I can assure you.

**The President:** Hon. member for Peel.

**Mrs Hannan:** Thank you, Eaghtyrane. Could I ask the member for the Department of Transport: since the takeover of Manx Airlines by British Airways, has this takeover been smooth? It would appear that Manx Airlines/British Airways do not understand the needs of the Isle of Man and are not going to be able to respond to our needs; is that what the member is suggesting by his response?

**The President:** Mr Kniveton.

**Mr Kniveton:** Yes, that, in a nutshell, is it, Mr President. The response is such that we are not getting the service that we used to have. It is very sad. They are giving us, as I say, a lot of problems at the airport because of their reliability and availability having fallen, with cancelled flights, particularly to Birmingham, and they are combining Liverpool and Manchester. Our airport is open regularly after hours, we have had staff problems - we have had to renegotiate with staff and we have had to pay extra money for working after 10 o'clock - and, in fact, we have advised the airlines that, after 10 o'clock at night, the staying open charge is going to be increased from £350 per hour to £700 per hour. And so it goes on. I can assure you, Mr President, hon. members, we do have a lot of problems with the changeover to British Airways.

**The President:** Hon. member for Onchan, Mr Karran.

**Mr Karran:** Eaghtyrane, would the member not agree that the expressions of concern by the finance sector as far as British Airways is concerned are just another result of the executive of this government not having taken the opportunity to buy a golden share in British Regional Airways when some of the hon. members were asking to do so? And would he also not agree that we need to develop a system of developing an air service to the Isle of Man which puts the Isle of Man first, not last? And will his department develop the issue of looking at whether we should develop an air service to the Island in which the taxpayer has a golden share in order to get the priorities back around because of the damage that it can do to the Island if we do not have an effective and efficient air service to keep the economy of the Isle of Man going?

**The President:** Now, Mr Kniveton, if you can answer without going down the debate line of a golden share in an airline, please.

**Mr Kniveton:** Yes, Mr President, I believe the hon. member has rather expressed his own views on that, a certain amount of which I would not like to get involved in today. I will take the message back to the department, but as he has expressed his personal views, I will express my personal views too: sad though it be, Mr President, gone are the days of our national airline, operated to a large extent in the interests of the Isle of Man, and I hope things will improve.

**Mr Houghton:** Hear, hear.

---

**‘Fax Polls’ – Legislation to Make Illegal –  
Question by the Speaker  
for Written Answer**

Question 32. The hon. member for Castletown (Mr Speaker) to ask the Chief Minister:

*Will the government consider the early introduction of legislation to make it illegal for fax polling companies to ‘fax poll’ within the Isle of Man?*

**Answer**

There are no proposals within government’s legislation programme to make it illegal for fax polling companies to “fax poll” within the Isle of Man.

---

**State Retirement Age –  
Policy on Fixing –  
Question by Mr Henderson  
for Written Answer**

Question 33. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the Chief Minister:

- (1) *What is your government’s current policy on fixing the general state retirement age for citizens to receive state retirement benefits;*
- (2) *what is this age; and*
- (3) *why?*

**Answer**

The questioner refers to ‘retirement age’ in his question, which misrepresents the principle involved. There is no such thing in the state pension scheme as a ‘retirement’ condition. People do not have to retire to draw a state pension, but they have to have reached a certain age – currently 65 for men and not less than 60 for a woman. If a woman has not paid sufficient National Insurance contributions in her own right then she cannot, regardless of age, draw a pension in her

right until her husband draws his pension at age 65, when she can, providing she is at least 60, draw her own pension on the strength of her husband's contributions. The age at which women can draw a state pension is to be equalised at age 65 between 2010 and 2020. People can retire whenever they want, and no doubt those who want to retire earlier than 65 will so arrange their financial affairs to enable them to do so.

On the Island, the principle is not really the policy in fixing the age at which people may draw a state pension; it is about the fundamental policy of maintaining the present reciprocal agreement with the United Kingdom, a policy that has existed since the National Insurance scheme was introduced in 1948, and a policy which has been endorsed consistently by this Court ever since. With that policy, it is impractical to take an issue such as the age at which people can draw their state pensions and create different rules for the Island. Rules on such a fundamental aspect of the National Insurance scheme must be kept in line, otherwise reciprocity in the form that we have had all these years simply will not work.

---

**TT Races –  
Increase in Anticipated Arrivals –  
Question by Mr Henderson  
for Written Answer**

Question 34. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the Chief Minister:

*Is your government in receipt of any hard factual evidence which would indicate that there will be an extraordinary increase above other years of visitor arrivals for the 2002 Isle of Man TT fortnight?*

**Answer**

It is never possible to be sure, in advance, of visitor arrivals for the TT fortnight; however, after the disappointment of last year's cancellation, we are hopeful that 2002 will be particularly successful.

