

**7. Select Committee on Poverty –
First Report 2019-20: Poverty Definitions & Data –
Amended motion carried**

The Chairman of the Select Committee on Poverty (Mr Speaker) to move:

That the First Report of the Select Committee on Poverty for the Session 2019-20 – Poverty Definitions & Data [[PP No 2019/0122\(1\)](#), [PP No 2019/0122\(2\)](#)] be received and the following recommendations be approved:

Recommendation 1

That the Isle of Man Government adopts the Social Metrics Commission's new measure of poverty for the UK for the purpose of measuring the extent of poverty in the Isle of Man.

Recommendation 2

That the Isle of Man Government collects the data required in order to adopt the Social Metrics Commission's methodology for measuring poverty.

Recommendation 3

That Tynwald is of the opinion that the Economic Affairs Division should gather the data required to implement the metric including 'Other available resources'.

Recommendation 4

That the Isle of Man Government, in partnership with Graih, defines 'rough sleeping' and produces data on the number of homeless people in the Isle of Man.

Recommendation 5

That Tynwald is of the opinion that the Isle of Man Household Income and Expenditure Survey should be conducted every three years.

Recommendation 6

That the Economic Affairs Division of the Cabinet Office sits independently from any Government Department.

Recommendation 7

That Government assign a lead Department for poverty.

Recommendation 8

That the Tynwald Policy Review Committee with responsibility for scrutinising the lead Department for poverty builds into its work programme the duty to report on the progress of the metric.

Response to the Select Committee on Poverty – First Report – Poverty Definitions and Data [[GD No 2019/0090](#)]; Annual Report of the Director of Public Health for 2019: An Equal Society [[GD No 2019/0071](#)]; and Council of Ministers Cold, Hunger and Homelessness Action Plan [[GD No 2019/0065](#)] are relevant to this Item.

The President: Thank you, Hon. Members.

We turn now to Item 7, Select Committee on Poverty. The Chairman of the Select Committee, Mr Speaker, to move.

The Chairman of the Select Committee on Poverty (Mr Speaker): Thank you, Mr President.

3585 Hon. Members, the first Report of the Select Committee on Poverty provides an overview of the options your Committee considered in seeking to arrive at a definition of 'Poverty'. This is not an easy task. Poverty is very personal and each individual or family affected will have a different experience, because there are so many factors which can influence whether someone has enough to meet their needs.

3590 Your Committee intends to look at some of these factors in more detail later and intends to consider themes including the social security system and benefits, children and families, youth and education, housing and homelessness, mental and physical health, money and debt, and rehabilitation. Of course, none of these can be considered in isolation, in any poverty situation there will usually be multiple factors to consider. And so in addressing poverty we should really place the *person* at the centre and surround them with the support they need. It says here, 'Hear, hear from Mr Robertshaw', at that point!

3595 Although Government has made progress in working across services it is not yet good enough at working holistically, it still works at improving services to benefit users on a service-by-service basis.

3600 Both the Programme for Government and the Cold, Hunger and Homelessness Action Plan contain ambitious ideas for action which will support tackling poverty. However, the Director of Public Health, in her most recent annual report, said:

We have an extraordinary opportunity as a small island nation to address inequalities through co-ordinated action through government policy and service delivery, and the contribution of those beyond government. However, at present we simply do not know what inequalities there are across our population, whether our current policies and interventions are addressing and changing these, or whether we have gaps that we are not currently addressing at all.

This is the challenge your Committee has addressed in its first Report: we need to find a way, a definition and a methodology to measure poverty. It is complex and so no measure is perfect, but in order to know what we need to address and whether the Government policies and actions have been successful, in doing so we need to define what we are addressing.

3605 In the Cold, Hunger and Homelessness Action Plan we learn that Government has worked with a number of public and third-sector bodies to understand where some of the issues lie. I have no doubt that the resulting actions will result in a positive change for some people. But how many? How will Government know whether the money being invested in these projects is providing the greatest benefit for the most people?

3610 We need Isle of Man data which will help us to understand the issues here: what affects people most deeply? Or what affects the most people? Knowing this is essential if we are to target our stretched resources.

3615 The good news, Hon. Members, is that we do not need to reinvent the wheel. There are several measures of poverty available which, if adopted, would allow us to compare and contrast with other places. This offers two clear benefits: benchmarking, yes, but more important than that it will enable us to see what actions have been most successful elsewhere, and by comparing data to identify where we have similar needs to look at those which could work here.

3620 Your Committee recommends the Social Metrics Commission measure as we felt this provided the most holistic view. I will briefly comment on two other measures and outline why we did not make these our first choice.

3625 The Joseph Rowntree Minimum Income Standard is a well-known income-based measure. It is a useful indicator of a household's ability to purchase goods and services but does not take into account other factors, including needs – for example, caring for a person with additional needs; or factors such as levels of debt, savings, liquid assets and access to credit. Poverty is not just about insufficient income in relation to day-to-day spending.

Indices of Multiple Deprivation are used across the UK. Each country has its own measure and so comparison between them is difficult, although the Office of National Statistics provides

3630 some guidance on how this can be done. It is suitable for use in small areas – the 2014 Joint
 Strategic Needs Assessment in the Isle of Man was based on the English Indices of Deprivation.
 The JSNA includes a broader range of data and as well as income it assessed aspects of
 employment, health and disability, education skills and training, barriers to housing and services,
 and living environment. The data used was acknowledged as having some gaps but it was what
 3635 was available at that time. However, the main issue with this measure, as far as the Committee
 was concerned, is that it is a comparator – it ranks the areas, so will tell you if one is more
 deprived than another, but it does not help to measure to what extent an individual or family is
 in poverty.

And so I turn to the Social Metrics Commission. Formed in 2016, the Social Metrics
 Commission’s mission was to provide a new consensus around poverty measurement that
 3640 enables action, informs policy-making and so improves the lives of people in poverty in real
 ways.

