



Reform Jersey

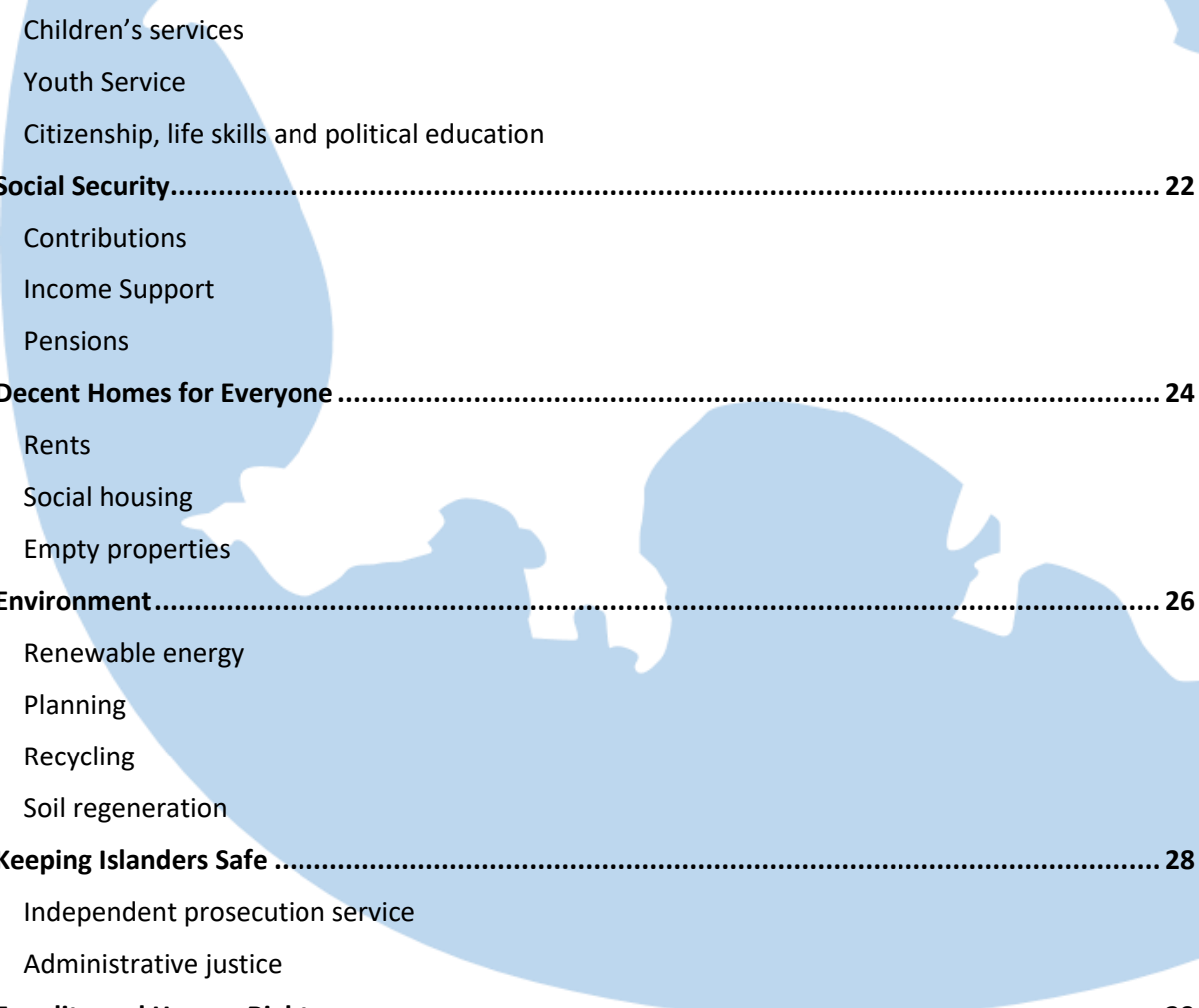
Election manifesto 2018

Working For A Fairer Island



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Introduction

Dear Islander,

This election is a chance for the people of Jersey to vote for real change.

Reform Jersey is standing on a platform of positive change, with one clear and simple aim – **to improve the lives of all Islanders.**

Jersey is full of potential. We are surrounded by a beautiful environment. The people here are generous and hardworking. From finance to farming or from care in the community to construction, we have some of the best expertise in the world. There is no reason why Jersey could not have the highest standard of living in the world if we had governments with a clear vision of how to get there.

Yet all too often it feels like the States of Jersey has held the Island back from succeeding and has often stepped in the way to make things more difficult for ordinary Islanders trying to get by.

The statistics show that under the current States leadership, Jersey has become a more unequal society in comparison to the UK: average earnings have flat-lined for a decade and relative poverty has dramatically increased. **We refuse to accept that any of this is inevitable.**

The current Council of Ministers has failed to control population growth, has let down young Islanders by failing to find a funded solution for Higher Education and has failed to reign in the wasteful spending at the senior levels of the civil service. **We believe that Jersey deserves better than this.**

In this manifesto, we are presenting our vision for how things can be different.

We know that there are huge challenges facing Jersey and that tough decisions will need to be made, but we accept that we do not possess all the answers and we want to work together in an open democracy, on behalf of the public to make this Island a better place for everyone.

We believe that the three main focuses for the next government should be –

- 1) To make a concerted drive to improve the standard of living for Islanders (**including the elimination of poverty**), based on a growing economy which works for all and strong public services
- 2) To implement the recommendations of the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry, to ensure all of Jersey's young people can thrive
- 3) To represent Jersey's interests at the highest level throughout Brexit negotiations, to ensure Jersey's place in the world is secured

If the people of Jersey offer us a chance to take a leading role in the next government, we will not let you down. A better Jersey is possible, and we are determined to make it happen.

Reform
Jersey



About Reform Jersey

Reform Jersey is a social-democratic political party, currently with three elected members of the States Assembly.

We believe that the role of the state is to create an environment in which every individual can achieve their potential, regardless of their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or social background.

We believe that it is the duty of the state, in partnership with its citizens, to help create a society that works for all, including the poorest and most disadvantaged. We believe in speaking up for the vulnerable, encouraging those with aspiration, and ensuring all can live in a society built on social and economic justice. We wish the Island to prosper in a manner that will improve the wellbeing of all current and future citizens

Our Ten Key Pledges

Where Reform Jersey candidates stand apart from ‘independent’ candidates, is that we can offer voters a cast-iron guarantee that we will pursue a core set of policies if we are elected.

This is not a wish-list, it is a blueprint for a Reform Jersey work programme if our candidates are elected.

After the election, our successful candidates will share responsibility for putting together States’ propositions to implement each pledge. **We commit** to reporting back to the public every year to update on the progress made towards fulfilling these pledges.

Consider this our contract with the electorate.

We will work to:

1. Reform our Income Tax system to allow all taxpayers to claim tax allowances, reducing the effective rate for all taxpayers, except the highest earning 5% who will be asked to pay slightly more.
2. Introduce grants to cover the costs of university tuition fees for all Jersey students, along with means tested maintenance grants. For those not seeking higher education, we shall secure provision of high quality apprenticeships.
3. Increase the Minimum Wage to £10 an hour by 2022 and end the inappropriate use of zero-hour contracts by enforcing the JACS guidelines through regulation.
4. Reduce Social Security Contributions for the self-employed and gradually increase the rate for high earners, to match the rate paid by low and middle earners.
5. Introduce 26 weeks statutory parental leave funded from Social Security contributions and 3 weeks’ minimum statutory annual paid leave.
6. Work with the Jersey Electricity Company to support investment in renewable energy technologies and set ambitious targets for renewable energy generation.
7. Reduce the cost of GP consultations for those on low incomes. In consultation with stakeholders, introduce an affordable scheme to replace the dental fitness scheme for children.
8. Introduce a rent freeze on the social housing sector and research and develop a fair rent regulation system for all sectors. We will introduce an empty property tax to encourage unused properties to be put back on the market.
9. Restore free collective bargaining with public sector representatives, and re-open negotiations over workforce modernisation.
10. Reform our electoral system to introduce one category of States Member, elected in equal sized constituencies where all voters have the same number of votes.

Our Record

Over the last four years, Reform Jersey has had three elected members in the States Assembly who have worked closely together to try to bring about changes to improve ordinary Islanders' lives, as well as leading the opposition to the Council of Ministers' harshest policies.

We have held a parliamentary party meeting almost every week throughout this electoral term, where we have co-ordinated our efforts to ensure that our time is spent most effectively. We believe this has been a crucial reason we have been able to achieve the successes we have.

Our three elected States Members have each worked hard on Scrutiny Panels throughout the term. They have taken on constituency work from around the whole Island when Islanders have come to them for help when their own Deputies have not been capable of helping them. The vast majority of States' questions and private members' propositions throughout this term have come from Reform Jersey members.

