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SUMMARY

I am standing for the States of Guernsey after a first term in the States to continue what I have been working on from 2020.

I come at this as an exponent of smaller government, with a view to reining in excessive regulation and wasteful spending which, inevitably, leads to higher taxes and lower growth in our economy. Sometimes, I do feel like King Canute in terms of holding back regulation.

I am a firm libertarian. Traditional liberties, freedom of speech, due process, freedom from government overreach, privacy and living ones life with dignity and respect must not be forgotten in the flurry of other issues that face us.

CV

I attended Poole Grammar School and read law at Downing College, Cambridge. Having qualified as a solicitor, I have worked as a partner of an international law firm and as a consultant to Mourants and am a director of an investment group. I have 3 adult daughters and 7 grandchildren.

I spent 4 years on the Public Accounts Committee (2012-2016) and was elected as a People's Deputy in 2020 where I served on the Development and Planning Committee and the Scrutiny Management Committee. I chaired the Legislation Review Panel and was a member of the Offshore Wind Sub Committee. This experience has given me a pretty good insight into the issues facing us.

KEY AIMS

- ..Fiscal prudence and spending control;
- ..Encourage small efficient government and light regulation;
- .. Grow the economy and improve airline connectivity

..no GST, we must do spending control and review other tax options first including a review of Deputy Parkinson's territorial tax proposals; GST is the very last resort;
.. improve housing supply, both private and social; the States must make use of its massive land bank;
..progress the wind farm

SPENDING

We have challenges arising from excessive expenditure and recruitment into our civil service. Numbers in public administration have now drawn ahead of our core finance sector. This direction of travel must be reversed. We now have a new head of the civil service. It will be the job of those elected to the Policy and Resources Committee to work with him to achieve efficiencies and savings and we, the Deputies, must stop passing more and more UK style laws which add the need for more and more staff. With a staff turnover of around 10% p.a., we are not talking of mass firings, non replacement will cover it in areas where we can. Plus a prohibition on creating new positions

A few specifics:

..I had challenged £13m in the 2025 budget for new vehicles. That's an awful lot of vehicles.
..We could pursue combining the two fire services together, possibly with the ambulance service.
..If we could cooperate with Jersey, we really need only one air traffic control system to cover the Channel Islands.
..Consultancy contracts must be cut back. Some are very useful. Many are pointless. Some are commissioned for purely political purposes and are entirely useless.
..Nursing costs are rendered artificially high by the fact that we have insufficient nursing accommodation in the vicinity of the hospital. This makes retention of nursing staff challenging leading to use of agency staff at eye watering cost. I will deal with this below under Housing.

I could go on. This is an area that must be addressed in the next States. Everything must be challenged.

Dep Vermeulen and I did bring a proposal to reduce the post inflation 2025 budget by 4.7%. That received 11 votes but failed. However, I am now seeing candidates suggesting a variation on that theme being an annual real terms cut of 1%. That approach might succeed in achieving a majority

TAX

We must remain a competitive financial centre. Everyone, particularly Jersey, wants to "eat our lunch" so we must be very careful indeed in raising taxes both from the point of view of

competitiveness internationally and from the point of view of burdening our own people. As a general rule, we cannot “tax our way to growth” as the UK is now finding out to its cost.

There are some taxes/ fees that can raise further revenue relatively easily, but not many. Dep Kazantseva Miller and I brought a proposal to raise annual Companies Registry fees somewhat to at least cover inflation since the last reset. This approach could be expanded somewhat. The finance sector has not objected.

Re corporate tax Deputy Parkinson has raised very well argued proposals for a territorial tax similar to Hong Kong at a rate of Zero/15. This is a complex area which will require very detailed discussion with the finance sector at a very granular level. This could be very significant and should be studied.

We have already signed up to Pillar II of the OECD Tax Convention. This, theoretically is raising between £10m to £30m pa from Jan 1, 2025. We shall see in due course.

We also have the potential for substantial income from leasing our seabed for offshore wind development.

To sum up, we must follow through all of the above before thinking of implementing GST. This is a last resort which I have voted against at least four times. To approve GST without first dealing with spending will simply mean not doing what is necessary.

HOUSING

Obviously, this derives from a serious supply v demand problem exacerbated by building costs.. I will deal with demand below. On the supply side, the States has rather failed to get much built in terms of social housing and key worker housing with little built in the last five years. The States MUST put its enormous land bank to good use. However, the plans to start building on the Kenilworth site seem to be progressing and an overall master plan, roads, green spaces etc across the main sites has been drawn up. It is legitimate to borrow to progress these sites as they will generate an income. Eight new sites for housing at the edge of the main and local centres are coming through in the current IDP review.