The SMC measures the extent to which the material resources that someone has available to
 them *now* are sufficient to meet the material needs that they currently have; and it takes into
 account household sharing. As well as income, this new metric accounts for the inescapable
 3645 costs including rent or mortgage payments, debt, childcare and the extra costs of disability.
 These are all things which reduce people’s spending power. It also factors in the positive impact
 of people’s liquid assets, including savings, on alleviating immediate poverty. This provides a
 total resources picture for an individual or family unit.

This measure also provides detailed insights into poverty depth and persistence and the
 3650 wider factors that can impact on the lives of people living in poverty. It provides the opportunity
 to factor in the lived experience of poverty – which you will not see in an income calculation –
 including social isolation, poor family relationships, the effect on health, access to jobs,
 education and training, and sometimes a lack of skills. It also takes into account people’s history
 of trauma.

This measure looks at the available resources and compares it to a poverty line which is
 3655 calculated based on circumstances – a single person with no children would need a lower level
 of available resources than lone parents, or couples with or without children, including
 pensioners. This assessment method provides information which enables Government to target
 resources more specifically – for example, there are a greater number of couples with children in
 3660 the UK in poverty than single parent families, but the *depth* of poverty experienced in the single
 parent families is greater.

Hon. Members, we do need action, we need to tackle poverty. However, your Committee
 respectfully suggests that we cannot know that we are successfully doing this unless we are able
 to identify the scale of poverty and where its impact is most keenly felt. Capturing information
 3665 over a period of time will enable Government to demonstrate that its policies are working.

And in supporting the revised amendments from the Council of Ministers, I would like to
 thank the Policy and Resources Minister for his engagement, which I know has meant an active
 dialogue and a change to the recommendations that appear in the Government response.

So we urge Members to accept recommendations 1, 2 and 3 as amended.

3670 On recommendation 4 we are content with the amendment proposed, as it is more inclusive.

In terms of recommendation 5, again we are content with the amendment proposed as we
 recognise that it is more efficient to collect data which can be used for a number of purposes,
 and that proposal represents an efficient use of resources. However, we are also appreciative of
 the fact that, whilst we recommended one metric, a suite of metrics will be used and we think
 3675 this can only be a positive step. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

With respect to recommendation 6, we have been given assurances about the independence
 of the Economic Affairs Division and enshrined in an amendment will be an assurance that this
 information is shared more widely by way of charter or public operating model to ensure
 transparency.

3680 The amendment to recommendation 7 is also accepted by the Committee providing there is an understanding that the Social Policy and Children's Sub-Committee will hold to account the various parties involved in the delivery of agreed actions. This is far too important to slip through the net of the strict lines in the Committee structure.

3685 Which leads neatly to recommendation 8, where we hope that the Hon. Members will support our proposal that the Tynwald Policy Review Committees undertake to monitor progress with declared policy actions which fall within their remit. We do not, however, oppose Social Affairs Policy Review Committee taking the lead.

3690 Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues on the Committee, Miss August-Hanson and Mr Moorhouse; as well as our diligent and professional Clerks, Jo Corkish and Peter Smith for their help.

With that, Hon. Members, I beg to move.

The President: Hon. Member of Council, Miss August-Hanson.

3695 **Miss August-Hanson:** Thank you, Mr President.
I stand to second and reserve my remarks.

The President: Hon. Member for Douglas Central, Mr Thomas.

3700 **Mr Thomas:** Thank you, Mr President.

I would like to start by thanking the Committee for the work that they have done in looking into an issue that has challenged politicians around the world for a long time. I would also like to commend the Chair and the Committee members for having engaged so positively with Government so that we could come to a consensus about the amendments that the Government is going to propose to the Committee's recommendations.

3705 The analysis of definitions and approaches in the Committee's Report is comprehensive and impressive, and defining terms and collecting data is invaluable to help to tackle the challenges of poverty and deprivation, providing a mechanism, just as described by the mover, to analyse the situation and to inform policy responses in terms of the evidence.

3710 Moreover, the impact of poverty on a person, families and society more generally cannot be underestimated and it needs to be acknowledged that the effects of poverty can continue well after a person or family is no longer considered to be poor – the persistence of poverty, as outlined by the Committee Chair. Absolute poverty is a scourge and we all need to continue to do everything we can to eliminate it from our Island, as I said in the foreword to the Government's response.

3715 We do need to wrap certainties around individual people and individual families, and that is an important part of Government and this Court's response to dealing with poverty. Government stepped up to that challenge straight after the General Election and included actions in the Programme for Government at the beginning of 2017, actions which have been refreshed since, most notably through the Cold, Hunger and Homelessness Action Plan which was laid before this Hon. Court this October.

3720 Providing an inclusive and caring society, as we all know, in an Island of enterprise and opportunity means increasing median earnings after tax and inflation; it means more people working in good jobs, encouraged by the Department for Enterprise. That means more people will have the opportunity to share in the success of the Island's growing economy and it also means that they will be able to pay more tax and National Insurance, and consume more and pay more indirect taxes, which will mean that those who need more care can get more care from the public resources generated by those who are able to be more economically active.

3730 The Minister for the Treasury, Mr Cannan, summed that up when speaking back in April. He talked about Child Benefit, he talked about trickle-up economics, he talked about the Minimum Wage increase, he expressed his support for the living wage, he talked about the increase to the

3735 Employed Person's Allowance, and he talked about the increases in Child Benefit. And let's make no mistake – it has been fundamentally important on this Island that the Minimum Wage has risen by one third in the last five years. Let's make no mistake – it has been transformational that we have the calculation of minimum income standards through the calculation of the living wage; and, with changed assumptions, that increased by 13.3% in the last year.

3740 I acknowledge that Mr Speaker, when moving for the Committee on Poverty, acknowledged the Programme for Government. Additional action laid out in the Cold, Hunger and Homelessness Action Plan, alongside working with the Committee, I guess, in respect of some local Isle of Man data and including definitions, includes the investigation of a Housing First approach to inform the Housing Strategy by June 2020, considering a practical response to any holiday hunger that emerges next summer, and working with utilities and energy suppliers in respect of affordability of life's essentials.