Our work has included –

- Persuading the States to agree to seek accreditation as a 'Living Wage' employer and accelerate the timetable for raising the Minimum Wage
- Campaigning with others to successfully help save People's Park from being developed as the new hospital site
- Bringing Equal Marriage onto the political agenda
- Getting the States to agree to introduce online voting by the next election
- Preventing the abolition of the Pensioners' Christmas Bonus for the poorest pensioners
- Achieving free bus passes for disabled Islanders
- Exposing much of the wasteful spending by senior civil servants
- Preventing the imposition of a lower Minimum Wage for young people
- Protecting funding for language teaching assistants in schools
- Banning discrimination against tenants with children
- Introducing an Ethical Care Charter for home care
- Thwarting government attempts to introduce stealth taxes
- Introducing Trade Union recognition rules

We have attempted to achieve much more than this. However, with a parliamentary majority pitted against us, this has often been difficult. With a greater number of Reform Jersey members in the Assembly, our chances of achieving our manifesto pledges will be greatly improved.

Whilst Reform Jersey has never been afraid to speak out in opposition to the government, we have never opposed just for the sake of it. We have been able to maintain a good working relationship with all States Members to get the best outcomes for the public and have voted with the Council of Ministers when it has been the responsible thing to do.



An Economy That Works For All

“Reform Jersey believes that Jersey’s prosperity lies in securing a growing economy which works for all, not just a few at the top. A growing economy will deliver better job opportunities for Islanders, as well as the revenue required to fund our public services. We believe that the government should develop our industries and support businesses to grow, whilst safeguarding conditions for employees to protect their standard of living.”

After many years of recession, Jersey’s economy has only recently begun to see low levels of growth return. However, **this has largely been driven by the unsustainable population growth** which the current Council of Ministers has failed to control. It cannot continue into the long-term. The targets on productivity have not been met.

Over the last decade, earnings have only increased by 0.1% in real terms. Last year, **the economic standard of living for Islanders decreased by 0.3%**. Pay for the lowest paid workers has fallen below that of the UK and Guernsey for the first time in 10 years because the States has refused to raise the Minimum Wage. It has also allowed the proliferation of zero-hours contracts, and unstable working conditions to increase.

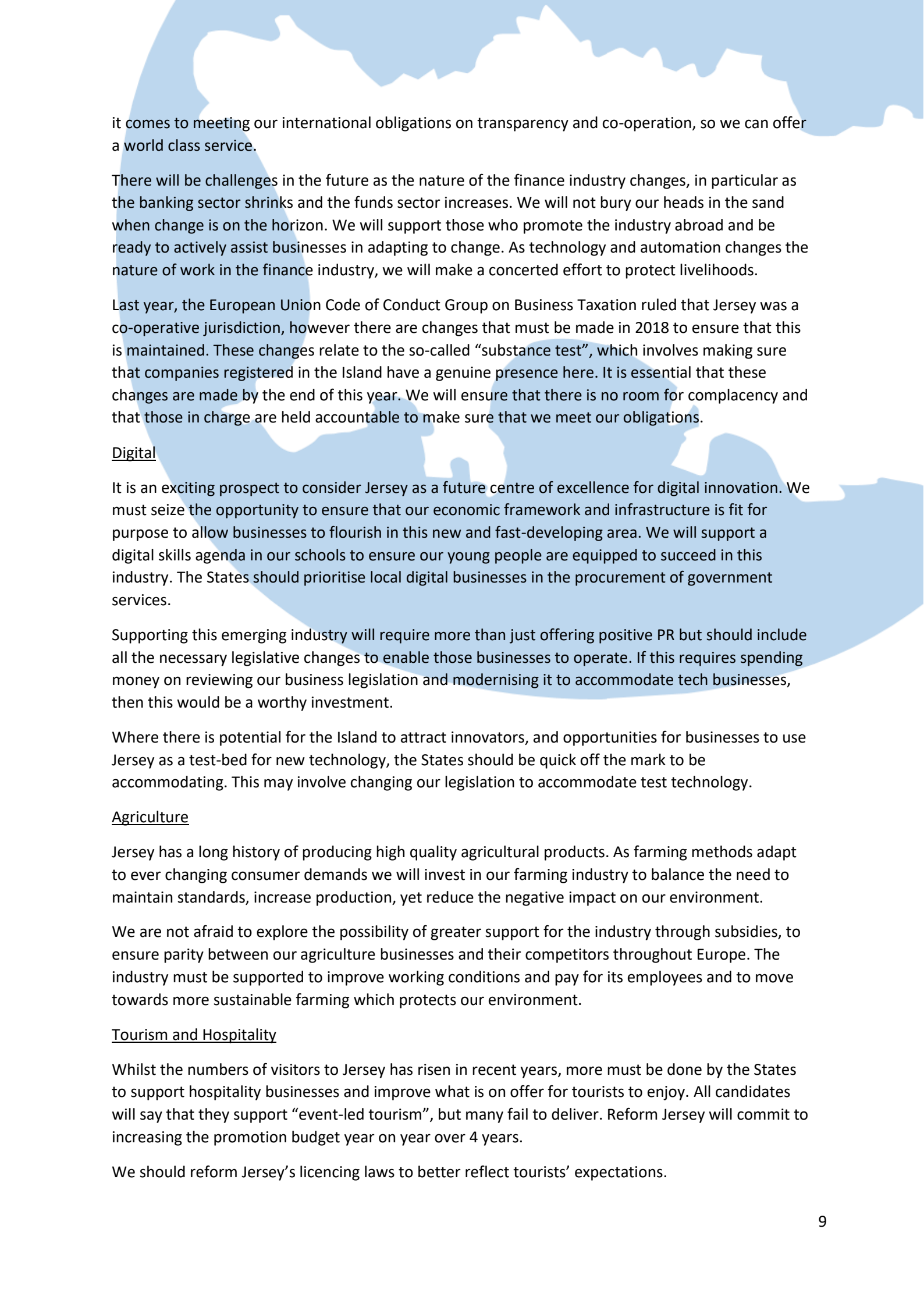
How can it possibly be right that when our economy returns to growth, Islanders are still worse off?

The next government must make a concerted effort to reverse the economic trends that have seen it become harder for ordinary Islanders to get by. The number one mission of the next government should be to improve the standard of living for ALL Islanders.

Reform Jersey wants to see a prosperous economy where all sections of our community can share in the benefits this creates. This will mean striking an important balance between supporting businesses and workers’ rights. We must move on from the complacency that has existed over the last decade.

Finance

The finance industry remains Jersey’s main employer and a very important source of income for the Island. We will support the industry in all its efforts to continue to be at the top of the league when



it comes to meeting our international obligations on transparency and co-operation, so we can offer a world class service.

There will be challenges in the future as the nature of the finance industry changes, in particular as the banking sector shrinks and the funds sector increases. We will not bury our heads in the sand when change is on the horizon. We will support those who promote the industry abroad and be ready to actively assist businesses in adapting to change. As technology and automation changes the nature of work in the finance industry, we will make a concerted effort to protect livelihoods.

Last year, the European Union Code of Conduct Group on Business Taxation ruled that Jersey was a co-operative jurisdiction, however there are changes that must be made in 2018 to ensure that this is maintained. These changes relate to the so-called “substance test”, which involves making sure that companies registered in the Island have a genuine presence here. It is essential that these changes are made by the end of this year. We will ensure that there is no room for complacency and that those in charge are held accountable to make sure that we meet our obligations.

Digital

It is an exciting prospect to consider Jersey as a future centre of excellence for digital innovation. We must seize the opportunity to ensure that our economic framework and infrastructure is fit for purpose to allow businesses to flourish in this new and fast-developing area. We will support a digital skills agenda in our schools to ensure our young people are equipped to succeed in this industry. The States should prioritise local digital businesses in the procurement of government services.

Supporting this emerging industry will require more than just offering positive PR but should include all the necessary legislative changes to enable those businesses to operate. If this requires spending money on reviewing our business legislation and modernising it to accommodate tech businesses, then this would be a worthy investment.

Where there is potential for the Island to attract innovators, and opportunities for businesses to use Jersey as a test-bed for new technology, the States should be quick off the mark to be accommodating. This may involve changing our legislation to accommodate test technology.

Agriculture

Jersey has a long history of producing high quality agricultural products. As farming methods adapt to ever changing consumer demands we will invest in our farming industry to balance the need to maintain standards, increase production, yet reduce the negative impact on our environment.

We are not afraid to explore the possibility of greater support for the industry through subsidies, to ensure parity between our agriculture businesses and their competitors throughout Europe. The industry must be supported to improve working conditions and pay for its employees and to move towards more sustainable farming which protects our environment.

Tourism and Hospitality

Whilst the numbers of visitors to Jersey has risen in recent years, more must be done by the States to support hospitality businesses and improve what is on offer for tourists to enjoy. All candidates will say that they support “event-led tourism”, but many fail to deliver. Reform Jersey will commit to increasing the promotion budget year on year over 4 years.

We should reform Jersey’s licencing laws to better reflect tourists’ expectations.

The fundamental factor that the government must address is the provision of reliable travel links by sea and air. Reform Jersey will address this issue as current contracts come to an end.

The Parish of St Helier should be given more powers, so it can take the lead in providing entertainment and cultural events in public spaces to enhance the experience in town for visitors, and to make it an even more attractive place for people to visit and enjoy.

Supporting Jersey businesses

Small businesses are the bedrock of our economy, employing local people and creating local jobs. The government should be on the side of people who want to start a business, helping create an environment where those with initiative, who take on the risk, are supported to enhance their chances of success and to provide a safety net if things go wrong.

