

IN JUNIOR TYNWALD

JULY 2011

Question 1

FOR ORAL ANSWER |

- (1) The Hon Member for Douglas North (Mr Chileab Redwood-Sawyerr) to ask a representative of the Department of Economic Development –

Why the Island capitalizes solely on tourist attractions such as the TT, which this year generated an income of £23,374,000, rather than being more proactive in advertising the Island all year round to a wider range of tourists?

THANK YOU MADAM PRESIDENT

THE ISLE OF MAN IS MARKETED AS A TOURIST DESTINATION OFFERING A WIDE RANGE OF ATTRACTIONS, INCLUDING HERITAGE AND CULTURE, FOOD AND DRINK, WILDLIFE, OUR COUNTRYSIDE AND THE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES THAT ARE OFFERED HERE. ONE OF THE PRINCIPLE AND BEST KNOWN EVENTS IS THE TT FESTIVAL, WHICH ALSO GENERATES THE MOST PUBLICITY, HERE AND WORLD-WIDE. ALTHOUGH IT IS THE BEST KNOWN EVENT, IT IS NOT THE ONLY EVENT ON THE TOURISM CALENDAR.

THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DOES, IN FACT, SUPPORT OVER 40 EVENTS, OTHER THAN THE TT; THESE ATTRACTED OVER ELEVEN THOUSAND VISITORS IN 2010, GENERATING INWARD EXPENDITURE OF £3.4 MILLION. SUCCESSFUL EVENTS INCLUDED THE ISLE OF MAN DARTS FESTIVAL IN MARCH, WHICH ATTRACTS APPROXIMATELY 800 VISITORS, TWO BOWLING FESTIVALS ATTRACTING OVER 1,000 VISITORS, THE END TO END MOUNTAIN BIKE CHALLENGE WITH 800 VISITORS AND THE MANX NATIONAL TWO DAY TRIAL WITH APPROXIMATELY 800 VISITORS.

MY DEPARTMENT VALUES THE TOURISM INDUSTRY ON THE ISLAND AND IT IS OUR BELIEF THAT TOURISM CAN MAKE AN INCREASED CONTRIBUTION TO THE ISLAND'S ECONOMY. OUR STRATEGY FOR TOURISM IS TO BUILD ON THE SUCCESSES, SUCH AS THE TT FESTIVAL AND TO PROVIDE FURTHER PROACTIVE MARKETING OF EVENTS AND ACTIVITY BASED HOLIDAYS.

THE CHALLENGE FOR TOURISM HERE ON THE ISLE OF MAN IS TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPETE IN A DIFFICULT MARKET, PARTICULARLY DURING THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CLIMATE. THE ISLAND MUST COMPETE WITH A VAST NUMBER OF OTHER TOURIST DESTINATIONS BOTH WITHIN THE UK AND GLOBALLY, MANY OF THEM OFFERING CHEAP PACKAGE DEALS. TO DO SO, WE MUST ALSO OFFER DISTINCT AND APPEALING REASONS FOR VISITING THE ISLE OF MAN. OUR BELIEF IS THAT TARGETING OUR MARKETING ACTIVITY ON EVENT AND ACTIVITY BASED HOLIDAYS WILL PROVIDE THE BEST RETURN ON OUR INVESTMENT AND WE ARE COMMITTED TO WORKING WITH ALL SECTORS OF HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN PARTNERSHIP TO ACHIEVE THIS.

IN JUNIOR TYNWALD

JULY 2011

FOR ORAL ANSWER 2

- (2) The Hon Member for Douglas South (Mr Carl Conroy) to ask a representative of the Council of Ministers –

Whether the Island can sustain the current level of immigration?

RESPONSE

Madam President,

The Island can sustain the current level of immigration, and I am also confident that changes can be introduced either to reduce or increase immigration, depending on how the Island wishes to develop its economy and community.

Managing immigration is achieved through a joined up approach involving all Government Departments and other agencies, including private sector employers.

