



**St Helena
Government**

ST HELENA GOVERNMENT
PROCEEDING OF MINISTERS QUESTION TIME
TUESDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2025
SECOND MEETING

Laid upon the table 17 July 2026

ST. HELENA

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

The Honourable Mrs Connie Johnson

EX-OFFICIO MEMBER

The Honourable Attorney General - Mr Andrew Duncan

ELECTED MEMBERS

The Honourable Martin Dave Henry - Deputy Chief Minister

The Honourable Karl Gavin Thrower - Minister for Economic Development and Environment, Natural Resources and Planning

The Honourable Andrew James Turner - Minister for Education, Skills and Employment

The Honourable Clint Richard Beard

The Honourable Ronald Arthur Coleman

The Honourable Dr Corinda Sebastiana Stuart Essex

The Honourable Robert Charles Midwinter

The Honourable Derek Franklin Thomas

The Honourable Julie Dorne Thomas

APOLOGIES

The Speaker - The Honourable Mrs Maureen Thompson

The Honourable Gillian Ann Brooks - Minister for Safety, Security and Home Affairs

OVERSEAS

The Honourable Dr Rebecca Elizabeth Cairns-Wicks - Chief Minister

The Honourable Denis Karl Leo

Legislative Council Office Assistant

Mrs Marita Bagley

PROCEEDINGS OF MINISTERS QUESTION TIME

Tuesday, 2nd December 2025

The Council met at 10.00 am
In the Council Chamber, The Castle, Jamestown

(The Honourable Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

ORDER OF THE DAY

1. FORMAL ENTRY OF THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

2. ADDRESS BY THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Good morning Members and a warm welcome to others present in the Council Chamber on this Tuesday, the second of December 2025. We also extend greetings to all those who may be listening to this live broadcast of the proceedings on SAMS Radio One. Apologies are given for the Chief Minister and the Honourable Denis Leo, who will be back on Island next week following their overseas visits. Madam Speaker and Minister Brooks are also sending apologies because they are attending the Memorial at Coleman House this morning. The focus for Minister's Question Time at this second sitting is Renewable Energy, and the Order Paper was published on the SHG website this morning. There are six questions on the Order Paper which are listed in alphabetical order to be selected randomly for response. Honourable Members, I know that you will all be aware of the rules and the time limit for this meeting, so we will move swiftly on. All of the questions are directed to the Minister for Economic Development and Environment, Natural Resources and Planning. Excuse me, who is Honourable Minister Karl Thrower. I would like to publicly thank Morgan Thomas-Henry, who left SHG for her assistance to the Legislative Office in the past, and wish her well for the future. The timekeeper and Clerk for this meeting is Marita Bagley; please may we have the Member's name for the first question. Thank you.

3. QUESTIONS

Question No. 1 - The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex

Madam Deputy Speaker -
The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex.

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex -

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Economic Development and Environment, Natural Resources and Planning, tell this Council what progress has been made regarding development of key performance indicators to monitor use of renewable energy?

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much Madam Speaker and thank you to my Honourable friend for her question. However, before I start, I'd like to just clear up obviously I used to have a conflict of interest in regards to renewable energy, because I used to install, sell and design renewable energy systems. Just for clarity, one of the commitments I gave to the Chief Minister upon being appointed as a Minister, including energy, was that I would not design, install or fit any more renewable energy systems. So the Company, Green Island Energy, which I own, will actually be wound up at the end of this financial year, so I just wanted to give clarity on that, I will carry on supporting the systems that are already installed, but we won't be designing or building anymore.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Thank you, Minister.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

In answer to my Honourable friend's question, the key performance indicators are actually part of what we're working on now. So as most people will be aware, there is a significant project going forward, which is the new Renewable Energy System for Connect. This project will cost somewhere between £10m and £15 million pounds. Unfortunately, at this stage, we are waiting for one of the key reports that will guide the future of renewable energy on St Helena, which is the design. So at the minute, we simply don't know how much it will cost, we don't know how we're going to finance it, we don't know how we will actually structure any company around it. So at the moment, I think the KPI's are very loose, they are currently monitored, the amount that we currently produce is monitored through the URA and Connect. They have unfortunately dropped significantly in the last few years, this is due to the delay of the PASH Energy Project. So as we all know, the wind turbines over have now become pretty much obsolete. Most of them are worn out, so unfortunately, that's where we are, but the KPI's will be a part of the new structure of the New Energy Project.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Dr Corinda Essex.

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex -

I thank the Honourable Minister for his response. Can you please give an indicative time frame for receipt of the report to which he alluded?

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -
That report should be with Connect and the two program boards by the end of this year.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Honourable Dr Corinda Essex.

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex -
Can the Honourable Minister clarify when he says this year, this month, or the financial year?