3745 Mr President, I think everybody in this Hon. Court knows that there is no silver bullet in how poverty can be addressed, and we all know that whilst measuring it is important, action is even more important. Of course definitions and data in the Isle of Man will then be helpful to monitor those actions, but essentially we need to tackle that scourge that we have acknowledged exists.

3750 One final point before commenting on each of the amendments: I just think we would all like to acknowledge, applaud and appreciate the work of the generous Manx community and charities who contribute so much to help us deal with that scourge. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) As one of the Treasury officials put it when giving evidence to the Select Committee, the charities and the volunteers for those charities, and the donations, provide that shock-absorber element, that flexibility, that treating you as an individual and dealing with you exactly as you need – the stuff that we cannot do in Government because to if we were to set it up it would require a level of administration and a level of inquiry into personal lives that would be intolerable on both sides. That is how important charities, volunteers and donations really are, and we are trying to do something supportive in that space because Government and those charitable organisations and volunteers are working together around forming protocols for combined action around commissioning and around developing systems inside those third sector organisations so that people are signposted and monitored to help them help themselves.

3755 In summary, Government and Tynwald Court together are developing strategies, doing things, and we might need a specific anti-poverty strategy but I think we all know that we have been doing so much inside the Programme for Government for the last three years.

3765 Moving, then, to our recommendation 1, again I commend the Committee for its profound, extensive treatment of the various and different measures, approaches and perspectives on poverty. The amendment in front of you from Government notes the actions in the Programme for Government Cold, Hunger and Homelessness Action Plan and asks Tynwald to be of the opinion that the Social Metrics Commission measure of poverty is adopted and measured, that the minimum income standards work and calculations which are produced annually continue, and that the Index of Multiple Deprivation is produced.

3770 Basically the Economic Affairs Unit of the Cabinet Office has been in discussion with the Tynwald Committee about the possibility, costs and benefits of adopting the Social Metrics Commission measure on the Island, and this amendment takes this forward. Moreover, Economic Affairs produces minimum income standards annually each February, and this amendment captures this fact. And thirdly, as the Committee Chair mentioned, in June 2014 the first Joint Strategic Needs Assessment provided an important step towards a comprehensive understanding of social need in communities throughout this Island, and my understanding is that this initiative is being repeated as we speak and more and more of the domains have information being added into them. I am expecting, next year, the publication of updated indices of deprivation for the whole Island, and perhaps even for parts of the Island, to help us deal with poverties that I think we all know exist in certain places in the Island as well.

In terms of recommendations 2 and 3, we support them and the spirit I think summarised in the Government response document. I think it might be tricky to capture the other resources, but we will do everything we can by running a mini Household Income and Expenditure Survey.

3785 In terms of recommendation 4, I think we conclude here that the Isle of Man Government, in partnership with the whole of the third sector, defines homelessness, which includes rough sleeping, and produces data on the number of homeless people on the Isle of Man rather than working just with Graih. Graih has done an incredible job. (A Member: Hear, hear.) The night shelter has been transformative. It has been so helpful for mental health, social care, and so many people, but all of us do not want just a facility where mattresses are rolled out on the bottom of a floor: we want to think through what we should be doing in terms of emergency housing and what is beyond that; we need to think through the step up from that; we need to think through what we need to commission in terms of supported living for different types of people. Therefore, the amendment that is before you is to capture that spirit of engagement and co-operation between bodies inside proper public service frameworks.

3790 Recommendation 5 is just an amendment that captures the fact that the Household Income and Expenditure Survey is conducted every five years to support the FERSA arrangements and minimum income standards are estimated and published annually now. Therefore I am glad that the Committee can support our amendment which captures both of those facts.

3800 Recommendation 6 is acknowledgement that we need to put a strong expression down inside this Hon. Court that official statisticians – although we do not have that comfort yet in the Isle of Man law – need to be able to go about their job of producing statistics for us all throughout Manx society, throughout this Hon. Court, without undue external pressure. Therefore we try to assist that by affirming that there will be an annual publication schedule for all planned statistical releases for the year ahead that will be published each January, and that a code of conduct will be developed – will continue to be developed, because it is a work in progress that is nearly finished – such that we can have an official code of conduct that covers all of these statistics that will be available in public for every Member of this Court and for the wider public beyond that.

3805 Finally, recommendation 7 is that I think it is generally accepted that we need to make sure this is joined up. I do not think the Director of Public Health would be so bold as to say Government was joined up from her role, and without having done a review on that specific point I think she was making the point in her review that we need to make sure that the data is there and the understanding of that data is there such that we can see to what extent the joined-up Government is actually causing a positive impact to eliminate the scourge of absolute poverty and to do something about relative poverty on this Island by continuing. So, I do not think the Director of Public Health was actually offering a review of the whole of Government policy and so on; I think she was perhaps overstated in terms of the meaning of her remarks.

3810 With that, I beg to move all of the amendments standing in my name to recommendations 1, 4, 5, 6 and 7:

Recommendation 1

To delete all words and replace with: 'That Tynwald notes the Cold, Hunger and Homelessness Action Plan and data which refreshes the Programme for Government actions; and that Tynwald is of the opinion that:

- *The Social Metrics Commission measure of poverty be adopted and measured;*
- *That the Minimum Income Standards be produced annually;*
- *That the Index of Multiple Deprivation be produced.'*

Recommendation 4

To delete 'Graih' and replace with 'the Third Sector', the amended motion to read: 'That the Isle of Man Government, in partnership with the Third Sector, defines homelessness, which

includes 'rough sleeping' and produces data on the number of homeless people in the Isle of Man.'

Recommendation 5

To delete 'three years' and replace with 'five years and Minimum Income Standards should be estimated and published annually', the amended motion to read: 'That Tynwald is of the opinion that the Isle of Man Household Income and Expenditure Survey should be conducted every five years and Minimum Income Standards should be estimated and published annually.'

Recommendation 6

To delete all words and replace with: 'That the Isle of Man Government should publish an annual publication schedule for all planned statistical releases for the year ahead, in January of each year and produce a Code of Conduct on the production on those statistics.'

Recommendation 7

To delete all words and replace with: 'That the Council of Ministers' Social Policy and Children's Committee act as the lead for poverty within Government.'