This work, which includes continuous review by the Migration Policy Group, a subcommittee of the Council of Ministers, results in the adoption of new Immigration Rules into the Isle of Man. These rules either limit or promote immigration in certain areas. In addition, there is a close working relationship between the Immigration service and the Department of Economic Development, particularly in relation to employment on the Isle of Man. This relationship focuses on the responsibility employers have in relation to the Points Based System of Immigration control and the work permit requirements set out in the Control of Employment Act 1975.

However it is important to acknowledge that immigration goes further than work related issues. Many people do not need to work and they move to the Isle of Man for other reasons. Some move here to retire, whilst others wish to be close to family and friends who are already resident in the Island. Whilst these people may not need to work, they will all call on different government services, such as health care through the hospitals and GP surgeries; or they may have children who attend our schools.

Working together, Government Departments are able to assess the Islands needs as they change and to bring forward projects that are needed to sustain the whole of the Island's population, both those people who were born here and those who have chosen to make the Isle of Man their home.

IN JUNIOR TYNWALD

18TH JULY 2011

QUESTION 3 - FOR WRITTEN ANSWER

The Hon Member for Ramsey (Miss Holly Jaques) to ask a representative of the Department of Community, Culture and Leisure –

If the changes made to the bus timetable during the last year have resulted in benefit to the Government or to the user?

Madam President

I am pleased to report that since the implementation of the new timetable in September last year and the subsequent amendments implemented in May this year benefits have been realised both in respect of Government and the travelling public.

I can confirm that a comparison undertaken for passenger numbers and revenue for the first quarter of 2010 and the first quarter of 2011 shows a 3% growth in passenger numbers with over $\frac{3}{4}$ million passenger journeys having been made. This increase has generated an 11% growth in income, of which only 6% can be explained by an increase in fare prices from 2010 to 2011.

This should be considered in context. The figures refer to a winter quarter and are not influenced by visitor numbers. The number of vehicles in the fleet has been reduced by 12 over the year. The number of drivers has been reduced through natural wastage by nine full time equivalents.

I am therefore pleased to report that across the year the bus service has in fact increased its income at the same time as costs are being reduced. I think that this is a really creditable achievement, particularly when set against the current difficult trading conditions, and I would like to thank all the staff of the Division who have made this possible.

Going forward the performance of the timetable will continue to be monitored and further amendments will be made as and when appropriate to do so.

Supplementary Questions:

Q Why are there still empty buses?

A We do provide some journeys that we know will be lightly used. This is for reasons of social inclusion. The new smaller buses that arrived recently will allow us to continue to provide these services whilst keeping our costs to a minimum.

Q But there are empty buses in town.

A Some of the social inclusion services start from town. The Member may have had reports of empty buses passing along Bucks Road in the afternoon. These are school buses heading out to the schools for their pick-ups.

Q Reducing Costs

A While income is up, the Department is progressing the planned programme of changes in order to bring costs down. As well as reduced numbers of drivers and buses, this includes consideration of such matters as working practices and maintenance contracts. There are some costs outside our control, such as fuel costs, but the new buses about to go into service are about 25% more efficient and will help control these costs as far as we can.

IN JUNIOR TYNWALD

JULY 2011

Question 4

FOR ORAL ANSWER 4

The Hon Member for Castletown (Mr James Ollier) to ask a representative of the Department of Economic Development-

If the Isle of Man TT is worth hosting each year?

THE ISLE OF MAN TT IS, THE MOST RECOGNISABLE BRAND BELONGING TO THE ISLAND, WORLD-WIDE.

FOR MANY PEOPLE IT IS THE FIRST THING THEY THINK OF WHEN THE ISLAND IS MENTIONED. THE TT IS ONE OF OUR GREATEST SUCCESS STORIES OF RECENT YEARS, BRINGING IN YEAR ON YEAR INCREASES IN REVENUE, COMMERCIAL REVENUE AND MEDIA EXPOSURE FOR THE ISLAND AS A WHOLE.

THIS YEAR, THE TT ATTRACTED OVER 37,000 VISITORS TO THE ISLAND WHO SPENT OVER £23 MILLION.