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower --
Thank you at the end of this month.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Honourable Dr Corinda Essex.

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex -
Can the Honourable Minister outline the immediate steps that will be taken on receipt of this report please.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -
I can, however, it depends actually what the contents of the report are. So obviously, once we have a outline design, then we can start looking at how much it will cost, tender processes, land allocation, and the other things that will need to be done to move this project forward, but there are numerous, but it really depends on what's in the report.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Honourable Dr Corinda Essex.

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex -
I thank the Honourable Minister, can you please indicate an indicative time frame for completing the process.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Not at this time until we know what's in the report.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Any further questions? Next question please.

Question No. 2 - The Honourable Robert Midwinter

Madam Deputy Speaker -

The Honourable Robert Midwinter.

The Honourable Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, Will the Honourable Minister for Economic Development and Environment, Natural Resources and Planning say what Policy relating to Renewable Energy his Portfolio is currently working against, in particular what renewable energy target is expected to be achieved, and by when?

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

So we are currently working to a Renewable Energy Policy 2023 to 2030. This Policy had a number of key work streams, including a Grid Impact Study, a Useful Life Maintenance Review of the existing wind turbines, Power System Study, SCADA Assessment, Research Funding Options for the Project, Energy Modelling and Design Study, which is the document I was just referring to, implementing the Infrastructure Project, which is the next part of the Project that the Honourable Dr Corinda Essex just asked about, and Capacity Building and Training for the implementation of the increased renewables.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

The Honourable Robert Midwinter.

The Honourable Robert Midwinter -

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker and I thank the Honourable Minister for his response. Madam Deputy Speaker, I wish to note that I submitted this question when we were still trying to obtain a copy of the current Policy, so noting that the current Policy was endorsed by EXCO in August 2023, will the Honourable Minister make a commitment to ensure that this is placed in the public domain, in particular to ensure that it is available to the public on the St Helena Government website.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Unfortunately I can't because it was held back from the public for a good reason. It wasn't my decision,

and I've actually just spoken with my Portfolio Director this morning about a review that we would undertake before releasing it, but it was held back on purpose from the public.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

The Honourable Robert Midwinter.

The Honourable Robert Midwinter -

Madam Deputy Speaker, noting that there was a Press Release to the public in September 2023 detailing that the Policy had been endorsed by EXCO, can you say why it was well then subsequently withheld from the public?

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

I believe that it went much further than a normal Policy. It had a number of things that would actually overflow into sensitive, which is why it was once again this was a decision made by a previous Minister. I want to review the Document, and then I will look at it and see if that's still the case, or whether we can maybe release a redacted version, but unfortunately, until I've reviewed it with the advisers that need to be consulted before we release it, I can't give any commitment to it.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Julie Thomas.

Honourable Julie Thomas -

Madam Deputy Speaker, can I raise, rise on a point of information?

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Yes you may.

Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you. Just because I was part of the previous government, I would just like to say part of the reason was because there should have been a Delivery Plan put together to support the Renewable Energy Policy, so that is part of the reason I don't know how far they've come with the Delivery Plan. Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Thank you for the explanation. The Honourable Robert Midwinter.

The Honourable Robert Midwinter -

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, and I think that leads nicely into my next question, because can the Minister say what progress, if any, has been made against the five key issues identified within the Policy.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

I can, and I think in a way we just did, so obviously we are currently waiting for the energy modelling and design study, so the progress has been made on it, but we're waiting for this, this key thing piece of information before we can move forward. The maintenance review of the existing wind turbines has been finished, that is with Connect, which was actually an answer to a later question. The Power System Study is finished. Obviously, that had to be finished before the energy modelling could be done, and once we have the energy modelling and design study, then we can look at research and funding options for the project.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Honourable Robert Midwinter.

The Honourable Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. One last question from me, because the Honourable Minister made reference to the fact that he intends to review the Policy now, and I just wish to know if he plans to change this Policy as a result of his recent trip to Sint Eustatius.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you, I don't believe anything that came up during the workshop that I attended would fundamentally change the Policy. However, once again I've only just this morning been discussing it with my Portfolio Director, and we have said that we will review it and maybe change it to make it cover a wider, so at the minute it simply covers renewable energy, but maybe when we review it, we will look at making it cover energy as an overall project.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, can the Minister confirm if the Energy Modelling Design Report is actually late, because this seems like it's a delayed Report that's being tabled.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm not aware that the Report has been laid, and actually my Portfolio Director has just indicated that it's not delayed.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. So with that information confirmed, it is my understanding that the Renewable Energy Policy should have had a Delivery Plan attached to it, and then there was going to be a wider Energy Policy. So can the Minister now say then if the Renewable Energy Policy is going to be updated to now become the Energy Policy.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much Madam Speaker. I believe I just said that that is something we would look at when we carry out the review of the Renewable Energy Policy.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Thank you. Any further questions? No, next question please.