The President: Hon. Member, Mr Moorhouse.

Mr Moorhouse: Thank you Mr President.

3825 As a member of the Poverty Committee, I would like to second the amendments put forward by the Minister for Policy and Reform.

3830 This has the potential to be a momentous day. Tynwald is not only assessing three reports that are related to poverty on the Island but more importantly helping to create a roadmap which will move the Island forward. We have worked independently but come together to find the real and lasting solutions. Each side has listened and worked hard to find ways forward. The Poverty Committee is really pleased that what we have got in front of us is a real way forward.

3835 These are not random pieces of paperwork but carefully crafted documents from Public Health, the Council of Ministers and a Select Committee on Poverty. The latter Report was fuelled by the thoughts and hopes that were gathered from Members of Tynwald last Christmas. The work of the Committee has been interesting and detailed. The document before you clearly shows how we focused on identifying core definitions of what poverty really is, before moving forward and analysing the all-encompassing impacts on individuals and their families in our Island.

3840 As Mr Speaker so clearly explained, addressing poverty really does involve placing the person at the centre and surrounding them with the support they need. Doing this in a methodical way which uses the incredible support network we already have is important. These individuals and the tireless work of the third sector organisations really are commendable. Thank you.

3845 As the Report suggests there are an incredible number of ways in which poverty can be measured and each offers a distinct advantage. When trying to move forward with a piece of work of this kind there is always a temptation to come up with something new and attractive. On this occasion, the areas we identified of being of primary importance were already encompassed into the Social Metrics Commission measure. What better example can there be of efficient working than actually being able to identify the clearest measure, then rigorously testing the methodology and the individuals behind it to ensure that the decision is the best for the Island, rather than simply coming up with something shiny and new that quickly gets forgotten?

3850 The Report, and other speakers, will inevitably focus on the intricacies of the measure. But the key aspect is the clear emphasis on trying to ensure the material resources that someone has available to them now are sufficient to meet the material needs that they currently have.

3855 This is the time of the year when hope is so important. These reports provide an overview of the real issues some people in our Island face. We hopefully have now a better idea of where to look and what questions to ask. The next step is ensuring not only adequate help is available but providing real solutions. This important journey has begun. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.)

Thank you, Mr President.

3860 **The President:** Hon. Member for Ayre and Michael, Mr Cannan.

Mr Cannan: Thank you, Mr President.

I simply rise to move a further amendment:

Recommendation 8

To delete all words and replace with: 'That responsibility for scrutinising the Government's work on poverty should be with the Social Affairs Policy Review Committee.'

3865 I think the mover of the original motion acknowledged that he knew this amendment was coming. It simply, I think, adds clarity to who should scrutinise the Government's work on this matter. This is very much cross-Government work but we think that this amendment will just add some definitive clarity to enable some more focus to Tynwald's future scrutiny of what is happening in this respect.

3870 **The President:** Hon. Member for Douglas North, Mr Ashford.

Mr Ashford: Thank you, Mr President.

I am happy to second the amendment. I think it does bring some much-needed clarity as to where the scrutiny should rest.

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The President: Hon. Member of Council, Mr Henderson.

Mr Henderson: Gura mie eu, Eaghtyrane.

3880 I must thank all Committee members for producing this Report, and a very thought-provoking report it is, too. In-depth and well researched. It certainly caused me a great degree of work because I am keenly interested in this subject matter, coming from a care worker's background as I do, and have witnessed first-hand varying degrees of poverty from absolute poverty to relative poverty, and it is a subject very dear to my heart.

3885 It sounds strange that in this society we live in here on the Isle of Man with rising living standards and rising wages compared to 10, 20, 30, 40 or 50 years ago, that we are still talking about this subject here now. But it is a sad fact that poverty does exist within the Isle of Man community from its basic level, or 'absolute poverty' as some experts call it, where we have people living rough with absolutely next to no resources at all living out in the wild in the weather, in glens and other places – from evidence provided to us over the last couple of years.
3890 But what struck me with my research into the subject to provide some sort of meaningful paper to the Committee was the fact of this term 'relative poverty'.

3895 I had an understanding that there may well be many people in the Isle of Man in our community who have just enough to survive on. But that is exactly what they are doing: they are only surviving and existing. They have got enough to buy their food and possibly pay rent, but is that enough to have meaningful quality of life? The answer is no, because they are not meeting their higher human needs, as it were. They are at a plateau and are living day by day in an existence rather than a quality of life that the majority of the community are enjoying above that. That is kind of a loose descriptor of what relative poverty is.

3900 Eaghtyrane, I notice that the Committee major on this Metrics Commission's measurement and it sounds very good and it touches on social issues. All very good. But I did put to the

Committee, Eaghtyrane, a Life Needs Model which looks in a far greater expanse than just looking at somebody's personal resources. Poverty covers many different things in social terms in somebody's quality of life, not just having enough food and existing, as I say; but the person who cannot afford to buy a pair of new shoes for their child, or a person who cannot afford to fix the washing machine, as A Little Bit of Hope charity put in the Committee's Report.

I fully concur with that because that too is an existence; it is a form of poverty. And I must acknowledge that the absolute poverty that we witness around the world, such as the people in Yemen are suffering at the minute, and in parts of Africa and in parts of South America, to me is abhorrent and that should not be happening. And we all do our bit for that kind of poverty or absolute poverty in our own ways. But I just wanted to acknowledge that and the fact that I am not ignoring absolute poverty, far from it, but what I want to do is just focus on our community here in my main points to the debate, Eaghtyrane.

I would say also that every human being has a right to be free of fear: to be free of the fear of not having a shelter or a home; to be free of the fear of not being able to feed themselves, or to have enough food on the table, or have enough warmth or have enough water, and the other basic needs of human life. That is a baseline I personally draw on and I am sure everyone in Tynwald will subscribe to that too.