THIS MONEY IS ESSENTIAL IN SUPPORTING OUR HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY, OUR SEA AND AIR TRANSPORT PROVIDERS AND GENERALLY INJECTING CASH INTO THE LOCAL ECONOMY. HOWEVER, THIS IS ONLY PART OF THE TT SUCCESS STORY. TELEVISION PROGRAMMES ABOUT THE TT ARE NOW BROADCAST IN OVER 80 COUNTRIES. THIS YEAR UP TO 800,000 PEOPLE WERE ESTIMATED TO HAVE WATCHED TT HIGHLIGHTS, AT ANY ONE TIME, DURING THE EVENING ITV4 SHOWS IN THE UK ALONE. THE WORLD-WIDE AUDIENCE WILL BE MANY TIMES HIGHER.

THE TT NOW GENERATES OVER £1.3 MILLION IN COMMERCIAL REVENUES, WHICH IS USED TO DEFRAY THE COSTS OF RUNNING THE EVENT. THE COST OF ORGANISING THE TT EACH YEAR IS APPROXIMATELY £3.5 MILLION. WE ARE, OF COURSE RELIANT NOT ONLY ON THE FUNDING PROVIDED BUT ALSO ON THE GOODWILL OF THE COMMUNITY AND THE WORK OF THE MANY VOLUNTEER GROUPS WHO HELP US TO MAKE THE EVENT HAPPEN.

WORLD-WIDE, THE ESTIMATED ADVERTISING VALUE, THAT IS WHAT IT WOULD COST TO ACHIEVE THE SAME LEVEL OF EXPOSURE THROUGH COMMERCIAL ADVERTISING, OF TT COVERAGE IN THE PRINTED AND BROADCAST MEDIA, WAS APPROXIMATELY £2.4 MILLION IN 2011. THEREFORE THE VALUE OF THE TT IS NOT ONLY THE MONEY SPENT HERE BY VISITORS DURING THE TT FORTNIGHT BUT THE EXPOSURE IT BRINGS TO THE ISLE OF MAN AS A PLACE TO VISIT AND A PLACE TO DO BUSINESS.

THE HONOURABLE MEMBER FOR CASTLETOWN ASKS WHETHER THE TT IS WORTH SUPPORTING. THE ANSWER TO THE QUESTION, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT ALL OF THE ECONOMIC AND REPUTATIONAL BENEFITS THAT IT BRINGS, IS **YES** IT CERTAINLY IS.

IN JUNIOR TYNWALD

July 2011

FOR ORAL ANSWER 5

The Hon Member for Council (Mr Tom Livingstone) to ask a representative of the Treasury –

How much money the Treasury has gained from past surpluses and what legislation exists to access it in times of economic hardship?

Madam President

The Isle of Man is in the fortunate position that unlike most countries it has savings in various reserve funds. Over the years, our past surpluses have been built up to a total combined value of around £1.7 billion, or £1,700 million.

However, a significant proportion of these amounts are already committed. For example, there is approximately £650million in the National Insurance Fund which will be required to meet future state pension liabilities; and similarly within the Public Sector Pension Reserve there is approximately £250 million which is committed to meet future employee pension costs. In both cases

current contributions do not meet current spending levels, and some draw down of savings is required each year.

In respect of the second part of the question, the legislation relating to use of surpluses is the 1985 Treasury Act, and the 1962 Finance Act. The 1985 Treasury Act section 3 requires Treasury to budget for a surplus on its regular spending, known as the General Revenue Account.

The 1962 Finance Act section 3 (3) allows Treasury to transfer a sum from a specific reserve known as the Reserve Fund into the General Revenue in order to create a surplus if required. The current balance on the Reserve Fund is £420 million.

In Junior Tynwald

2011

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The Hon Member for Douglas East (Miss Hannah Riordan) to ask a representative of the Department of Education and Children –

Whether, in the context of a changing financial position of the Isle of Man in relation to the UK and the probable need to “tighten our belts”, the Government will prioritise long term investment in the Isle of Man by ensuring that grants are available for all seeking a university education off the Island?