We will ensure the States provides better outreach services to help businesses deal with employment issues. We will also introduce a system to allow businesses to pay their licences in monthly payments, instead of ad hoc full payments at inconvenient moments in the business season.

We will oppose the introduction of stealth taxes and charges on businesses, which do not reflect the businesses' ability to pay.

Low pay and insecure work

Over the last few years, Jersey has gone backwards as the lowest paid workers have seen their wages fall in value, and rights have been eroded in the workplace. We believe that every single Islander deserves to be paid properly for the work they do and to have security in their jobs. They need to know that they cannot be treated unfairly and can provide for their families during tough times.

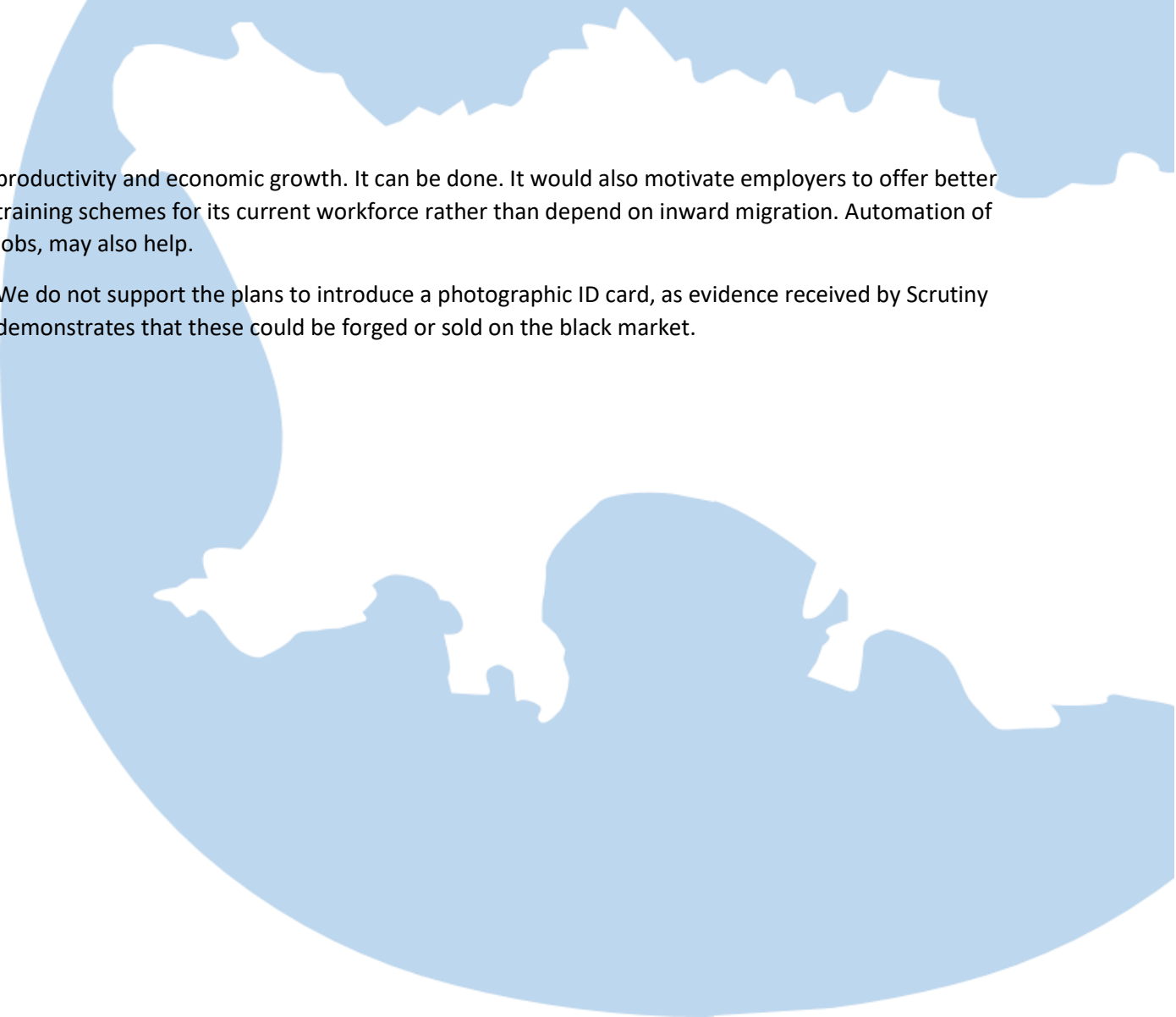
We will legislate to introduce compulsory regulations on zero-hours contracts to outlaw their inappropriate use and enforce minimum-hours contracts for workers who are not involved in casual work. We **pledge** to raise the Minimum Wage to £10 per hour by 2022. We will introduce legislation to protect workers' jobs through company acquisitions. This legislation was introduced almost 40 years ago in the UK, yet Jersey is lagging behind. We will reverse the unreasonable decision by the previous Minister for Social Security to extend the period before unfair dismissal can be claimed from 6 to 12 months.

Population

The current government has failed to control population growth. In 2014 they set an interim target of 325 net inward migration per year, yet the average has been 1,000 per year.

Jersey's population policy must not stifle businesses that rely on workers with skills that are not available in Jersey already, however there must be a focus on training people already here to take up as many of these jobs as possible. Targets set **must** be followed.

In our opinion, and that of the Statistics Unit, the new proposed work permit scheme will prevent between 500 to 700 registered workers from "graduating" to permanent residence after 5 years. This will solve the problem in terms of the numbers contributing to population growth. The problem then is just a question of commitment: that is, setting a limit and sticking to it on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. This will enable the government to achieve its target of selecting high-earning, highly trained migrants paying tax and Social Security, and thus contributing to increased



productivity and economic growth. It can be done. It would also motivate employers to offer better training schemes for its current workforce rather than depend on inward migration. Automation of jobs, may also help.

We do not support the plans to introduce a photographic ID card, as evidence received by Scrutiny demonstrates that these could be forged or sold on the black market.



A Governance Structure for the 21st Century

“Reform Jersey believes that Islanders deserve to have a public sector which delivers a first-class service at an efficient cost. Those in positions of responsibility should be held to account to deliver for the public of Jersey, and the culture should be open and transparent. Governments should deliver balanced budgets and not spend beyond their means.”

One of the crucial challenges of the next government will be to deliver on reforming the structure of the public sector. Over recent years, Reform Jersey has helped to expose the extent of waste in the public sector, which many Islanders have found shocking and unacceptable. It is well known that there is an ultra-conservative culture within the senior levels of the civil service where many officers have acted as if they were unaccountable and have expected the taxpayer to foot the bill for their extravagance.

We believe that this culture has developed under the recent political leadership, which cannot now be counted upon to change it. Only new leadership can deliver this change.

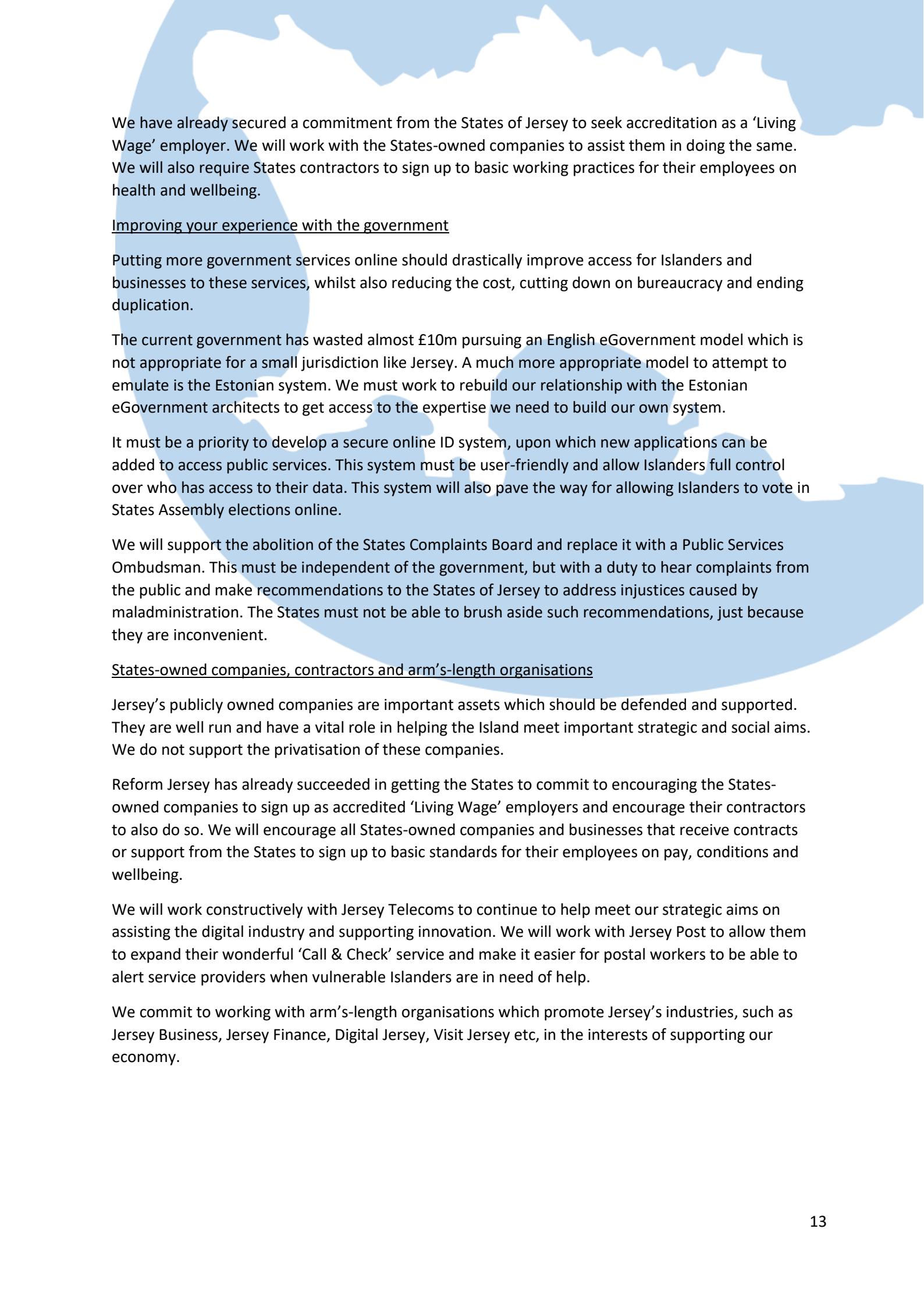
Our position is clear – **we will defend the front-line workers in our civil service who do an excellent job, often in difficult circumstances. We will not support bloated management levels where resources are inefficiently allocated and where the taxpayer does not get good value for money.**