But I would push my observations out further, as I have done for the Committee, Eaghtyrane, and put a set of Life Needs proposals to them as a way of an assessment. I would ask Government to take on board my evidenced document that I have put to the Committee in special reference to the Life Needs Model that I have proposed there. Some of it is taken from the likes of Abraham Maslow who studied human needs and put them into a hierarchy from the basic needs up to your social community and the higher self-actualisation needs, and if you are not meeting those as well that is causing mental health issues – it is causing stress. And it can cause a whole range of issues where somebody has reached that plateau I speak about and cannot move on from there, possibly to find themselves full-time employment, to find that promotion they are after – they are stuck. And we need to recognise all those variables as well: is somebody socially isolated? Is there something going on in the community they live in? Because there is community poverty as well and the way communities operate and interact within themselves, too, that I think is highly relevant to this discussion. And the likes of Maslow, as I have spoken about ...

I would like Minister Thomas to take on board also the Asset-Based Community Development – the ABCD model – based on Kretzmann and McKnight, Housing First's policy. And for the ABCD model I have to thank Hon. Member, Mr Peake for bringing that to my attention and for briefings to Tynwald Members, because that is looking at society and at communities as well, and at strengths within those communities that things can be galvanised. Communities at times are becoming more isolated and people are more interested in closing their front doors and are not as helpful as we used to be towards our neighbours and others. People like Kretzmann and McKnight, as Mr Peake points out, are addressing those issues.

We also have Prof. Robert Henderson's amazing research work in Australia from the 1970s – no relative, (*Laughter*) a well-known researcher, working in such substantial areas as deprivation and he produced his own metrics and ideas, looking at communities as well as just single people. Erik Jensen is another one from America, *Teaching With Poverty in Mind* who touched upon the community and social issues that can become apparent in deprived areas or areas that have received less investment than others – people left behind.

The point I am trying to make, Eaghtyrane, is that quite often these metrics that we talk about – as good as Mr Speaker has pointed out – they do direct you to monetary resources and what is available to a person, and I think you need to broaden out your focus on that to look at what other life needs are not being met when you are looking at a person, because it is not just about money, it is about what they can achieve or not achieve.

Also a Life Needs Model, such as of the experts I have just mentioned, are looking at many streets, communities, interactions between those streets and so on, and what support

mechanisms are there; and a whole range of social issues that I think are vitally important to what we are discussing here.

3955 I would also like to say, Eaghtyrane, that when I am out walking or certainly shopping in Douglas, and around and about, I can see quite often many people who you could class as homeless, or people that we say, 'Oh well, it's your choice. There's a flat to live in; there's your benefit'. And it is quite obvious to me that these people are suffering from some sort of an addiction problem one way or another. But it has always been our thing, let's get them into their
3960 own little place, they will be fine there – it is normalisation, as it used to be called, in that they can have their own flat or whatever. But that is where it falls down then because if they are not able, or do not have the ability to meet their life needs, then that is what they will get – isolated in a flat, with a possible addiction problem, or a continuing addiction problem; and their quality of life, from my own personal observations, is practically zero. It is appalling.

3965 We need to look at those people as well and in special reference maybe we should rethink some of our social policy in time where we can provide some sort of hostel-type accommodation or work with the third sector so that there is an element of – not supervision – but there is somebody there to offer help and support, not just to leave somebody isolated in a flat somewhere and left predominantly to their own devices.

3970 Yes, there may be a social worker calling in once a week and that is all we are able to do. Or they may attend the Salvation Army or Graih on odd occasions; but to all intents and purposes their quality of life too is not great. And in certain instances, and with a specific example in mind at the minute of one particular gentleman, it is quite appalling.

3975 So there is a whole range ... And I do not want us just to focus on monetary resources. There are social resources that we need to look at here too.

Another thing I would point out too is, in our quest – and as good as that is – where we want to have our senior citizens, our older people living for as long as they can ... I am just waiting for Mr Thomas, Eaghtyrane, because I am making a critical point here about care of the elderly, and in special reference to our policies where we try and ensure that older folk can live in their
3980 homes for as long as they wish to. The trouble is I think we need to look at the balance there where some older people may have gone past the point where they feel safe in their own homes. Perhaps in some cases we are leaving them there for longer than they need to be and they need to be in some sort of residential setting where they feel safe and secure and they have company, and they know they can call for help if they need it or somebody will help them
3985 with their meals or their medication.

So as good as our stay-at-home policy is, I think we need to just look at the other side of that, because I have got evidence where – not all the time, but we do not want to push that too far is what I am saying. So that needs to be taken into account too because we can have poverty levels with our elderly; and then again we have got social isolation and all the other negative aspects that go with that.
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So I would just say, Eaghtyrane, I would also like to recognise the work that Government has put into this over the years in any case and working in partnership with the likes of Graih and other charities, and in its own right through the DHSC as well, in assisting in this area. And I would also, in giving that recognition, say that the poverty issue in all of its forms ... It is not just
3995 a Government issue, although Government should be leading the way probably in showing strategy and direction and encouraging partnership working and all sorts. Poverty, like other issues, is an all-community issue, and it is up to us all and every person out there, to recognise these issues and do their little bit. I know people do, but I am just making the point that it is not just an in-here issue, it is a whole community issue as well and we need to take note of that.

4000 As I say, I congratulate the Government initiatives that have gone on over the years in addressing poverty and the less well-off and the vulnerable, as some people are referred to, but nonetheless I think we need to look wider than just at the metrics. You need to look at some of the experts I have given in my evidence, to look at life needs and social and community issues.

Thank you.

4005 **The President:** Hon. Member of Council, Miss August-Hanson.

Miss August-Hanson: Thank you, Mr President.

4010 I do not seek to repeat what Mr Speaker and the Minister for Policy and Reform, Chris Thomas, had to say, and they have so eloquently put to Hon. Members; but I will add that, researching this in some level of depth and persistence, I have found it abundantly clear that in order to understand the threat that the problem of poverty may pose to our Island it is necessary to understand its dimensions and the process through which it seems to deepen. The only way to track that is by defining it by measurement, and that is something that both your parliamentary Poverty Committee and Public Health seem to agree on. And evidently so does
4015 Government

There appear to be two very natural questions that spring forth when looking at poverty depth and persistence in our society: the identification of those in poverty and the aggregation of characteristics which filter into an overall indicator, illuminating paths to solutions and preventing the worsening of poverty for each individual in the long term.