Question No. 3 - The Honourable Clint Beard

Madam Deputy Speaker -
The Honourable Clint Beard.

The Honourable Clint Beard -

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Can the Honourable Minister of Economic Development and Environment, Natural Resources and Planning, please tell this House what is planned to encourage residents and businesses to adopt renewable energy solutions?

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to my Honourable friend for his question. So actually there are already a number of things in place to encourage residents and businesses to adopt renewable energy solutions. For example, you can import renewable energy systems at 5% tariff instead of the normal 20% tariff. We also encourage residents and businesses to import much more efficient white goods and things like that through taxes, but also at the minute there isn't a plan further than that to encourage residents and businesses to adopt renewable energy solutions, basically because obviously, if we fix renewable energy for the whole island, it would automatically bring everybody up to 80% of their energy being from renewable sources.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Honourable Clint Beard.

The Honourable Clint Beard -
Thank you, Madam Speaker. You referred to white goods, what is the current rate for white goods?

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -
There is a tariff that should be applied, and I say should, because I believe that sometimes it's not applied correctly, that means that anything that's energy efficient should get a 5% import duty.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Honourable Clint Beard.

The Honourable Clint Beard -
Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think the question is, is it 5% or is it 20%?

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -
I believe I just answered that question, Madam Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Honourable Clint Beard.

The Honourable Clint Beard -
Madam Speaker, I speak under correction, but I think it's 20% so I would like the Minister to please make sure that those goods are amended in the customs codes.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -
Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will check with Customs and we will go through the Tax and Revenue Working Groups papers that myself and Councillor Turner were working on when we were Councillors and review that, but it should have been implemented. One of the things with this, and I've had experience with this myself is, we have such complicated tax codes when we import goods that sometimes the wrong tax codes are applied to things that should basically get a different tax level than what is actually obtained, so actually what I would commit to is looking into this, and then I believe what we should do is, we should then put out a press release stating what the codes are exactly what those codes cover.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Honourable Clint Beard.

The Honourable Clint Beard -

Thank you, Madam Speaker. What will be in place Minister, what will be in place for low-income households in the, in the adoption of renewable energy solutions.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Once again Madam Speaker I'm sorry, I believe I've answered that question, because as I've already said, that when we fix the renewable energy and get this new renewable energy system up, all businesses and households will see the benefits of it.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Thank you. The Honourable Clint Beard.

The Honourable Clint Beard -

Madam Speaker thanks, thank you for that. Sorry to be a stuck record to me it hasn't still been answered, but I'll have to, we'll have to accept it. Thank you.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Honourable Robert Midwinter.

The Honourable Robert Midwinter -

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, knowing that my Honourable Colleague, this was something that he pushed for as a Councillor, can the Honourable Minister outline what measures he will be taking to ensure the St Helena Government moves towards green energy practices within public buildings, for example, the hospital, care facilities, offices, and schools.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you Madam Speaker and thank you to my Honourable Colleague for his question. Absolutely yes, I think that I still believe that that is something we need to do, and I will say right now we are still under the same fluorescent lights that I've been complaining about for over four years. There are Policies in place, what we really need to do is make sure that these Policies are enforced. We have to and personally I would like to look into bringing out an Energy Manager for SHG properties to review all of the energy usage but also take it even further, they should also review utility usage, which covers things like water.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Any further questions? Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. I think the biggest thing that I can see from Renewable Energy is the public information, so can I ask the Minister what public information campaigns are planned to help residents understand the renewable energy transition and associated challenges, and the importance at the moment of staying on the grid, or what, how can you come off grid, and what are the implications of doing such. I think that's the big piece that's missing right now. The island does not understand what's happening with renewable energy, all we know is there is a deadline set for 2027-28.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much Madam Speaker. I think that we do need to engage in a significant information release during the entire project. At the minute, the key thing is waiting for this one document that, as I've said, should be with us by the end of this month. Once we know that, we will have a lot more information that needs to go out into the public space, but also we can then start planning for what the energy future of the island really looks like, so for example, at the minute we all know that there is a complete block on people fitting renewable energy panels and then putting any of that back into the grid. Once we get these documents and once we start moving forward even that will need to be reviewed. You know one of the questions is always whether, as a government, you should invest and buy all of the renewable energy systems, or whether actually you should encourage the public to buy renewable energy systems, and then give them what's called a fit, a feed-in tariff. That is where basically you would be people would be able to put systems onto their roofs, and any excess energy would be then pushed back into the grid, and Connect, or whoever the utility provider would then give you a price for each unit that you push back into the grid. At the minute, there is a complete moratorium on it, but it will really depend on what this system looks like when we get this design modelling.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. So can I just ask if after this report is received, hopefully at the end of this month will, can you put a timeline to the Delivery Action Plan, so that the public, and indeed ourselves will have some indication as to when that can be rolled out please.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

I can, and I will do, obviously the current date of 27-28 for the finalisation of the project is still the goal.