The silos which divide States departments must be broken down and clear lines of accountability must be drawn up. Chief Officers must no longer be responsible for signing off their own expenses. We will work with the new CEO of the States of Jersey to achieve this.

The States of Jersey as an employer

Reform Jersey believes that the workers’ representatives have a vital role to play in assisting the States to identify inefficiencies and systems which could be improved, but this can only happen when there is a positive relationship between the employer and employees. It is not justifiable to see our hardworking professionals, such as nurses and teachers, facing deteriorating working conditions and pay, whilst those at the top squander taxpayers’ money.

We believe that the States should be a model employer which treats its workers with respect and dignity, whilst also operating modern practices which provide good value for money for the taxpayer. We **pledge** to re-open Workforce Modernisation negotiations. With this aim in mind, we will enforce bullying and harassment guidelines and tackle workplace stress.



We have already secured a commitment from the States of Jersey to seek accreditation as a 'Living Wage' employer. We will work with the States-owned companies to assist them in doing the same. We will also require States contractors to sign up to basic working practices for their employees on health and wellbeing.

Improving your experience with the government

Putting more government services online should drastically improve access for Islanders and businesses to these services, whilst also reducing the cost, cutting down on bureaucracy and ending duplication.

The current government has wasted almost £10m pursuing an English eGovernment model which is not appropriate for a small jurisdiction like Jersey. A much more appropriate model to attempt to emulate is the Estonian system. We must work to rebuild our relationship with the Estonian eGovernment architects to get access to the expertise we need to build our own system.

It must be a priority to develop a secure online ID system, upon which new applications can be added to access public services. This system must be user-friendly and allow Islanders full control over who has access to their data. This system will also pave the way for allowing Islanders to vote in States Assembly elections online.

We will support the abolition of the States Complaints Board and replace it with a Public Services Ombudsman. This must be independent of the government, but with a duty to hear complaints from the public and make recommendations to the States of Jersey to address injustices caused by maladministration. The States must not be able to brush aside such recommendations, just because they are inconvenient.

States-owned companies, contractors and arm's-length organisations

Jersey's publicly owned companies are important assets which should be defended and supported. They are well run and have a vital role in helping the Island meet important strategic and social aims. We do not support the privatisation of these companies.

Reform Jersey has already succeeded in getting the States to commit to encouraging the States-owned companies to sign up as accredited 'Living Wage' employers and encourage their contractors to also do so. We will encourage all States-owned companies and businesses that receive contracts or support from the States to sign up to basic standards for their employees on pay, conditions and wellbeing.

We will work constructively with Jersey Telecoms to continue to help meet our strategic aims on assisting the digital industry and supporting innovation. We will work with Jersey Post to allow them to expand their wonderful 'Call & Check' service and make it easier for postal workers to be able to alert service providers when vulnerable Islanders are in need of help.

We commit to working with arm's-length organisations which promote Jersey's industries, such as Jersey Business, Jersey Finance, Digital Jersey, Visit Jersey etc, in the interests of supporting our economy.



A Tax System with Fairness and Sustainability at its core

“Reform Jersey believes that tax is the subscription fee we pay for living in a civilised society. We believe that each should contribute according to their ability to pay, rather than how much they benefit from public services. Taxes should be fair and sustainable.”

Jersey’s tax system has evolved in a haphazard and incoherent way since the introduction of 0/10. It is no longer fit for purpose and has contributed to the States’ public spending deficit. There is an injustice that many businesses continue to trade and make profits in Jersey without paying tax. Meanwhile, many middle earners feel increasingly squeezed by new taxes like the Long-Term Care tax, which exempt the wealthiest Islanders from paying the full rate. Our system must be reformed to ensure that Islanders and businesses are all contributing fairly.

Jersey’s “low-tax low-spend” model is broken. The current government has attempted to introduce stealth taxes (which they refuse to call taxes) to make up for the fact that our Income Tax and Corporation Tax systems are not raising the revenue we require to pay for our public services. We will oppose these stealth taxes and support honest reform of our tax system.

Income Tax

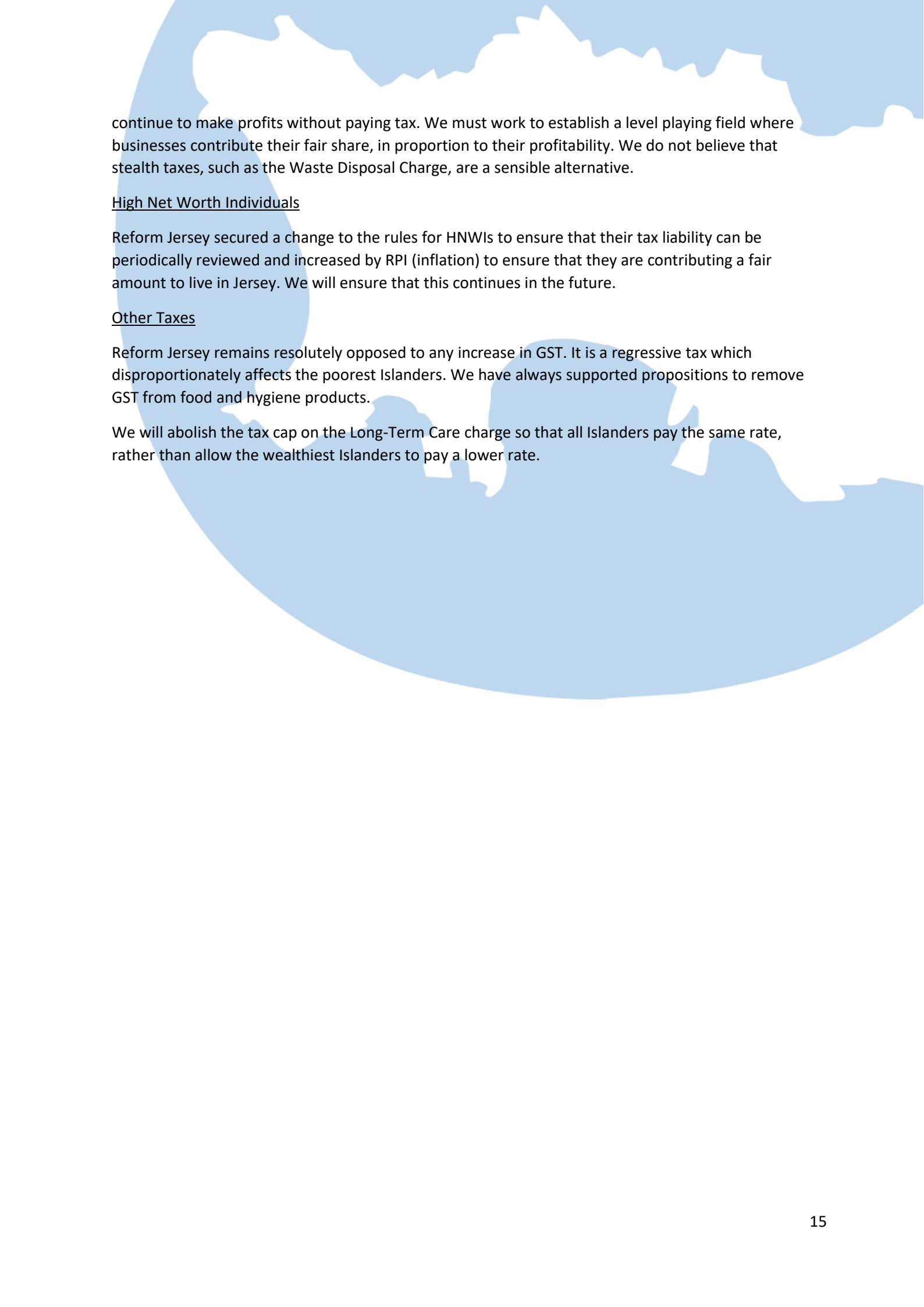
Jersey’s two-tier Income Tax system is unnecessarily complicated and unfair. The “20 means 20” system no longer really exists, and many middle earners feel too squeezed by the tax burden. We **pledge** to simplify our Income Tax system by moving to one tax calculation, reducing the marginal rate of tax by 1% and allowing all taxpayers to claim tax allowances. We will propose this change in the 2019 Budget.