4020 Of course this involves looking at monetary and non-monetary variables, as the Hon. Member of Council, Mr Henderson has so eloquently put – a multi-dimensional and uni-dimensional approach for a multi-dimensional Manx phenomenon.

4025 As the Chairman of our Committee says, it is important to benchmark ourselves against other jurisdictions to understand what we might do better. A purely Manx measure of poverty, mixing research frameworks, sounds like a marvellously patriotic ideal but it would not work to ensure that we are meeting our obligations, tracking them and ensuring that we are not letting vulnerable groups down. Right now it is impossible to ascertain the success of policies in this context in this section of our society.

4030 The Social Metrics Commission is an independent, non-partisan commission that was brought about following a deadly lack of targeted action by the UK's Department for Work and Pensions. It reflects the nature and experiences of poverty that different families in the UK have, and can be used to build a consensus around poverty measurement and action in the UK. UK concerns were amplified a year ago when the United Nations accused government there of being in a state of denial about the growing divide between the rich and the poor.

4035 In 2017 the UN Economic Commission for Europe said:

The call for internationally comparable poverty measures is especially strong in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Moreover, the recent economic crisis has heightened the need for reliable and timely statistics for international monitoring and national policymaking on poverty reduction.

4040 Having worked with the DWP herself, Baroness Philippa Stroud brought together a number of experts like Matthew Oakley from WPI Economics, Carey Oppenheim from the London School of Economics, Robert Joyce from the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Helen Barnard from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Their research dictates that there were 4.6 million children in relative poverty in 2017-18 in the UK. That is no mean sum. Other organisations that measure child poverty such as the IFS and the JRF advise that child poverty has significantly worsened.

4045 Around 4.5 million people across the UK are trapped in deep poverty and more than 50% are below the poverty line which is defined by the SMC as at 54% of the resources available to the typical or median household. The SMC's August 2019 report predicted that 14.3 million Britons are in poverty and that is just over one in five of the population. They have the figures, and the SMC and Legatum Institute think tank know why these people are struggling. They understand what poverty means in the present day and they understand what it means right now.

4050 They track it, they can hold government to account on its policymaking, which the ONS – the Office for National Statistics – has made additional dataset provision for. Its approach is an invaluable endeavour that works into the future and can save lives by ensuring the taxpayer's money is properly spent in targeted ways that can help the most people in a multi-dimensional

way. For example, it seems the UK poverty rate among families where adults work part-time stands at 58% and 10% for those with full-time work.

4055 Government can use data like this to sculpt policy decisions with evidence and staged fluid measurement. And if those policies are not working there will be indicators to shine a light on those problem areas.

4060 Channel 4 ran a *Dispatches* documentary that featured an eight-year-old Courtney and her family – that was last month. They live off £5 a day and they rely on a foodbank to eat. They wear coats to bed when there is no money for heating. I have met a family on this Island, a single mother with two children, who are in the same situation and they are in and out of this particular state dependent on the time of year. They have debts creating inescapable costs that deteriorate their overall well-being. We all know people that live in these circumstances.

The Poverty Committee has taken time over this, yes; and it has talked to people on the other end of Government policy decisions that affect their lives.

4065 The third sector cannot do this alone although they do an absolutely incredible job at what the Policy and Reform Minister quite accurately described as a ‘shock absorber’ element that they provide. I was quite distressed recently to hear that Waverley House had closed down – they had a ‘family dinner’ every Friday up in Ramsey, taking in people on licence from the Prison and Probation Services without judgement, and provided people without accommodation *with* accommodation and some level of stability. It is an incredible shame.

4070 I am grateful to this Government for its willingness to listen, particularly to this Committee’s arguments and to hear how investment in research might improve its ability to do its job better – wrapping services around each resident and making *them* the priority, rather than wrapping individuals around the services. No more stabbing at assumed problems without sight of the reality, the evidence base. No more waste of taxpayer funds. I am not suggesting that Government is not currently doing a good job, it is. But perhaps there are ways for us to do better.

4080 Targeted action plans with KPIs respecting financial efficacy and efficiency at the very heart of them, breeding a culture of real compassion for those that it has got a duty to respect and protect. And that is why I ask that you agree to the amendments by Government to our recommendations, and I do feel that it is the right way forward and I feel that we need a true coalition of the willing.

Thank you, Mr President.

4085 **The President:** Hon. Member for Garff, Mrs Caine.

Mrs Caine: Thank you, Mr President.

4090 I would like to commend the Committee for putting fresh eyes on this perennial, thorny issue. I appreciate their focus on the Social Metrics Commission’s measure of poverty; we do have to get better at gathering data to be able to address the issues for the most vulnerable in our community.

4095 There are a couple of areas of concern that I would like to share with Members, actual examples of people experiencing poverty. In my experience, speaking to foodbank users, there are some easy improvements that could be made for people who are juggling the ‘eat or heat’ dilemma.

4100 One is in cases of the deserted partner, married or otherwise, of a Manx person, who because of residency of under five years fails to meet the criteria for certain benefits if their Manx partner leaves home, and therefore they do not have automatic access to free school meals and transport for their children. This is a real scenario: families forced to rely on the foodbank and other charities because they fall out of the benefits system.

I would like to see more discretion in that benefits system to assist people in genuine need instead of the referral to charities. While there must be checks to prevent abuse of our benefits system, there is something wrong when families in genuine need are unable to access support.

4105 Also, what attention has been given to make sure the parent who has left home pays maintenance to the deserted family if they can afford to? In my experience, and recently in the course of consulting for the no-fault divorce Bill, there seems to be a significant impact on the deserted partner, usually a woman, and any children, with no comeback on the estranged partner until matters are resolved in the Family Court in terms of a financial settlement, which could take months or years.

4110 Similarly, I wonder if these recommendations and the Cold, Hunger and Homeless Action Plan will focus enough on areas of social deprivation. I am disappointed that the most socially disadvantaged are still not recognised with an appropriate pupil premium through our schools. Perhaps that is something that might be rectified in the future, looking at the wider social issue of a particular area rather than the individual.