---

**Civil Service –  
Training of Junior Staff –  
Question by Mr Henderson  
for Written Answer**

Question 35. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the Chief Minister:

*What current government employment policies are in place, throughout all government departments and statutory boards and promoted in the private sector, which ensure the development and succession training of junior staff to enable them to progress their careers, keep updated and well motivated, and have reasonable promotional aspirations?*

**Answer**

Government employs some 8,500 staff, and their personal development is key to assuring a well-motivated and skilled workforce which can respond positively to the changing demands on it. Government's policy for training and development was reviewed, with the participation of staff across the whole of the public service, in 2000, and this resulted in a revised Employee Development Policy and Strategy to achieve those aims. That policy highlights that employee development is more than attendance on formal training courses; it can take the form of a variety of activities, including job rotation, project work, coaching, participation in corporate group work or short-term secondment.

Whilst specialist development generally falls to departments, boards and offices, government offers a wide programme of central training through the employee development arm of the Personnel Office. That programme is wide ranging and includes some 57 courses, covering personal effectiveness, management development, and health and safety awareness, to mention but a few. Those courses are open to all public servants and not promoted to the private sector, as they are designed to meet government's identified needs. Although I have to say there are approaches from the private sector for places from time to time, these will only be offered where there are vacancies.

Other evidence of the importance placed on employee development is the Civil Service Commission's strategy for developing the civil service, which aims to focus on improved development and performance of staff in a systematic way and which is commensurate with the principles of the Investors in People Standard (IIP). Elsewhere in government, a number of departments are actively pursuing IIP accreditation, and some have achieved that quality standard.

It must be remembered that government's workforce is extremely diverse, and while there is a central employee development policy, the ways in which that is delivered within departments are many and varied. Therefore, resources are directed to identified development needs of those staff employed.

More generally, promotion of employee development in the private sector falls to the Department of Trade and Industry, which provides training and retraining opportunities and support for employers to achieve Investors in People accreditation. Statistics with regard to the numbers of employers who have achieved IIP accreditation or are pursuing accreditation can be provided by the Department of Trade and Industry.

Government's Employee Development Policy is set out below:

**ISLE OF MAN GOVERNMENT  
EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

The Isle of Man Government is committed to a policy of providing training, development and career opportunities across the public service to all its

employees. It recognises the importance of training and development in providing skilled, flexible, well-motivated employees to deliver a wide range of high quality public services which meet the current and future needs of the Island's population.

The implementation of this policy involves everyone within the organisation:

**Members of the Government, Chief Officers and Senior Managers:** in providing and communicating the objectives and goals of government (both the overall objectives of IoM Government and the specific objectives of Departments, Boards and Offices); and in supporting staff development by the provision of resources and encouragement.

**Line Managers:** in providing support for development by identifying skills and competencies required for both the current job and future development; identifying targets and objectives; agreeing personal development plans; providing support and assistance to implement the plans; and providing recognition of achievement through appraisal, feedback etc.

**Individuals:** by taking ownership of their development by actively contributing to the creation of their personal development plan; and following the plan to meet targets and objectives.

Staff will be encouraged to take responsibility for their own development. Government will provide support and actively encourage learning and development opportunities aimed at continuous improvement for all its employees by:

- Appraisal and discussion between managers and staff on development needs.
- Ensuring the provision of a range of assessment, training and development activities to develop the skills and competencies required for the employee's current job and for career development.
- Providing information and support for flexible career development across the range of jobs in government.
- Recognition of achievements.
- The provision of an Employee Development Strategy which supports this policy.

---

**Work Permits – Waiting Time to Obtain –  
Question by Mr Henderson  
for Written Answer**

Question 36. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the Minister for Trade and Industry:

- (1) *Can you state the average approximate amount of time it takes for the granting of a work permit from application to permission, if appropriate, when that person receives a letter from the Work Permit Committee; and*
- (2) *can they, or their prospective employer, telephone the secretary of the committee for verbal information?*

**Answer**

- (1) Where an application is straightforward, it currently takes approximately seven working days from receipt of the application to the time when the permit is issued to the employer and a copy is sent to the worker.

Where matters are more involved or controversial, then consideration, which is likely to involve the Work Permit Committee, may take up to several weeks, allowing for the submission of all relevant material and for the committee to convene and determine the application. If refused, an application may be the subject of a request for a review of that decision before the Work Permit Committee. If the refusal is upheld, the matter may then be subject to an appeal before an independent appeal tribunal.

- (2) The Secretary to the Work Permit Committee and her staff can, where appropriate, provide information verbally as to the progress of an application for a work permit.