This will ensure that 95% of taxpayers receive either a tax cut or a tax freeze. Only the wealthiest 5% of Islanders will pay slightly more. Under this policy, a family with two children and with both earners on the average wage, would receive a tax cut of £385 a year. Overall, this policy will raise £6m per year, which we will put towards improving our public services, including Higher Education funding.

We will support the end of the sexist system which prevents women from discussing their tax affairs with the States without their husbands’ permission, by moving towards personal taxation (as opposed to household taxation) by 2019. We will move to put tax returns online, which will save money in administration costs, and eliminate queues at the Tax Department.

Corporation Tax

It is vital that the 0% tax rate remains for the investment businesses in the Island which depend on tax neutrality to remain viable. However, it is wrong that so many businesses trading in Jersey



continue to make profits without paying tax. We must work to establish a level playing field where businesses contribute their fair share, in proportion to their profitability. We do not believe that stealth taxes, such as the Waste Disposal Charge, are a sensible alternative.

High Net Worth Individuals

Reform Jersey secured a change to the rules for HNWIs to ensure that their tax liability can be periodically reviewed and increased by RPI (inflation) to ensure that they are contributing a fair amount to live in Jersey. We will ensure that this continues in the future.

Other Taxes

Reform Jersey remains resolutely opposed to any increase in GST. It is a regressive tax which disproportionately affects the poorest Islanders. We have always supported propositions to remove GST from food and hygiene products.

We will abolish the tax cap on the Long-Term Care charge so that all Islanders pay the same rate, rather than allow the wealthiest Islanders to pay a lower rate.



Finding Jersey's Place in the World

"Reform Jersey believes that whilst we are a small Island, we should not shy away from playing our part on the international stage. The government should aim to seize opportunities to work with our neighbours and partners to achieve the best outcomes for people in Jersey."

With Brexit on the horizon, Jersey's position is uncertain. We do not know what the final deal for Britain leaving the European Union will look like and what its implications for Jersey will be. Our position is that we want Jersey to retain as many of its current relationships (currently governed under Protocol 3 of the UK accession treaty) with the UK and EU as possible. We will speak up for the Island's interests at the highest levels to make sure that this status is preserved in the final deal.

We will also seek to benefit from our relationships with other EU states which are also members of the Commonwealth, such as Malta and Cyprus (who will have vetoes on the final Brexit deal) to ensure that our interests are taken into account.

Channel Islands' Co-operation


There are many areas, not least over Brexit, where Jersey and Guernsey should be working together to provide value for money for both governments as well as drawing on a wider pool of experience and expertise to provide better services. There are services where we should aim to establish joint offices to achieve this. We will seek an agreement with our neighbours to establish a Channel Islands Council to facilitate communications and joint project work with our counterparts in each Island. The maintenance and improvement of our sea and air links, not only with the other Islands but also with France and the UK, requires full co-operation.

Our special relationship with the United Kingdom

Reform Jersey believes that our special relationship with the United Kingdom is of paramount importance, not just for our economy but also for our security, and we do not support Jersey becoming an independent country. Progress has been made in recent years to ensure all UK political parties understand Jersey's value to the UK and the nature of our constitutional relationship. We will work to maintain good relations to ensure that Jersey's interests are considered in the Brexit negotiations.

International Development and Foreign Policy

Jersey's contributions to Overseas Aid should be a source of pride for Islanders. The aid we provide is improving the lives of some of the most deprived people in the world. We will protect funding for the Overseas Aid Commission and work to ensure that each project we take on is providing the maximum benefit possible to those we are seeking to help by focusing on long-term projects designed to help lift areas out of poverty, rather than making token donations.



Reform Jersey accepts that we cannot solve all the world's problems, however we should not be legitimising regimes which are abusing human rights and contributing to instability and terrorism in trouble spots around the world. We would not take part in positive PR for disreputable regimes, as the current government in Jersey has done on several occasions.



Health

“Reform Jersey believes in the principle of a universal health service, free at the point of need. We believe that every Islander in need of treatment should receive it in a timely manner and without incurring costs. We believe that to guarantee the best services, we must invest not just in the new hospital building, but in the staff who care for us when we are sick.”

With an ageing population, it is imperative that we invest in our health system to make sure that all patients receive the care they need. This must remain a strategic priority of the new government, which must reduce the long, anxious and painful waiting times for elective surgery.

The Health Department has had problems with recruitment for years. We must face up to the fact that following years of cutbacks in the UK which have led to shortages of healthcare professionals at all grades, we are an expensive Island with a very high cost of living. If we are to recruit and, above all, retain professionals in the long-term, we must improve conditions and incentives for healthcare professionals to ensure we attract the best people for these jobs.

Primary Health Care

It ultimately costs less in the long run to ensure that people have their health issues addressed in the early stages, rather than put off seeking treatment until they are seriously ill. We **pledge** to reduce the cost of seeing a GP, initially for those on a low income, but eventually for everyone, to enable Islanders to see a doctor whenever they need to, without worrying about money. This will reduce the burden on A&E and lead to a healthier society.

Mental Health

1 in 4 of us will face a mental health illness at some point in our lives. It is crucial that these health issues are treated with the same seriousness that any physical health difficulty would be treated with. Currently, Jersey’s mental healthcare system falls well short of what is acceptable. Waiting lists are far too long and many vulnerable Islanders are being let down. We must invest in this service urgently, with a focus on early intervention.

The plans for a mental healthcare centre at Overdale are good, however the child and adolescent service should not be housed with the adult services.

We will also support introducing an on-Island mental health nurse training scheme, as currently exists for general nursing.

The new hospital

The debate on securing a new hospital has demonstrated Jersey politics at its worst. It is not acceptable that the government has spent £26m with so little to show for it at this stage.

Reform Jersey would seek the opinion of clinical staff to guide decisions, but generally supports building the new hospital on a site in town, where transport links are best and where little disruption can be caused. Some outpatient services can be provided at an expanded Overdale site; however, emergency and general services must be located on one site with optimal clinical adjacency to enable swift transfers between A&E and wards with minimal risk to the patient.

Care in the home

The cut in funding to the Family Nursing Home Care service was a demonstration of the “race to bottom” philosophy at its worst, which provoked many experienced carers to leave the profession.

Reform Jersey has secured a commitment to introduce a compulsory “Ethical Care Charter” to ensure those who provide care services to patients at home are well equipped to safeguard the patient’s wellbeing. We will make sure that this is implemented fully and receives the funding it requires.



Education and Young People

“Reform Jersey believes in an inclusive education service which provides young people with all the opportunities they need to achieve their potential, irrespective of their family background, and a settled, motivated workforce providing the highest quality of education. Young people growing up in Jersey should be supported by the States and the wider community to enable them to be safe, to thrive and be happy.”

At 2.6% of GDP, funding for education in Jersey is one of the lowest in the world. The Education Department has been cut to the bone by the current government and is not capable of finding further savings without damaging the quality of service provided to our young people. We must invest in our young people, not just to ensure we have the skilled workforce we need for a healthy economy, but to enable them to live happy lives and achieve their aspirations. Children’s wellbeing must not come second to achieving academic targets.

The findings of the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry have made it clear that improving our children’s services must be one of the top priorities of the next government. We commit to implementing all the recommendations made in their report.