SHORT ANSWER

As I am sure the honorable member is aware, there are two elements to the financial support that is currently made available to IOM students. Grants, which are for subsistence and other living costs, are one of these elements and are made available on the basis of a ‘means test’ that takes into account both the student’s and their parents’ income. This is a fair system that targets limited resources at those students who are most in need of them. There is certainly no intention to change this system in the short term. However, given the upcoming election it would be impossible to predict whether a new administration would wish to revisit the system for allocating this support. If this were to happen any revisions would hopefully continue to ensure that all suitably qualified young people would have the opportunity to access appropriate university courses regardless of their means.

In Junior Tynwald

2011

FOR ORAL ANSWER

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The Hon Member for Douglas West (Miss Sophie Jackson) to ask a representative of the Department of Education and Children –

If the Government is doing enough to educate young people about gay relationships and civil partnerships?

SHORT ANSWER

In answer to the honourable member's question the DEC Sex and Relationships Education Policy states that "Sex and Relationship Education should not be delivered in isolation in schools but rather should be integrated within the whole curriculum and supported through the whole school ethos".

For example, components in Science, Religious Education and a discrete strand in the Personal and Social Health Education Curriculum should be coordinated to deliver age-appropriate, effective Sex and Relationship Education" and should be "inclusive of all pupils".

Gay relationships and civil partnerships would not be an individual theme taught specifically in SRE, Citizenship, RE or PSHE but may form part of discussions as early as KS2 as part of 'What is a family'.

Sex and relationship education is an entitlement for children and young people and is a lifelong process of acquiring information, developing skills and forming positive and empathetic beliefs, attitudes and values about sex, sexuality, relationships and feelings. Training delivered to teaching staff reflects this and any changes in legislation. As such, the Civil Partnerships Act 2011 will continue to inform SRE training for teachers in the next academic year.

IN TYNWALD

18th July 2011

QUESTION 8

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The Hon Member for Ayre (Mr Michael Tushingham) to ask a representative of the Department of Economic Development –

Whether the Isle of Man should look to generate income by the provision of practices and opportunities not available anywhere else in the British Isles?

MADAM PRESIDENT

ONE OF THE MAIN AIMS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS TO ENSURE THE ISLE OF MAN MAINTAINS A DIVERSIFIED STRONG ECONOMY. THIS APPROACH HAS SO FAR HELPED THE ISLAND TO ACHIEVE 26 YEARS OF CONTINUOUS GROWTH. WHEN WE HAVE HAD A DOWNTURN IN ANY ONE OR MORE OF OUR SECTORS THEN THE STRONGER SECTORS HAVE ENSURED THAT OVERALL OUR ECONOMY HAS REMAINED RESILIENT.

WE ARE, HOWEVER, ENTERING A VERY DIFFICULT PERIOD FOR THE ISLAND'S ECONOMY. IT IS MORE IMPORTANT NOW THAN EVER BEFORE THAT WE SEEK OUT NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTINUE TO DEVELOP THE ECONOMY AND PROVIDE A DIVERSE RANGE OF GOOD QUALITY JOBS FOR OUR WORKFORCE. AS THE HONOURABLE MEMBER HAS ALLUDED TO IF WE ARE TO SUCCEED WE NEED TO DIFFERENTIATE OURSELVES FROM OTHER JURISDICTIONS. TO DO THIS WE NEED TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO FIND OUT WHERE THESE NICHEs EXIST AND THEN TO EXPLOIT THEM TO OUR ADVANTAGE.

I AM PLEASED TO SAY THAT THE DEPARTMENT IS ALREADY ACTIVELY PURSUING A STRATEGY ALONG THE LINES I HAVE JUST MENTIONED. IT IS NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE TO HAVE SOMETHING COMPLETELY NEW AND DIFFERENT FROM ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE BRITISH ISLES. HOWEVER, IT IS POSSIBLE TO DO WHAT WE DO IN A WAY THAT IS BETTER AND MORE PERSONAL THAN OUR NEIGHBOURS. WE KNOW THAT THIS IS WHAT BUSINESSES WANT AND VALUE AND IS WHAT WE HAVE A TRACK RECORD IN DELIVERING.