I've always said, and I won't change it just because I'm the Minister, it would be nice to have it sooner. We also have to look at whether we can do a staged approach or a phased approach, where potentially you can do parts of it, like do solar panels or batteries first, and then do wind turbines last. It really depends on once we know what we've got to go and look for, it depends on then finance, obviously, then you've got to get the supply, so you've got a tender process. Solar panels and batteries are relatively easy to get hold of, wind turbines are much more complicated, so this is why this, this document is really the key to how we move this island forward with Renewable Energy.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Dr Corinda Essex.

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex -

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Given the huge amount of work that still needs to be done in relation to this topic, does the Honourable Minister believe that a target date of 80% renewable energy by 2030 is still an achievable target, or is it likely to require revision.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am not aware of any reason why it cannot be delivered on time. We went, obviously, you one of the earlier questions mentioned the trip to Sint Eustatius, which I had to the Energy Workshop. Sint Eustatius has achieved 60% renewable energy with a working system. They save, and I'm going off memory here, somewhere around 2.4 million litres of fuel per year with a system that you can buy. Now I will say that we need to add wind turbines to it, or the plan is to look at adding wind turbines to it, but I firmly believe that this is a deliverable plan, and it should be on time. I think that there will be a number of challenges, you know, and we can't forget how notorious problems we had with other projects, where things like planning really held up projects, but if we work together and unite as an island behind this project, I firmly believe it can be delivered on time.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, and I couldn't agree more with the Minister with regards to working together. Hence, I suggested that a Delivery Plan or something goes into the public domain to get a campaign going. But can the Minister confirm whether the existing grid infrastructure is sufficient to support higher levels of renewable penetration, because I know you talked about ten to fifteen million pounds when answering the Honourable Dr Corinda Essex's question earlier, but do we know if the grid in its state at the moment can support higher levels of renewable penetration or where the upgrades are planned, to note that the Grid Assessment Report was due back in August 2023.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Yes Madam Speaker thank you, and yes so that part of the key policy work stream was a grid impact study so I will read you the summary of this - “so the grid impact study was to assess how the grid is affected through private photonic PV systems, and how they're connected to the grid to quantify the safe maximum amount of P-generated PV-generated electricity from both private and utility scale systems that could potentially be connected to the grid on St Helena” So that was an early study that was done quite a few years ago, I want to say three years I could be wrong on that. This is actually the study that informed Connect to block the connection of any further renewable energy systems. However, it did do a grid impact study that should now, once again, I can check on this, that grid impact study should have been utilised as part of the energy modelling and design, so it's not just a renewable modelling that's been done, it is an energy modelling that should have compensated for the problems identified in the earlier grid impact study.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Sorry Madam Deputy Speaker, I just was distracted by somebody else's light. I think though again it comes back to campaigning or informing the public. I don't think, and again, Minister I'm not suggesting this is something you have to do yourself, but I would encourage then the Utility Service Provider, if you can, to put some information into the public domain regarding the outcome of that grid impact assessment because that was something they committed to, I don't know if it's a year ago or maybe even two years ago, and the public doesn't quite understand the reasons why further PV panels cannot be installed in different parts of the island. It's just been said that if you are off grid completely, that can be entertained, but it's not being clearly stated to the community why you can't install PV panels and still feed of the grid at certain points, so I think some more information regarding the outcome of the grid impact assessment is required. Can you have some conversations with our Utility Services provider to ensure that information is put in the public domain, please.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Deputy Chief Minister.

The Honourable Martin Henry -

Thank you Madam Speaker. I just want to rise on a point of information, and on some of the campaigns I've done around this. While we're talking about the grid, I just like to put it out there that I believe that the grid is the most important part of this. I know people are looking at windmills and solar panels, etc but without a smart grid that communicates, we will build a system that at some stage in the future will then reach limitations. If we are planning to move forward in a proper manner, we have to look at the grid. If we installed a smarter grid now, we could have just, we could put solar panels in. The point of information I want to rise on is the fact that what most of the latest research shows is that we are looking at energy and

we're looking at communications in isolation, where the world is going is that what is considered now the internet of things, communication and an energy now transmits through similar grid formats, and if we don't work these things hand in hand, we are going to end up with two completely different systems that doesn't speak to each other, and we're going to have a stop gap in the near future. We have to think a lot further than our noses on this particular one. Thank you.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Thank you Honourable Deputy Chief Minister. Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you. If I may, I can actually add some maybe important information to what the Honourable Minister just said, and that is that actually the Chief Minister is meeting with the Department for Energy and Net Zero today about exactly that. So we are trying to do that, I absolutely agree with what he said. We even when we look at these large projects, we have been doing too much silo thinking, you know, we have to realise that telecommunications and energy, if you want to really move the island forward, sit side by side, because it's all utilities. So also it's a major part of, we also all had a presentation about the Water Strategy for moving forward that also depends on telecommunications.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