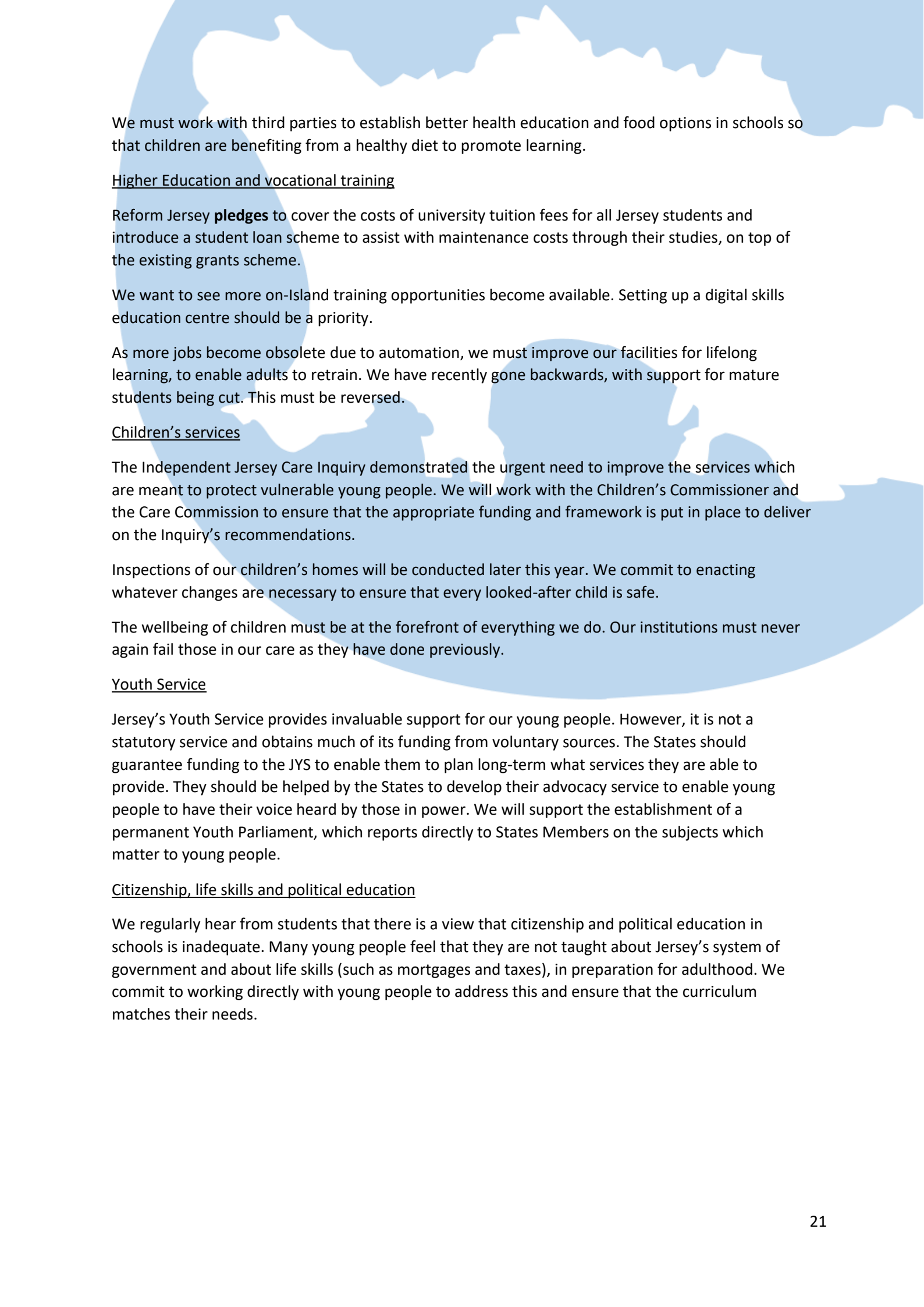
Nursery

Reform Jersey has opposed means-testing nursery places and continues to believe that providing free access to nursery places for as many children as possible is in the best interests of families and the economy. The current government has attempted to undermine the private sector nursery providers by pursuing their means-testing agenda in a covert way. We will engage constructively with the Jersey Early Years Partnership to ensure that the system in place is based on what is best for young children and that all families can benefit from affordable childcare.

Primary and secondary school

The wellbeing of pupils and staff must be given the highest priority in all schools (with professional support available to all at any time of the school day). We must return to an education system which allows students to learn and thrive, without the increasing stress that has developed in recent years by pressure to meet arbitrary targets.

We believe that teachers should be empowered to teach their students in a way which is most effective, without the burden of an over-cumbersome bureaucracy.



We must work with third parties to establish better health education and food options in schools so that children are benefiting from a healthy diet to promote learning.

Higher Education and vocational training

Reform Jersey **pledges** to cover the costs of university tuition fees for all Jersey students and introduce a student loan scheme to assist with maintenance costs through their studies, on top of the existing grants scheme.

We want to see more on-Island training opportunities become available. Setting up a digital skills education centre should be a priority.

As more jobs become obsolete due to automation, we must improve our facilities for lifelong learning, to enable adults to retrain. We have recently gone backwards, with support for mature students being cut. This must be reversed.

Children's services

The Independent Jersey Care Inquiry demonstrated the urgent need to improve the services which are meant to protect vulnerable young people. We will work with the Children's Commissioner and the Care Commission to ensure that the appropriate funding and framework is put in place to deliver on the Inquiry's recommendations.

Inspections of our children's homes will be conducted later this year. We commit to enacting whatever changes are necessary to ensure that every looked-after child is safe.

The wellbeing of children must be at the forefront of everything we do. Our institutions must never again fail those in our care as they have done previously.

Youth Service

Jersey's Youth Service provides invaluable support for our young people. However, it is not a statutory service and obtains much of its funding from voluntary sources. The States should guarantee funding to the JYS to enable them to plan long-term what services they are able to provide. They should be helped by the States to develop their advocacy service to enable young people to have their voice heard by those in power. We will support the establishment of a permanent Youth Parliament, which reports directly to States Members on the subjects which matter to young people.

Citizenship, life skills and political education

We regularly hear from students that there is a view that citizenship and political education in schools is inadequate. Many young people feel that they are not taught about Jersey's system of government and about life skills (such as mortgages and taxes), in preparation for adulthood. We commit to working directly with young people to address this and ensure that the curriculum matches their needs.



Social Security

“Reform Jersey believes that our Social Security system should be there to help those who are in need and provide support for Islanders to get back on their feet when they fall on hard times. The system should be compassionate and guided by principles of common-sense, to ensure that everybody receives what they are fairly entitled to.”

Under the current government, the Social Security budget was the first in the firing line, with £10m of support for pensioners, disabled people and single-parent families cut. The government took this action before waiting for the independent Statistics Unit to publish their findings on levels of poverty in Jersey. We subsequently found out that rates of poverty for pensioners and single parent households were exacerbated by these decisions. The lack of compassion that has been shown towards the vulnerable in our community must end.

To fill the predicted shortfall in the Social Security fund, the department has held a consultation with leading questions to justify future benefit cuts and increases in the qualifying period for contributory benefits. Reform Jersey will oppose every attempt to cut support for the poorest and most vulnerable members of our community. Instead, we will propose reducing the benefits bill by raising low wages.

Contributions

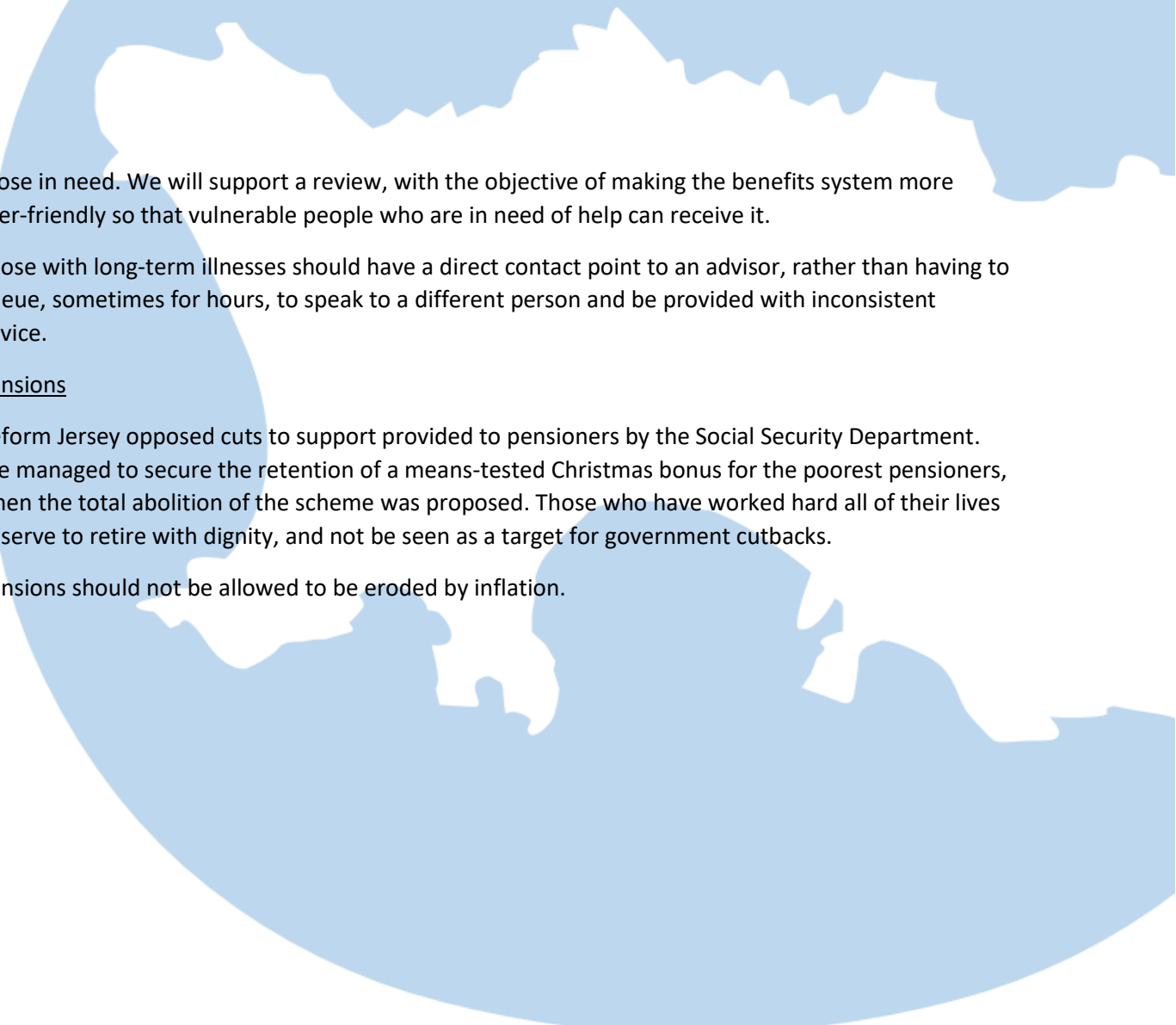
We **pledge** to reform our Social Security Contributions’ system to ensure that all Islanders pay their fair share, based on their income. We will raise the cap on contributions, which limits the percentage paid by high earners, so that they will pay an equal rate to low and middle earners.