WE ALREADY DIFFERENTIATE OURSELVES IN A NUMBER OF AREAS SUCH AS AEROSPACE ENGINEERING, OUR AIRCRAFT, SHIPPING AND YACHT REGISTERS AND IN FILM AND MEDIA BUT WE ARE ALSO CONSIDERING NEW AREAS WHERE WE CAN INNOVATE AND STAY AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION SUCH AS INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LEGISLATION, CLEAN TECH, DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPACE SECTOR, NEW FINANCIAL SERVICES PRODUCTS AND A PROPOSED NEW COUNTRY STRATEGY WHICH WILL ENABLE NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES TO BE PURSUED WITH COUNTRIES BEST ALIGNED AND MOST STRAIGHTFORWARD FOR US TO DO BUSINESS WITH.

IN RELATION TO THE OTHER ISLANDS IN THE BRITISH ISLES, IN PARTICULAR JERSEY AND GUERNSEY, WE DO OF COURSE HAVE THE SIGNIFICANT ADVANTAGE OF HAVING PLENTIFUL SPACE TO DEVELOP NEW INDUSTRIES AND SO ACHIEVE THE BROAD ECONOMIC BASE WE NEED TO REMAIN SUCCESSFUL.

In Junior Tynwald

2011

FOR ORAL ANSWER 10

The Hon Member for Michael (Mr Steven Lowe) to ask a representative of the Department of Education and Children –

If the Department will continue to pay tuition fees for Isle of Man students studying at university for the foreseeable future?

SHORT ANSWER

I am pleased to be able to confirm to the honourable member that all students who take up a place at university in September 2011 will have their tuition fees funded, at the levels specified by the current regulations, for the duration of their course. Given that there will be an election in September of this year it is not possible for me to commit any new Government as to future funding arrangements. However, I am sure that any new administration would want to take into account a wide range of views before reaching any conclusions about any proposals to change these funding arrangements.

IN JUNIOR TYNWALD

FOR ORAL ANSWER 11

The Hon Member for Onchan (Mr Christopher Holmes) to ask a representative of the Council of Ministers -

Whether party politics should be encouraged on the Isle of Man as an effective means of holding the Government to account?

Madam President

It is not necessary to encourage party politics within a Parliamentary Democracy to effectively hold Government to account.

Within the Island's Parliamentary system, which is not dominated by party politics, Members are free to individually hold Government to account and we have Parliamentary Committees who are able to question and report to Tynwald on matters relating to Government. The only controls being Standing Orders of Tynwald which are approved by Tynwald. Unlike party dominated Parliaments the Government of the Isle of Man does not control Tynwald and thus have controls on how Tynwald undertakes its responsibilities. The Executive Government of the Isle of Man ie the Ministers are in the minority being 10 out of 33 Members.

Junior Tynwald
FOR ORAL ANSWER

12. The Hon Member for Council (Mr Tom Hemy) to ask a representative of the Department of Home Affairs –

When the Government will legalise cannabis?

Madam President,

The Department has absolutely no intention of legalising cannabis, or indeed any controlled drugs.

IN JUNIOR TYNWALD

JULY 2011

Question 13

FOR ORAL ANSWER 13

- (1) The Hon Member for Ramsey (Mr Henry Swithinbank) to ask a representative of the Department of Economic Development –

Whether a work permit may be with-held in circumstances where it is anticipated that a vacancy could be filled by a Manx student returning to the Island?

THANK YOU MADAM PRESIDENT.

IN SHORT THE ANSWER IS YES.

THE WORK PERMIT COMMITTEE CONSIDERS A NUMBER OF ISSUES WHEN AN APPLICATION FOR A WORK PERMIT IS RECEIVED. THIS INCLUDES THE LIKELIHOOD OF SUITABLE ISLE OF MAN WORKERS BECOMING AVAILABLE WITHIN 12 MONTHS, TAKING ACCOUNT OF GENERAL EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS. STUDENTS RETURNING TO THE ISLAND WOULD THEREFORE FALL WITHIN THIS CONSIDERATION.