I would just ask the Honourable Minister, I know that went into a longer question, but if you could just give confirmation that you will speak with the Utility Service Provider to talk about the outcomes of the grid impact assessment please.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you. Sorry yes, I agree. Sorry, sorry, my Honourable colleague. Yes, but obviously, as an interested party at the time, I do know that that did go out public, and they also had several public meetings on it. I wasn't on island at the time, but I do know several people who attended those meetings. It did go out public. I would, what I would give a commitment to is asking them to re-issue it.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you Honourable Karl Thrower, and then my final question would be, can we be reminded what funding has been allocated or secured in this current financial year to advance any works regarding renewable energy projects.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you, Madam Speaker. In truth, I can't, give you the, I can get back to you with the exact figure. What I do know is that we've earmarked ten million pounds for the project, potentially from EDIP funding moving forward.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you and is that secured, or is that just pipeline, which is obviously something we'd like to do, but not secured.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

So I think at the minute there seems to be a lot of information coming at us from a number of third parties in that reference financing and I think a lot of it will obviously depend on exactly how we follow the energy model in design study so obviously one thing we can potentially look at is private finance. We can look at creating a new company that would be potentially almost a charity, where it would be non-profit retaining or non-profit making. We also, as most people will be aware, that we are also looking at Connects license, so at the minute the truth is on that, I think that the funding has been earmarked from EDIP, but there are still questions about how much we will need and therefore how we fund the project overall.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I just want to have it clarified though, is the ten million pounds secured, or is that just a pipeline figure at the moment?

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Sorry, so I've just had it confirmed it is just a pipeline, I think because there is no true costing available at the moment.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Any further questions? Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Sorry only because of what the Minister mentioned at the very end there, and I know that is very early days to talk about specific funding but bearing in mind that you were attending a workshop that focused primarily on this venture, was there any initial conversations regarding exploring external financing.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much. There wasn't specifically to our project, so one thing I did engage with was people or the attendees from other countries who have all got different funding systems in place for them, so Sint Eustatius itself received the majority of its funding direct through the Netherlands. For us actually some things came out in COP that might be of interest. We know that we are looking at UK Export Finance have also got a possibility of some funds, but the simple fact is we really need to start looking at this, and we haven't done enough work at the minute to be able to identify which one we will select.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Thank you. Honourable Members thirty minutes have gone, and we still have three questions to still to be asked. Can we have the next Member please.

Question No. 4 - The Honourable Derek Thomas

Madam Deputy Speaker -

The Honourable Derek Thomas.

The Honourable Derek Thomas -

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Can the Honourable Minister for Economic Development and Environment, Natural Resources and Planning tell this House how will the Island upgrade or replace ageing renewable infrastructure (e.g solar panels, wind turbines)?

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much Madam Speaker and thank you very much to Honourable friend for his question. I think this can be actually split into two sections, so we've obviously got the current infrastructure on Island, where the wind is obviously currently, I believe there's one wind turbine currently moving, however, I'm not sure actually it's working. However, Connect are working on getting some of the wind turbines working again. This is a project from them, they brought out WES, and they are looking to do it through basically the parts that they already have on Island. So unfortunately, the Company that made those wind turbines is no longer in business, so new parts are not available. So what I believe the plan is, is basically to cannibalise some of the non-working wind turbines to get some of the others working. However

obviously, this is a short-term solution. The end goal of course, is to replace the wind turbines completely under the project that we've just been talking about. The solar systems, the panels have a lifespan of over thirty years, so we still have plenty of life left in the current solar farms and the roof-mounted solar systems. I know that they are having to replace inverters, but that is just part of routine maintenance on PV systems, obviously moving forward for the, for the new systems, and remembering that batteries actually only have roughly a ten year lifespan, then obviously when we look at how we're going to structure the company or the owners, then obviously we'll have to take into account how they're going to start accumulating the funds to replace and do the maintenance on those as those projects obviously start to age.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Derek Thomas.

Honourable Derek Thomas -

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank the Honourable Minister for his response. Can the Minister say whether there is a proper maintenance programme in place for the Solar Farm at the Rifle Range in Ladder Hill.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

I don't know about the Solar Farm specifically, but I do know that Connect do have active maintenance projects in place, and if the ones that I've seen at the generation site are anything to go by, they are robust and extremely good. The solar system currently is still working, and I know as I said earlier, I know that they have had to replace inverters and that, all of these systems are remotely monitored through computer-based systems.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Derek Thomas.