At the start of this term of office, the Council of Ministers promised that it would reform Class 2 contributions (paid by self-employed people), however they have failed to do so.

We will reduce the rate for Class 2 contributions for self-employed people on lower incomes, to assist those who are starting businesses and are worried about losing their rights to contributory benefits as a safety net if their business does not succeed. This will enable those people to invest more in their businesses, employ workers and take risks.

Income Support

Since Income Support replaced Parish Welfare a decade ago, there has been no full-scale review to evaluate the success of this scheme and ensure that it is being targeted and accessed properly by



those in need. We will support a review, with the objective of making the benefits system more user-friendly so that vulnerable people who are in need of help can receive it.

Those with long-term illnesses should have a direct contact point to an advisor, rather than having to queue, sometimes for hours, to speak to a different person and be provided with inconsistent advice.

Pensions

Reform Jersey opposed cuts to support provided to pensioners by the Social Security Department. We managed to secure the retention of a means-tested Christmas bonus for the poorest pensioners, when the total abolition of the scheme was proposed. Those who have worked hard all of their lives deserve to retire with dignity, and not be seen as a target for government cutbacks.

Pensions should not be allowed to be eroded by inflation.



Decent Homes for Everyone

“Reform Jersey believes that every Islander deserves to have a secure and affordable roof above their head. Home-ownership should not be out of reach for the many, and those in the rental sector should receive a decent service for the rent that they pay.”

Jersey’s housing market is broken. The Jersey Household Income Distribution Survey 2014/15 showed that the cost of housing was the largest contributor to poverty, and we have a much lower home-ownership rate than the UK. For too long, the States has regulated the market in the interests of investors, rather than the interests of people who need a place to live. They have opposed regulations to improve access and have claimed that the only solution to the housing crisis is to build more houses, yet have failed even by their own benchmarks. This will change under Reform Jersey.

Simple regulations exist in other jurisdictions which the current government has refused to implement here, despite the clear impact they would have in improving access to affordable housing for Islanders. If a Reform Jersey member becomes Housing Minister in the next government, they will ban letting agent fees for tenants immediately (as has already been done in the UK).

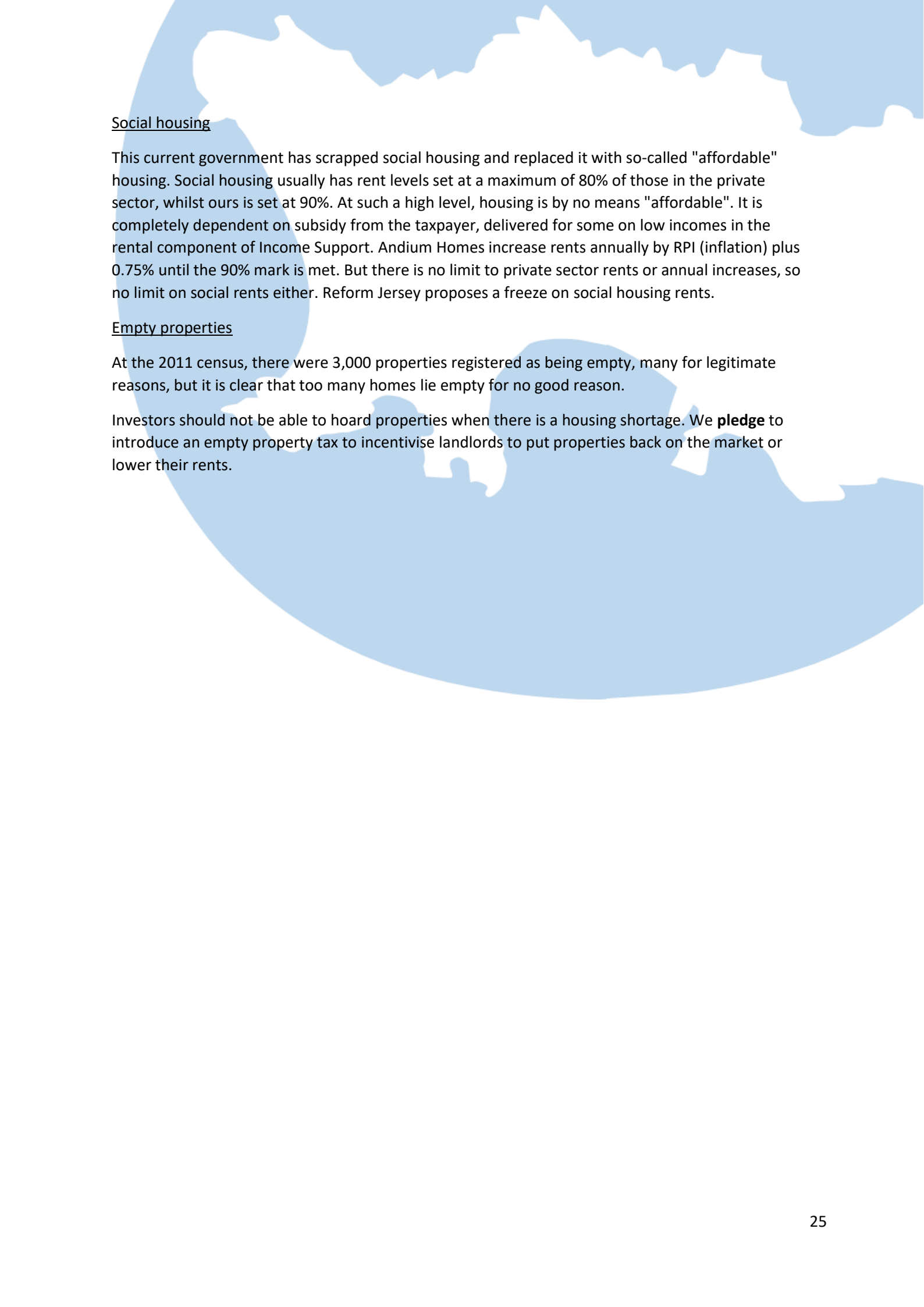
We believe that the cost of accommodation, whether to rent or buy, at its current high levels is unsustainable. The housing crisis is in major part due to the current government's inability or unwillingness to tackle inward migration. They have set a level for net inward migration of around 325 individuals a year, which leads over time to nil net growth, but has failed to meet its own target by spectacular margins, averaging 1,000 over the last 5 years.

Rents

Over 35% of our population are living in “housing stress”, where they are paying more than 33% of their income on rent (with many paying more than 50% of their income). It is clear that the cost of housing is too high in Jersey and this must be addressed urgently.

Increasing supply in the market can only be part of the solution. Much of Jersey’s private sector housing is completely unregulated, with no safeguards in place on whether those properties are suitable or being rented for a reasonable amount.

We will re-establish the Rent Tribunal to allow tenants to challenge unjustifiable rent increases, whilst we conduct further research into housing regulation to make sure that the housing market works in the interests of people who need a roof above their head.

A stylized, light blue map of Jersey is positioned in the background of the page. The map shows the island's coastline and internal regions, with a darker blue area representing the surrounding water.

Social housing

This current government has scrapped social housing and replaced it with so-called "affordable" housing. Social housing usually has rent levels set at a maximum of 80% of those in the private sector, whilst ours is set at 90%. At such a high level, housing is by no means "affordable". It is completely dependent on subsidy from the taxpayer, delivered for some on low incomes in the rental component of Income Support. Andium Homes increase rents annually by RPI (inflation) plus 0.75% until the 90% mark is met. But there is no limit to private sector rents or annual increases, so no limit on social rents either. Reform Jersey proposes a freeze on social housing rents.

Empty properties

At the 2011 census, there were 3,000 properties registered as being empty, many for legitimate reasons, but it is clear that too many homes lie empty for no good reason.

Investors should not be able to hoard properties when there is a housing shortage. We **pledge** to introduce an empty property tax to incentivise landlords to put properties back on the market or lower their rents.



Environment

“Reform Jersey believes that tackling climate change is the single biggest challenge humanity faces and that Jersey should be playing its part to protect our environment, reduce pollution and become more sustainable. Our natural environment is a huge part of what makes Jersey special and must be protected.”

It is no good just pointing at our excellent record in moving to low-carbon sources of energy generation like nuclear and hydro-electricity; we could and should go further and set targets for increasing our generation using renewable sources such as ground-based photovoltaic (PV) arrays on derelict land (such as the reclamation site at La Colette). As we wait to see PV generation become increasingly cost effective, we should also require new build accommodation to be PV-ready.

We will work with the JEC to revive the energy savings services outlined in Pathway 2050 including expanded targets for the Home Energy Scheme and the Energy Efficiency Service and agreeing joint funding for increased promotion for electric vehicles.

Renewable energy

As the “sunniest place in the British Isles” and with some of the greatest tidal reaches in the world, Jersey should be a pioneer for renewable energy. We **pledge** to work with the Jersey Electricity Company to produce ambitious targets for renewable energy generation. We will examine opportunities to benefit from wind farms in France, and local generation of solar and tidal power.