EMPLOYERS WISHING TO TAKE ON NON ISLE OF MAN WORKERS MUST BE MINDFUL OF THE POTENTIAL FOR STUDENTS RETURNING TO THE ISLAND TO SEEK WORK AND THE COMMITTEE MAY RAISE THIS MATTER WITH EMPLOYERS; THIS HAS BEEN THE CASE IN THE PAST.

GRADUATES AND OTHER ISLE OF MAN WORKERS WHO WISH TO WORK ON THE ISLAND COULD CONSIDER APPLYING FOR LOCAL JOBS IN ADVANCE OF THEIR RETURN. EMPLOYERS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO CONSIDER THEIR SUITABILITY IN THE NORMAL WAY INCLUDING WHETHER SEEKING TO EMPLOY NON ISLE OF MAN WORKERS WAS APPROPRIATE IF ISLE OF MAN WORKERS WERE SUITABLE BUT COULD NOT COMMENCE WORK IMMEDIATELY.

For Oral Answer 14

- (1) The Hon Member for Malew and Santon (Miss Samantha Hewins) to ask a representative of the Department of Infrastructure –

What the Department's assessment is of the adequacy of the Isle of Man's transport links with the rest of the world?

As the Isle of Man's social and business contacts are mainly with the UK and Ireland, the sea links "to the outside world" are focused on maintaining high quality ferry and air services to the UK and Ireland.

The Department maintains close links with the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company to ensure that relevant strategic and operational matters are dealt with promptly. The Department has an agreement with the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company, which ensures that the people and businesses on the Isle of Man have a guaranteed minimum ferry service that operates with high quality ships on a frequent and regular basis throughout the year.

The Steam Packet operates passenger and freight services all year to Heysham and operates a passenger service seasonally to Liverpool, Belfast and Dublin.

Mezeron and Ramsey Steamship Company operate cargo services to Belfast and Glasson Dock, near Lancaster.

Central heating oil, diesel, and petrol are shipped from Milford Haven in South Wales to Peel for Total and from Milford Haven or Stanlow, on the River Mersey, to Douglas for Manx Petroleums.

Air services to the UK and Ireland are very good, and the number of direct charter flights is excellent. The Department is also working hard to encourage airlines to operate an international hub destination eg Amsterdam or Paris Charles De Gaulle. This would link the IOM very nicely, to use the Hon Questioner's words, 'with the rest of the world'.

Airline companies currently operating to and from the Isle of Man include Flybe who operate to: Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh, Gatwick, Glasgow, Liverpool, Luton (Jersey via Luton), Manchester and Southampton (Brussels via Southampton). Manx 2 operate to Belfast (City), Blackpool, Gloucester, Leeds and Newcastle, Blue Island to Jersey on to Guernsey, Easy jet to Liverpool and Aer Arann to London City and Dublin.

While it would be good to have links to other areas the Department believes that existing links more than adequately serve the needs of the Manx people.

In Junior Tynwald

2011

FOR ORAL ANSWER 15

The Hon Member for Glenfaba (Anushay Khan - QEII) to ask a representative of the Department of Education and Children

Whether the Department has considered replacing the current Sixth Forms with a Sixth Form College in order to offer a greater range of courses and better quality teaching and learning for students in Further Education?

SHORT ANSWER

In 1997, the Department of Education considered in some considerable depth the possibility of changing the Island's 5 secondary schools into 11-16 schools and establishing either a Sixth Form College or a Tertiary College (in other words, 6th Forms incorporated into a College providing both Further Education and some Higher Education for adults). A two-day event brought together politicians, officers from the Department and senior leadership teams from schools.

There are arguments that could be made for a Sixth Form College. It might enable a wider choice of subjects to be offered and would enable an easier mix of A levels and more applied or vocational qualifications. It might also ensure good teaching group sizes and specialised A level teaching. It might offer a more mature learning environment for 6th Form students.