4115 Rough sleeping and the problems with establishing numbers of homeless is another concern as it seems to be largely unseen and underestimated. How do you factor in young people sofa-surfing until they cannot, until they run out of friends willing to accommodate them?

4120 How do you factor in those who choose to live off-grid for much of the year? As the Committee found, a key question is whether some people are aware of their poverty, perhaps considering it a lifestyle choice.

Improving data gathered can only improve the strategies for tackling poverty and its impact on education, mental and physical health, even life expectation. And I do appreciate the comments of the Policy and Reform Minister, Mr Thomas and the collaboration it demonstrates between the Committee and the Government. I do feel this issue is being tackled as never before; perhaps it is necessary that the Report appears a little dry in order to focus on the need to establish the criteria for assessing poverty before it can be tackled.

4125 The Committee has brought a good Report with some excellent recommendations. I do not particularly care who the lead is for delivering an ongoing poverty strategy but I fear that without a named Minister responsible and publicly accountable, the work of this Committee and other Government initiatives could lack cohesion.

4130 I note the amendment from the Hon. Member for Ayre and Michael, Mr Cannan, that makes it the responsibility of the SPCC – a group of Ministers concerned with social policies. I hope that is enough. Perhaps it comes back again to the Government's silo mentality. Lots of excellent people are doing good work but if it is not joined up effectively it will not deliver meaningful improvements.

4135 Again, I do accept that this administration is making strong attempts to be more joined up as demonstrated by the Ministers' amendments today.

4140 In terms of actually delivering support to the poorest, most vulnerable people, I wonder if that is something that will be better facilitated with the development of the much-anticipated community hubs. We constantly talk about putting the person at the centre of services and we are still talking. Community hubs that truly deliver services around the individual will be a major step forward.

4145 I also wish to applaud the engagement of key charities in this Committee's work; their input, I think, has given the clarity that the Committee has been able to bring forward in this Report on the Island's particular issues. The Report is a huge step in the right direction, it will advance our understanding and definition of poverty – but I fear it will not deliver actual improvements to the poorest and most vulnerable in our community as soon as I would like.

Thank you, Mr President

4150 **The President:** Hon. Member for Douglas North, Mr Peake.

Mr Peake: Thank you, Mr President.

I thank the Chair of the Committee and the other members of the Committee. I know that the Chair has a special interest in this. It is a great body of work and very interesting.

4155 Poverty is a label, but quite often people have gone through an issue to actually get there and there is always somebody at the centre of this. So it is respect for the person; that is what I would like to think of.

4160 There is a lot of discussion here about Government. It is quite possible that Government actually can get in the way sometimes because Government can actually just continue to do things to people or for people and then that is another dependency that they get into. So the best way is actually to walk alongside somebody, to actually do something with the person, to eventually get them to do it themselves by the person. So it is investing that time, effort and humility; and is Government the best body for that? I would say not. I would think, as one of the appendices actually pointed out, that local authorities, third sector, perhaps closer communities
4165 who can build a stronger community, are the best people to deliver that; they can understand people in the community.

I thank Mr Henderson for reminding us about Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD). He is quite right. That is about finding what is strong in the community and building on that; rather than endlessly going to see what is wrong, building more and more Joint Strategic Needs Assessments to focus on the weaknesses of people. Do you really want to hear about your weaknesses, Mr President? I do not. If you can listen to your strengths and build on those ...
4170 *(Laughter)* **(A Member:** He's got one.) With exception, Mr President, I know you haven't got any!
(Laughter)

4175 **Mr Malarkey:** Let's vote straight away – quick!

The President: Keep going, Hon. Member. *(Laughter)*

Mr Peake: So it is building on those strengths. We have all got strengths and sometimes they do get covered by the issues that people have found themselves in and they then do turn to self-medication, they turn to things to block out that trauma that they have suffered in their past, but they have got strengths.

I am proud to be the Chair of Quing, the charity, and I have met some wonderful people over the last two years and many of their lives have been turned round and, unfortunately –
4185 *unfortunately* – we have actually lost a couple over the two years and it is a shock, an absolute shock that this does go on. But the hope that we give other people, I am delighted to be involved in that and to do as much as I can for that. But it is about education and what I have actually seen over these two years is that education ... When they can then start to understand what is affecting them and they come to terms with it and give them hope – we give hope and they give
4190 other people hope. We have got a peer mentoring training course that works exceptionally well. Once the people get some education and realise what they can do, they are then absolutely best placed to help other people.

So while this Report is titled Poverty, it is actually about people; and I do know that Mr Speaker and the other Members wanted to address that in the best way and I think that it is a
4195 good start. But where I hope we go on from here is that it is not Government telling people what to do; it is about Government getting out of the way and allowing the community to help their own.

Thank you, Mr President.

4200 **The President:** Hon. Member, Mr Thomas.

Mr Thomas: Just speaking briefly to the amendment tabled by the Treasury Minister.

I fully support that and that scrutiny from the Social Affairs Policy Review Committee would also require them working with the Economic Committee to look at the income standards and it
4205 would enable Tynwald to monitor whether Government is stepping up to the mark in terms of ABCD, in terms of the Life Needs Model, in terms of making sure that we were recognising that

some people need to be in residential care and we could not pursue a community first policy blindly.

4210 With that, Mr President, I also wanted to give the assurance to Mrs Caine, Hon. Member for Garff, and the Speaker that this Minister will take personal responsibility to make sure that the Social Policy and Children's Sub-Committee joins things up and actually makes sure that we are collecting the right data and actually makes sure that we are delivering all the things – at least we are considering delivering all the things – in the right timescale that Mr Speaker and Mrs Caine outlined.

4215

The President: I call on the mover to reply, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, Mr President.

4220 Thank you all for contributions, which have been very useful and will certainly assist us going forward.

Firstly, thanking Mr Thomas for his engagement with the Committee's recommendations. I would like to think that there is a possible model for good practice in terms of Committees working with Government Ministers. Just to reiterate the Committee's support for the amendments standing in the name of Mr Thomas.