---

**Work Permits Committee –  
Inability to Process Applications –  
Question by Mr Henderson  
for Written Answer**

Question 37. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the Minister for Trade and Industry:

- (1) *Have there been any times during the last 24 months where the Work Permits Committee has been unable to process applications for work permits; and*
- (2) *if so, how many times has that occurred in that period?*

**Answer**

- (1) I am not aware of any times during the past 24 months where the Work Permit Committee has been unable to process applications. There will, however, clearly have been occasions on which consideration of applications has been deferred pending a

meeting of the committee, or pending the submission of further information from the applicant employer. Some delay can also arise simply because of the timing of the application in regard to that of the committee meetings.

- (2) Broadly speaking, a full meeting of the Work Permit Committee is convened once a month to consider applications for Work Permits and related matters, with a further short meeting convened during the intervening period to consider matters such as requests for a review of refusal decisions.

---

**Work Permits – Process of Applying and Granting – Question by Mr Henderson for Written Answer**

Question 38. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the Minister for Trade and Industry:

- (1) *Can you explain briefly what the general process of applying for a work permit entails; and*
- (2) *does the committee itself process every work permit, or are there circumstances where this can be done at an administrative level?*

**Answer**

- (1) An applicant for a work permit must submit a completed application form to the Department of Trade and Industry, together with the application fee, which is currently set at £10.00. The information to be contained in an application is prescribed at Schedule 1 to the Control of Employment Regulations 1993. In the case of an application relating to direct employment, information has to be submitted, at different parts of the same form, by both the prospective employer and prospective employee, while for applications which relate to prospective self-employment, information is required from the individual only. Further information may be provided in support of an application, and this may include, for example, detailed information relating to the background of an employer and the reasons for the vacancy having arisen, information relating to the recruitment and selection process that has been followed, notes from interviews and copies of applications and curriculum vitae for the applicants for the post. Should such information not be provided at the time of application, then some or all of this may be requested, later if considered necessary.

In certain cases, arrangements may be made for an employer to meet with the Work Permit Committee to discuss the circumstances of a particular case. This may occur when the application is first considered, or where an application has been refused and a review of that decision takes place before the committee.

- (2) Not all applications require consideration by the Work Permit Committee, that committee having delegated authority to its secretary, who may determine applications within certain parameters.

-----

**Work Permits System – Discrimination against Local Staff – Question by Mr Henderson for Written Answer**

Question 39. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the Minister for Trade and Industry:

- (1) *Can you indicate how the Isle of Man work permit system currently discriminates against some local staff, as stated by you on a Manx Radio interview on the morning of 13th May 2002; and*
- (2) *how many times are you aware of this happening?*

**Answer**

- (1) There have been two particular allegations brought to my attention on several occasions by Isle of Man workers who have felt that the work permit system has effectively been circumvented to their disadvantage.

In the present employment climate, employers are acutely aware of the need to secure the staff that they require as quickly as possible, both as a response to the realities of the commercial pressures under which they operate, including those pressures arising directly from difficulties in recruiting/retaining staff, and to ensure that prospective workers do not take up employment elsewhere as a result of any delay or uncertainty in the recruitment process.

The allegation has been that employers, having identified a worker for whom a permit would be required, do not progress applications from Isle of Man workers, in order to avoid any difficulties that may arise through the current mandatory requirement in the work permit system for regard to be had to the matter of the likelihood of suitable Isle of

Man workers being available. Unless information about the employer's actions is brought to the attention of the Work Permit Committee or its secretary, the likelihood of a permit being granted would be high. The second common allegation is that some employers have drawn up advertisements and job descriptions in such a way as to ensure that Isle of Man workers are less likely to be suitable. This may be by requiring specific experience or expertise which a known Isle of Man worker does not possess. It is in such ways that Isle of Man workers may perceive themselves subject to discrimination.

- (2) It is not possible to identify the number of occasions when such practices have occurred or led to the granting of a permit to the disadvantage of Isle of Man workers.

---

**Noble's Hospital – Waiting Lists –  
Analysis – Question by Mr Henderson  
for Written Answer**

Question 40. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the Minister for Health and Social Security:

- (1) *How many Isle of Man residents are currently on all planned elective admissions to the Island's general hospital for all surgical and medical areas;*
- (2) *how many different waiting-lists are there; and*
- (3) *into what medical and surgical categories do they break down?*

**Answer**

- (1) At the end of March 2002, the total number of patients waiting for in-patient treatment at Noble's Hospital was 882.
- (2) There are currently eight consolidated waiting-lists.
- (3) The categories of waiting-list are as set out in the tables below, which show the number of people waiting for in-patient treatment at the end of March 2002 for each speciality, and, for comparison, corresponding figures for March 2001.