We need affordable housing to buy including partial ownership units built by the GHA. Nursing accommodation is also a priority in terms of recruitment and in terms of reducing pressure on the local market which pushes up rents.

In the private sector , construction has been running at a little over 100 units pa. Not enough but this was held back for years by GP11 (the IDP rule that required sites for over 20 houses to donate up to 30% of the buildable area to social housing). Predictably no large private site came forward in nearly 8 wasted years. I spent nearly 4 years of aggravation trying to get this changed. It now has been with an overwhelming vote in the Assembly and the larger private sites are now coming forward. I think this has been my greatest achievement in this Term.

Cost is still an issue and young families struggle to raise a deposit. To assist with that, I PROPOSE A PLAN to allow first time house buyers to apply their secondary pension plan pot towards the deposit with provisions to pay it back in at a later date. I think that is a neat solution that I have seen applied elsewhere.

IMMIGRATION

This is the other side of the housing issue. Numbers coming into the island on 3 and 8 year licences seem to be rising and the target annual population increase of 300 pa (itself high) has been exceeded in recent years. We need an urgent review of just how many 8 year licences are issued and the salary threshold bearing in mind these licensees can bring family members with them. We should also require health checks on those seeking residence, medical insurance and proof of adequate means. That is standard in most places.

OPEN MARKET

This is a vital part of our fabric and needs to be encouraged. The Population Management Law passed in a previous States term imposed unfortunate restrictions on who may occupy open market homes, broadly limiting it to one family plus a lodger. This not only damaged the usefulness of the open market but also pushed numerous renters out and on to the local market thus adding even more to the cost pressures there. That should be reviewed urgently.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE/GROWTH

This will require careful prioritisation in terms of what is affordable and the limitations on our actual capacity to build without causing yet more price inflation. We are committed to the Institute so that must proceed. Housing is vital as is nursing accommodation on or close to the PEH site. The extension to the PEH cannot proceed right now. It will require 150 or more new staff and we simply can't house them.

We need investment around the harbours for both flood defences and to enable business development. The Guernsey Development Authority must be allowed to proceed with that in a commercial, cost effective way.

We need to take a serious second look at an EMAS (Engineered Materials Arrest System) at the Eastern end of the runway. Our current connectivity is damaging to our hospitality and finance sectors and very expensive for Islanders. A connection to Heathrow would be ideal and may be feasible, possibly even without EMAS. I favour keeping Aurigny but it will need to adjust somewhat.

At the end of the day, we must grow our economy and do everything possible to support our key finance and hospitality sectors and to develop new lines of business if we are to have a prosperous future. Currently our economy is flatlining, if not slipping.

We must progress our offshore wind farm both for leasing income and to diversify the economy.

ENVIRONMENT/NET ZERO

We need to continue to reduce our energy consumption and generally become more sustainable, but only in a gradual, economic way that does not push up energy prices and electricity bills. Net zero is probably unachievable. We should not try to push ahead on that whilst 80% of the world economy is still using fossil fuels with no intention of stopping.

We should change how we deal with food waste. This could be composted into fertiliser on Island. Far more eco friendly and less costly than shipping offshore. Proposals have been put forward supported by me but the STSB have not taken this up.

Our big contribution to clean energy will be to push forward with plans to lease our seabed for wind farm installation. The plans will not involve us taking on economic risk: they will only involve acting as lessor of our seabed to others who will take on the building project and enter into the relevant contracts with the UK or France. The planning on this has advanced well and must be pursued.

I would like to improve cycleways to include segregated cycle paths around the south, west and north coasts, planned to keep pedestrians, bikes and cars apart so far as practicable.

We must protect the green areas of Guernsey by keeping development within the main and to a lesser extent local centres. That is enshrined in the Regulations.

EDUCATION

The bright spot on this is our new Institute which will start building soon. We should give our youngsters great options to stay and study in Guernsey, especially in those practical and technical areas where we have such high demand. This must be a great asset

I regret the disruption caused by the termination of the Grammar School which has led to a difficult period for our States secondary school pupils. We must now concentrate on raising standards in our secondary schools with consideration given to looking at models other than the UK and to devolve as much autonomy to each individual school as possible

We must continue to work with the Colleges who educate over 30% of our pupils. The grants should certainly be retained. I supported that in the recent debate. Further, Dep Matthews and I have brought forward a proposal for means tested scholarships to the Colleges for less well off pupils. We plan to pursue that.

REGULATION

We really must cease to follow gold plated UK regulation. It annoys everyone, costs a fortune and brings in more and more State employees to administer it, thus adding even more to costs and making the housing crisis even worse.

CHARITIES

The States should continue financial support for those charities that provide services more cost effectively than the States could do. This is a vital sector. The level of the tax gross up applied to private donations should be updated at least in line with inflation each year.