4225

We have no objection to Mr Cannan's amendment, but in the same way that we are trying to burst silos in Government, nor should we limit the scrutiny of poverty to any one Committee. But we are certainly happy to support Social Affairs Policy Review Committee as the *lead* role in that. I think that was the sentiment just echoed by Mr Thomas there. In the same way that the Social Policy and Children's Sub-Committee will unite disparate parts of Government, there needs to be some level of co-ordination within the scrutiny side as well. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) We certainly recognise the role that the Social Affairs Policy Review Committee can have there.

4230

I have just sought some assurance that Mr Cannan's amendment does not actually lead to the abolition of the Committee, which I am reassured at, because I think it leaves a trail of work for the Social Affairs Policy Review Committee once the Poverty Committee itself has finished its work. Hon. Members will be aware of the work programme that we have set ourselves to go forward in the Report.

4235

Mr Henderson, I would very much like to thank him for his paper and concur that nobody has fully solved the issue of poverty, but we can only hope that we are demonstrating that we are doing the best that we can with the resources that we have got. We are supporting those on low incomes and with greater needs.

4240

In terms of the Life Needs Model that Mr Henderson mentioned, I have not got a side-by-side analysis for this, but needs are a core component of what we are looking at here, needs are a core component of the Social Metrics Commission approach and the other approaches that are going to be dealt with under the amendment as well. Some of those needs can be monetised and some of those cannot. I will come on to that in a second. In terms of the ABCD model as a tactical tool in problem-solving, which sits under this wider definition umbrella that this First Report sets out, it is definitely a really useful tool to take us forward.

4245

Mr Henderson also talked about people with complex life needs and we have already identified physical and mental health as a future workstream, and that builds on Mr Peake's point in terms of respect for the person and walking alongside them to build resilience. So I certainly appreciate the work that Mr Peake has done in the third sector with some of the more vulnerable and complex cases, in giving positivity and support to them and moving them away from a new form of dependence which would be dependence on Government.

4250

In terms of safety of our elderly in care and the stay-at-home policy, this is a fine balance. It is rooted in the core of personal choice and I know that well via my own work with Southern Befrienders, and again would want to put on record thanks to the directors and staff of Southern Befrienders, Live at Home and others such as Hospice who are really at the sharp end of helping people make decisions in this area.

4255

4260 Miss August-Hanson, I thank her for her research and energy in this work and in fact introducing the Committee to the Social Metrics Commission. (**A Member:** Hear, hear.) I definitely support her comments, especially, and the eagerness of the Committee, which she has been at the forefront of, to meet people behind the statistics and reach out there.

4265 In terms of the comments by Mrs Caine about: are we moving fast enough to get out there and actually deal with the real problems that real people are facing right now? Well, no, we are not, but a little bit deliberately because that is where everyone has gone wrong in the past; they have rolled their sleeves up and dove in with the first problem they have seen and tried to solve that one, rather than anyone taking a breath, taking a step back and saying, 'What is the problem that we are trying to solve? How can we define it?'

4270 So I appreciate that it might come over as a little dry at this stage. The action is yet to come and as we look at the different work programmes that we have got, these themes will unravel and they will become far more relevant to people's real lives in the thematic work that we have outlined than perhaps the definition. But we do need to start somewhere and we do need to benchmark from which we can move and somewhere we can demonstrate that the taxpayers' money that we are spending is going in the right place to help the most people in the best way possible.

4275 I reiterate the point that Minister Thomas made: the named Minister is the Policy and Reform Minister. I was going to commit him to that because we have had that conversation in the Committee and I am *really* pleased that he has stood up and made that intervention. It is something that is really important in terms of making sure that Government really does have a point person on this to make sure it does not get lost in the plan.

So, Mr President, this is a big issue; it is one which your Committee has taken seriously and incrementally.

4285 We cannot know the full depth and persistence of poverty without a definition and I am delighted to see such support for that approach. Subject to a positive vote, this work will continue in earnest.

I beg to move.

The President: Thank you, Hon. Members.

4290 We turn to the vote on Item 7, Select Committee on Poverty Report with recommendations. We will take each recommendation in turn.

Recommendation 1, I put the amendment in the name of Mr Thomas. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it. Recommendation 1 as amended. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

Recommendation 2. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

4295 Recommendation 3. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

Recommendation 4, I put the amendment first. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it. Recommendation 4 as amended. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

4300 Recommendation 5, the amendment. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it. Recommendation 5 as amended. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

Recommendation 6, the amendment. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it. Recommendation 6 as amended. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

4305 Recommendation 7, I put the amendment. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it. Recommendation 7 as amended. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

Recommendation 8, Mr Cannan's amendment. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it. Recommendation 8 as amended. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.

4310

I put the resolution then as amended. Those in favour, say aye; against, no. The ayes have it.

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

In the Keys – Ayes 23, Noes 0

| FOR | AGAINST |
|---------------|----------------|
| Mr Ashford | None |
| Mr Moorhouse | |
| Dr Allinson | |
| Mr Baker | |
| Mrs Barber | |
| Mr Boot | |
| Mrs Caine | |
| Mr Callister | |
| Mr Cannan | |
| Mrs Corlett | |
| Mr Cregeen | |
| Ms Edge | |
| Mr Harmer | |
| Mr Hooper | |
| Mr Malarkey | |
| Mr Peake | |
| Mr Perkins | |
| Mr Quayle | |
| Mr Robertshaw | |
| Mr Shimmins | |
| Mr Skelly | |
| Mr Speaker | |
| Mr Thomas | |

The Speaker: Mr President, in the Keys, 23 for and 0 against.

In the Council – Ayes 8, Noes 0

| FOR | AGAINST |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Miss August-Hanson | None |
| Mr Cretney | |
| Mr Crookall | |
| Mr Henderson | |
| Mrs Lord-Brennan | |
| Mrs Maska | |
| Mrs Poole-Wilson | |
| Mrs Sharpe | |

The President: In the Council 8 for and 0 against. Carried unanimously.