Honourable Derek Thomas -

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Can the Honourable Minister give an indication to check whether there's a proper maintenance programme in place to maintain the solar panels at the Rifle Range in Half Tree Hollow.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Madam Speaker, yes I can.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Thank you. Any further questions? No, next question please.

Question No. 5 - The Honourable Julie Thomas

Madam Deputy Speaker -

The Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Will the Honourable Minister for Economic Development and Environment, Natural Resources and Planning provide an update on progress in implementing the 2016 Energy Strategy through the Renewable Energy Policy 2023 - 2030 – specifically St Helena's commitment to achieve at least 80% renewable energy – and advise on the current status and expected timelines for the Regulatory Framework and proposed Utility Services Provider license, which were reported to be with the provider in July of this year but since we have not been updated?

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much Madam Speaker and thank you to my Honourable colleague for her question. Yes I can, the Regulatory Framework is due by the end of January 2026. I believe there were some delays in delivering this, and then we will look at it and have actually done all the review and everything by March 2026.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

The Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, bearing in mind now that we've just been advised that the Regulatory Framework has been delayed, has the utility services provider provided feedback or raised any issues with the draft documents that was made available to them back in July or prior to that time?

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you Madam Speaker, yes they have.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you, and would that mean now that's part of the delay is to incorporate whatever feedback they have issued to, to the providers.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Sorry Madam Speaker, I was just getting an update there, so apparently it was actually the provider that delayed the Regulatory Framework moving forward.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. What I know you've said it is the provider that's delayed it can, can we explain exactly why it was delayed, what's the reasons?

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you Madam Speaker, yes I can. It was down to personal reasons between the contractor and the subcontractor.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

So does the delay in establishing the Regulatory Framework present any risk to meeting the 80% renewable energy target, and what measures are in place to mitigate this, because can, can it be first confirmed, how much of a delay is this, when was this piece of work due to be finished, and what is the delay?

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much. The original date was November 25 and it shouldn't affect the 80% target by 27-28.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you, and as we go on this journey now with the Regulatory Framework, are there any resourcing or capacity challenges within the responsible, responsible department or the provider that are affecting progress and how are these being addressed.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much Madam Speaker. I'm not aware of any at this stage.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Robert Midwinter.

The Honourable Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise mainly to clear up with the Minister because I have heard two of my colleagues refer to 2030 in the discussions but the Policy is 2023 to 2028 and in particular if we have not got this Regulatory Framework in place until March 2026 he was referring to undertaking reviews and completing them by then, though that actually only leaves two financial years in which to complete the 80% target, and yet we have no funding identified, not particularly it's in pipeline, but we don't actually have any funding at the moment.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much. So first of all, the Renewable Energy Policy is 2023 to 2030. Secondly, the two years is still, and as I said before, there are no indicators why this is not an achievable timeline. We have choices to make reference how we finance things and the finance that we pursue. However, the EDIP pipe is already in the EDIP pipeline as a backup.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. So bearing in mind what we've just learned about the Regulatory Framework, will the Minister commit to providing Council with regular updates on implementation milestones for the Energy Strategy and the Renewable Energy Policy, or the Energy Policy, whatever it becomes after you've done your review.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you Madam Chair, yes because I think it's extremely important, as I said, that this is a journey that we will have to go on together. So I will actually commit to what I said earlier about keeping the public informed, and obviously keeping the Councillors informed as we go on this journey, it's an extremely key point of getting this project over the line.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you. I am also mindful that there is a notice period that government would need to give the Utility Service Provider, and from memory, I'm thinking that must be by the end of March, but it needs to be a year in advance. So if that is the case, if we are not in a position, bearing in mind that the Regulatory Framework you suggested isn't going to be complete until March of this, March 2026 of this financial year, we would be looking to have to give that notice by the first of April 2026 which means that they wouldn't be able to move over to a new license until April 2027, it is now becoming quite tight on timelines, it's just my opinion, but you can tell me if I've got that wrong. So my question is, how does the timing of the framework and license align with the current and planned renewable energy projects on the island, and of course, the license that we still have in place at the moment with the Utility Service Provider.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much. I agree with my Honourable Colleague it is a tight timeline, and this is why it's so important that we get all of the things we've been talking about today in line in order to meet those tight timelines. You know, there are a number of options that we can look at how to do this within the current term license, as my Colleague indicated, even if we give notice on the first of April, by the first of April next year, they still have 12 months underneath, under their current license.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you. I would assume, but if you could confirm please Minister, that there is regular, because of the different boards that's set up, that there's regular communication with the Utility Service Provider, but from what you're hearing, is the sector confident, that once approved the necessary systems, compliance measures, and enforcement arrangements will be ready to operate, and I'm speaking more than for the Regulatory Framework, with that we've got, that we'll have people in place to enforce it.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much Madam Speaker. Short answer is yes, so obviously we have an Energy Programme Board and a Renewable Project Board, which sit under each other, oh sorry, the Renewable Project Board sits underneath the Energy Programme Board. It's our intention actually to bring both of those Boards before Cabinet, so that we can actually truly get a complete feel for how this is working, and any changes that will need to be made in order to deliver this project on time.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Is this your final question?