The discussions in 1997 concluded that these advantages were outweighed by the advantages of having 11-18 schools with 6th Forms. Our school 6th Forms are one of the most successful elements of the Island's education system with large numbers of students returning to schools after Year 11 (51% in 2010) and excellent results. Staff already know the students and there is good continuity of teaching and learning. The 6th Forms add a hugely positive dimension to the secondary schools. The presence of A level teaching helps to recruit well qualified staff to the schools. The 11-18 schools save several hundred A level students from travelling daily to

somewhere central from the far north and south of the Island. Students in Bride for example would struggle to get to Douglas or somewhere central by public transport.

As a result of the decision in 1997, all five secondary schools were provided with new 6th Form blocks, the last of these being completed in Ramsey Grammar School just 3 or 4 years ago. There are currently no plans to move away from the provision of 5 schools each catering for the 11-18 age range.

ANSWER CONTINUATION

The Department of Education and Children is currently analysing responses to a consultation on Education and the Workplace. One of the areas of focus of the consultation relates to the 14--19 curriculum in schools and in collaboration with the Isle of Man College. The consultation asked questions about whether the post-16 curriculum in schools could better prepare young people for the workplace and whether that curriculum serves the needs of the Island's economy. These are very broad questions and may lead to further consultations.

It is conceivable that these, together with the impact of financial constraints on the smaller 6th Forms, could lead to future consideration of the best way to provide post-16 education on the Island. However, there are no discussions currently taking place, nor even discussions about discussions. The Island will continue to have 11-18 schools for the foreseeable future.

In Junior Tynwald

2011

FOR ORAL ANSWER 16

The Hon Member for Council (Mr Theo Leach) to ask a representative of the Department of Education and Children

Which courses the Department will cut, in the interests of rationalising the funding of university students, on the basis that those courses are not of benefit to the Isle of Man?

SHORT ANSWER

The Department has no plans to deny, or reduce, funding for any Higher Education courses on the grounds that those courses are not of benefit to the Isle of Man. The Department's Service Delivery Plan outlines that our mission is "to help all children and young people make the very best of their opportunities and life chances", and the Department is committed to that position.

The Isle of Man Government provides perhaps the most generous Higher Education support for university students found anywhere in the world. The cost of tuition fees for students from the Isle of Man attending UK universities is known as the Island rate and is set at a level above that for UK students. This is currently covered in full for qualifying Manx students. In addition, there is a system of maintenance grants for students from low-income households. Very few other countries come close to matching this level of support.

Whether the Isle of Man can continue to provide such a generous level of support in the face of current and future financial constraints remains to be seen and will rest on decisions to be made by the new government after the 2011 election.

In Junior Tynwald

2011

FOR ORAL ANSWER 17

The Hon Member for Peel (Miss Hannah Shimmin) to ask a representative of the Department of Education and Children

What the minimum grade or UCAS points requirement is for a student to qualify to have tuition fees paid by the Department; and whether this is likely to increase during the coming years.

SHORT ANSWER

The Students Awards Regulations agreed in Tynwald in December 2010 establish that the following eligibility requirements apply for the academic year 2011-12:

Students wishing to undertake an HND or comparable course must possess 1 A2 level pass at grade C, or the equivalent.

Students wishing to study for a university degree, or comparable course, must possess 2 passes at A2 level, at grade C or the equivalent.

Students wishing to study for a postgraduate research course leading to a doctorate of philosophy (PhD), a Masters degree; a post graduate Diploma or a post-graduate teaching qualification require an upper second- class honours degree.

The Isle of Man Government provides what might be described as an exceptionally generous level of Higher Education support for university students. For students who secure a university place and meet the eligibility requirements, the Department of Education and Children currently pays university tuition fees in full. In addition, there is a system of maintenance grants for students from low-income households.

Whether the Isle of Man can continue to provide such a generous level of support in the face of current and future financial constraints remains to be seen.