It should be noted that the number of patients waiting for in-patient treatment at the end of March 2002 shows a reduction of 5.9% on the figures at the end of March 2001.

See Tables 1 and 2 on following page (TQ 123).

**Noble's Hospital – Outpatients' Clinics  
Cancelled in TT Period –  
Question by Mr Henderson  
for Written Answer**

Question 41. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the Minister for Health and Social Security:

*Will all out-patient clinics be cancelled for the 2002 Isle of Man TT fortnight?*

**Answer**

No. There are no out-patient clinics being cancelled specifically for the T.T.

---

**Cardiothoracic Centre, Broadgreen  
–Waiting-List Audit –  
Question by Mr Henderson  
for Written Answer**

Question 42. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the Minister for Health and Social Security:

- (1) *Can you confirm that your department has completed its waiting-list audit of Island residents waiting for a cardiac angiogram, or heart surgery, or related operations at the Cardiothoracic Centre, Broadgreen, and is this the only cardiac centre used by the Isle of Man Department of Health and Social Security; and*
- (2) *can you also confirm that it is a relatively simple exercise and say why it has taken your department months since this issue was first raised to count a few names on a waiting-list?*

**Answer**

- (1) I can advise that the Noble's Hospital Clinical Audit Committee is currently carrying out an audit of waiting-list information for patients who have been referred to the Cardiothoracic Centre at Broadgreen Hospital, Liverpool. Some delay was experienced whilst patient information was awaited from the Cardiothoracic Centre; that information has now been received.

Whilst the majority of Isle of Man patients are referred to Broadgreen Hospital for cardiothoracic treatment, records show that in the last financial year referrals have also been made to the following clinics/hospitals: Royal Liverpool University Hospital, Papworth Hospital, Wythenshawe Hospital, Harefield Hospital, Bristol Royal Infirmary, and the Royal Brompton Hospital, London.

- (2) The process of audit is not simply the production of names or numbers, but involves

a review by a clinician of the effect of any delay in treatment experienced by a patient. This would include an assessment of the clinical condition of the patient and their individual circumstances. Subject to the audit findings, particularly in relation to whether waiting times posed a clinical risk to patients, my department will consider what actions, if any, may be necessary.

**TT Races – Increase in Anticipated Arrivals – Question by Mr Henderson for Written Answer**

Question 43. The hon. member for Douglas North (Mr Henderson) to ask the Minister for Tourism and Leisure:

*Are there any indicators, from booking figures that your department has access to, which indicate that there will be an extraordinary increase above other years in visitor arrivals for the 2002 Isle of Man TT fortnight ?*

**Answer**

The Isle of Man Steam Packet Company Limited and airline operators supply my department with information on bookings on a regular basis in the lead-up to TT fortnight. As this is commercially sensitive information, it is supplied in confidence to my department. The latest booking information supplied to my department from the Steam Packet Company relates to inbound travel for the period 24th May 2002 to 6th June 2002, for bookings made up to 20th May. This suggests that bookings at this stage are approximately 11% lower for motorcycles, and 14% for passengers, when compared with TT 2000. In respect of Manx Airlines, indications are that passenger numbers will be approximately 20,000; this represents a decrease of 2,000, or a 10% decrease, on air travel compared to TT 2000. However, it should be borne in mind that these figures are not comparable on a like-for-like basis, in that adjustment needs to be made for late arrivals. This is an extremely difficult area to predict, but current indicators suggest that arrivals for TT 2002 will be close to TT 2000, which was a record year in terms of attendance.

**Table 1**

**In-Patient Waiting-Lists At 31 March 2002**

Speciality	<3 Mths	<6 Mths	6-8 Mths	9-11 Mths	12+ Mths	Total
General Medicine	10	1		4	3	18
General Surgery	207	59	19	5	8	298
Gynaecology	56					56
E.N.T.	69	14	6	2	2	93
Ophthalmology	85	15	4	1	5	110
Orthopaedics	134	42	16	1	2	195
Oral surgery	103	4	1			108
Rheumatology	3	1				4
Total	667	136	46	13	20	882

**Table 2**

**In-Patient Waiting-Lists At 31 March 2001**

Speciality	<3 Mths	<6 Mths	6-8 Mths	9-11 Mths	12+ Mths	Total
General Medicine	6	3	1			10
General Surgery	201	59	14	3	2	279
Gynaecology	27	2				29
E.N.T.	73	50	17			140
Ophthalmology	66	50	18	1	4	139
Orthopaedics	160	44	7	1	1	213
Oral surgery	113	4	1			118
Rheumatology	6					6
Total	652	212	58	5	7	934