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Yes.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, and earlier it was talked about employing an Energy Manager, has funding been obviously allocated for that, and is that something you'd like to see in this, the remainder of this financial year, or something from the new financial year?

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much. In truth that would be something in a future financial year. I believe that at the minute, if we're looking at a TC post, then the unfortunately is not enough money, and we have other priorities for TC posts. We have to write a Business Case if we are going to do that. The Business Case, normally for Energy Managers, is very strong, simply because they should save you more than they cost you. Well I can't give a commitment on it, it is something that I would like to see implemented within the term of my office.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Thank you I think we've exhausted those questions. The Honourable Ronald Coleman?

Question No. 6 - The Honourable Ronald Coleman

The Honourable Ronald Coleman -

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Can the Honourable Minister for Economic Development and Environment, Natural Resources and Planning tell this Council what role does the Private Sector Investment play in renewable energy deployment?

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much and thank you very much Madam Speaker and thank you to my Honourable Colleague for his question. So the private sector actually play a key role in energy, renewable energy development as we are aware, several of the merchants, including Solomons, have significant size PV systems on their roofs, with a number of the smaller merchants having smaller systems on their roofs. We know that there is a small renewable energy system that is based on the fisheries factory, which was actually done under the St Helena Government when they fitted out the project, the factory under the five-hundred-thousand-pound renovation scheme. I think that we kind of send a mixed message in regard to private sector investment, because on one hand we have the five per cent duty to encourage them to import PV systems, but then against that we have a moratorium of allowing them to connect to the grid, for understandable reasons when you read the grid stability report, so I think what we need to do with this to move it forward is that we need to start getting all the ducks in a row, and as I've already stated that this new project, the bigger system will actually hopefully help once again allowing private sector investors to actually connect their systems to the grid.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Robert Midwinter.

The Honourable Robert Midwinter -

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Madam Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Minister touched on this earlier in response to one of my Honourable friend's responses, but can the Honourable Minister say if the St Helena Government is currently in discussions with any parties who are interested in entering into a Power Purchase Agreement for the Island.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, thank you to my Honourable Colleague. The answer is no, we have not looked at the business strategy for moving this project forward until we actually know what the project is going to be, and once again it's down to the report that we should receive by the end of this month.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Derek Thomas.

The Honourable Derek Thomas -

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Can the Minister say whether the solar panels placed on fisheries building in Rupert are in working order.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much Madam Speaker, as I said earlier, it is actually one of the conflicts that I listed at the beginning, so actually it was myself that fitted them. I haven't had any information on those since I actually fitted them nearly six years ago. So the truth is, as I do carry on servicing things, I would hope that I would have been informed if they're not working.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. I think as we are kind of coming to round up here, I would like just to ask, based on all the questions asked this morning, how will the government ensure that the energy transition aligns with wider policy areas, including environmental management, tourism development, and revenue policy.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much Madam Speaker. I think this is one of the questions as to we will have to answer when we actually look at whether we want to change the Renewable Energy Policy 23-30 and make it a wider concern, because I do think it is worth considering all of those elements, and I would like to see them as part of the overall Energy Policy if we move it forward. At the minute they're all addressed through separate things, like obviously through planning and the other various steps that we will have to do before actually building any new systems.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you, and then I don't know if I should be asking, what plans, or will there be any plans put in place to build the necessary on island expertise for designing, maintaining, and integrating renewable technologies.

Madam Deputy Speaker -
Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much Madam Speaker. The answer is yes, so actually, that was the last thing when I listed

the key policy work streams, which was capacity building and training, and then to give you the full line, it's capacity building and training for implementation of increased renewables, so that comes under that.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Are there any further questions? The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex.

The Honourable Dr Corinda Essex -

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker. Although it is accepted that detailed estimates cannot be drawn up at this point in time, what action has been taken with regard to actually identifying and establishing potential sources of funding for the project.

Madam Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much, at the moment it is just that, we have just started identifying them without actually knowing what the amount will be and exactly what the work stream to deliver the system will be. It gets a bit more difficult to go out and actually look further into funding streams, and obviously, since that report is due quite literally within this month, then obviously the plan would be to actually start seriously looking at funding streams early next year at the start of January.

The Deputy Speaker -

The Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable Julie Thomas -

Thank you, and as we, as he said with all the reports now due, can you give some sort of confidence to us, but also the public, as to what safeguards are being put in place to avoid similar setbacks with future Renewable Energy Partners.

The Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable, Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much. Currently this project is structured completely different to should I say, the failed past Renewable Energy Project where we're actually looking for a Power Purchase Agreement. I think this time, what we're actually going to be looking for are separate funding streams, plus the supplies for the equipment, and then obviously the plan is to operate it on island.

The Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Clint Beard.

The Honourable Clint Beard -

Thank you Madam Speaker. I know the Minister referred to the critical role the private sector plays in this

and maybe I don't have my policy in front of me, but could the Minister please at a later stage, just show me the direction in any part of that Policy where the private sector is mentioned.

The Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much Madam Speaker. May I ask my Honourable Colleague which Policy he is referring to.

The Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Clint Beard.

The Honourable, Clint Beard -

Renewable Energy Policy 2023 to 2030.

The Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much ma'am, so yes, I would be happy to share that with him.

The Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Robert Midwinter.

The Honourable Robert Midwinter -

Thank you Madam Deputy Speaker, and again because we are now wrapping up, I just wanted to ask the Honourable Minister if he will renew the previous government's commitment to protecting on grid, low income households, we've discussed a lot about solar PVS and other systems, but there was a commitment from the previous government to protect those in low income households.

The Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Members, we have less than eight minutes left. Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much Madam Speaker, yes is the short answer, but how we do that we will have to consider and put a lot of, to make sure we get it right, so I'm trying to think a bit off kilter here. So obviously there were a number of ways for us to address the cost of living and energy poverty, which is, I'm guessing what my Honourable friend is referring to. So the question is, do you do it directly through energy costs, do we see different tariffs being put in, as the Honourable Minister Henry referred to the idea of having a smart grid, one of the biggest reasons for having a smart grid is so that you can do prepay meters and things like that to help people manage their monthly bills. So I think it does need a lot of

consideration, and I will undertake to do that, and we should have in place something that protects our most vulnerable people from excessive energy costs.

The Deputy Speaker -

Honourable Julie Thomas.

The Honourable, Julie Thomas -

Thank you, and again coming to the round up, giving the, given the logistical challenges of shipping anything to St Helena really, but if there's going to be any larger modern turbines, or whatever it is that we're going to be using, how is government planning to address potential transport and installation constraints.

The Deputy Speaker -

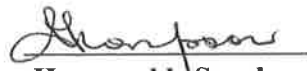
Honourable Minister Thrower.

The Honourable, Karl Thrower -

Thank you very much Madam Speaker. In truth, that would be an impossible answer to give right at this stage, because you don't know what size the wind turbines potentially are. So actually you could simply say, yes we will ensure that we get wind turbines that are relatively small, so and this is one of the big questions, do you go for large wind turbines and only a few of them, or you go for multiple small wind turbines, which are much easier to maintain, ship and you know, basically you don't need the big crane infrastructure. I think everybody will be aware of the PASH Project, obviously, that went out when I was on the Planning Board, and we went to a number of planning meetings with the public, and you know, they were on about bringing these specialised vehicles, which were absolutely enormous. They would have sat there in Ruperts or somewhere else, until needed. These wind turbines I believe, once again, if memory serves, they were something like 75 meters blade tips. So once again, it's a question on to the Delivery Plan, but I do agree that it is one of the main concerns. Whilst I was in the workshop in Sint Eustatius, I did meet somebody from the Falkland Islands, and they've gone with a special wind turbine system that are relatively small, but they fit multiple ones in what they call camp, which is the countryside to the Falkland Islanders, and they actually are provided by a Scottish manufacturer, for example. So there are hundreds of options available, but it has to be a consideration when we do these systems, not only how we get them here, to construct them, but how we maintain them afterwards. If you've got a massive wind turbine, you cannot afford to keep a spare turbine on the island, it would quite literally, you could have millions of pounds worth of spare parts just there in case. So all these considerations I hope will be in the documentation that we receive.

The Deputy Speaker -

Thank you. Any further questions? No. Honourable Members this concludes the Minister's Question meeting, Question Time meeting for today. Thank you, Honourable Members for all your contributions. Thank you to the clerk Marita and SAMS for broadcasting the proceedings live. Thank you also to those who took the opportunity to listen to the live proceedings, and we hope that you found the session relating to Renewable Energy, both informative and interesting. In closing, because this is, this is our last formal meeting for this month, we wish you all a peaceful festive season. Thank you all very much.


Honourable Speaker

17th July 2026
Date