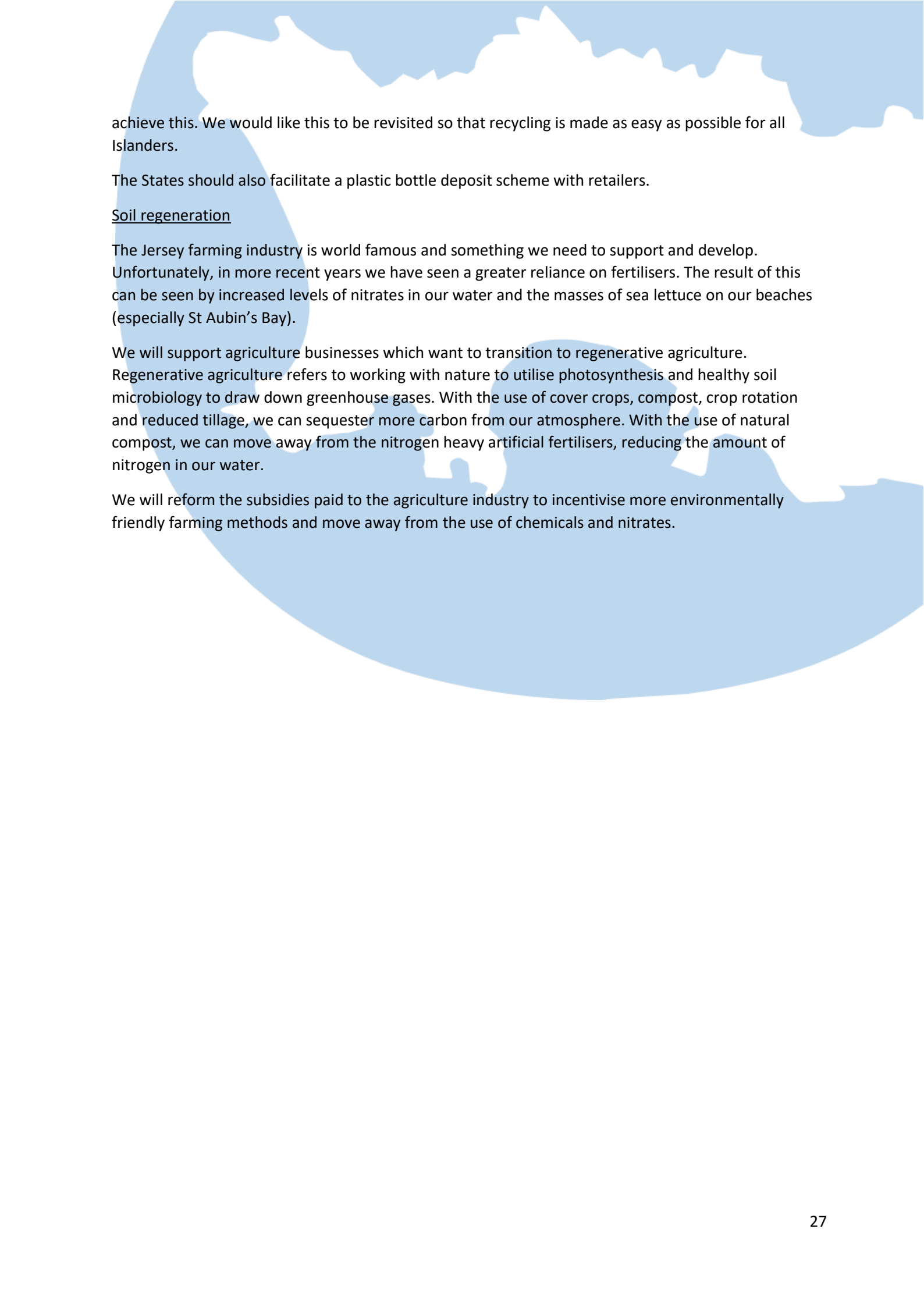
Planning

Planning regulations must be in place to ensure we protect both urban and countryside areas from over-development. In town, there must be an emphasis on access to open green space in densely populated areas as well as good traffic management. Properties must be built to appropriate standards on environment, space and access. It is also important that new developments fit in with their surroundings and do not detract from the character of their location.

Whilst we want to see Jersey’s historic buildings preserved as far as is possible, there must be flexibility for owners to be able to improve their properties for energy efficiency. A common-sense approach is required.

Recycling

Reform Jersey has long campaigned for an Island-wide kerbside recycling scheme but has been knocked back by the Infrastructure Department because they would not work with the Parishes to



achieve this. We would like this to be revisited so that recycling is made as easy as possible for all Islanders.

The States should also facilitate a plastic bottle deposit scheme with retailers.

Soil regeneration

The Jersey farming industry is world famous and something we need to support and develop. Unfortunately, in more recent years we have seen a greater reliance on fertilisers. The result of this can be seen by increased levels of nitrates in our water and the masses of sea lettuce on our beaches (especially St Aubin's Bay).

We will support agriculture businesses which want to transition to regenerative agriculture. Regenerative agriculture refers to working with nature to utilise photosynthesis and healthy soil microbiology to draw down greenhouse gases. With the use of cover crops, compost, crop rotation and reduced tillage, we can sequester more carbon from our atmosphere. With the use of natural compost, we can move away from the nitrogen heavy artificial fertilisers, reducing the amount of nitrogen in our water.

We will reform the subsidies paid to the agriculture industry to incentivise more environmentally friendly farming methods and move away from the use of chemicals and nitrates.



Keeping Islanders Safe

“Reform Jersey believes that keeping Jersey a safe and peaceful place to live is vital for our future success. Islanders deserve to be able to live their daily lives and know that they will be safe from harm and able to rely on a justice system which will support them if they are wronged.”

The Home Affairs Department has been subject to efficiency savings over this term of office that risk seeing our services become reactionary, instead of pro-active. The vast majority of the department’s budget is spent on salaries for uniformed officers. Savings can be made by the improved use of technology to reduce the amount of bureaucracy many officers currently have to deal with, when they could be out on the beat. However, these savings can only go so far, and we do not want to see cutbacks to frontline policing.

Other services such as the Prison and Customs and Immigration Service are not able to sustain further cuts without damaging the level of service they provide. The Prison must have adequate facilities to help rehabilitate inmates who are serving a sentence there, so that they are less likely to reoffend when they are released.

Independent prosecution service

Reform Jersey has long supported the establishment of an independent prosecution service, outside of the office of the Attorney General. It is not right that the legal adviser to the government of Jersey is also the person who decides whether or not to bring a prosecution forward. We will seek to end this inappropriate dual role.

Administrative justice

There are currently 8 tribunals which adjudicate on administrative disputes (such as Social Security, mental health reviews etc) that should be amalgamated into a single Jersey Administrative Appeals Tribunal, as proposed by the Jersey Law Commission. This would provide a much better path for Islanders to have their disputes resolved.



Equality and Human Rights

“Reform Jersey believes we should strive to create an Island where everybody, no matter their race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or social background, can reach their potential and lead happy and fulfilling lives. Equality is the core principle which inspires our policies.”

Jersey has lagged behind the rest of Europe by several decades on our anti-discrimination law, although progress has been made in recent years. The law that Jersey has adopted is based on the old law which existed in the UK but has now been superseded by the Equality Act. We will re-examine Jersey’s anti-discrimination laws, with the aim of consolidating them in our own Equality Act, which will focus on inclusivity, rather than just punishments for those who breach the law.

Women, people from ethnic minorities and disabled people are drastically under-represented in States appointed bodies. Ultimately the best candidate should always get the job, but clearly more needs to be done to encourage more diverse applications so that all groups can be better represented.

Disability

It should be an obligatory requirement for new buildings to be accessible for Islanders with mobility difficulties. The public sector should be leading the way as an inclusive employer and one which goes out of its way to ensure that its services can be utilised by any member of the public irrespective of disability. We will legislate to ensure that there is access for all in every shop and office.

LGBT rights

We are proud of the role we played in forcing Equal Marriage onto the political agenda in 2014. We were disappointed at the extraordinary length of time it took the States to make it a reality once the political commitment had been established. It is clear that there are issues which need to be resolved in our law drafting processes to prevent future delays to important pieces of social legislation. We will seek to amend the Marriages Law to remove the discriminatory clauses against transgender people.



Celebrating Jersey Culture and Talent

Jèrriais

Having our own indigenous language is part of what makes Jersey a special and unique place. It is important to make sure all efforts are made to preserve Jèrriais as a part of Island life. We will support the efforts being undertaken to create a comprehensive digital archive of recordings of Jèrriais being spoken to ensure that, even if the numbers of native speakers reduces, there will still be an authentic record of pronunciation and nuance that cannot be lost.

We will support teacher training for native Jèrriais speakers to enable them to teach the language to both adults and school children. Without this necessary step, the language will be at a severe risk of being lost.

Diversity

We believe that the presence of people of different nationalities, races, cultures and religions in our Island is a source of strength for Jersey which is worth celebrating. Having people from around the world sharing different ideas and ways of doing things is both economically and culturally beneficial for all of us.

We will support all efforts made by our minority communities to share their cultural experience with the whole Island through their food and cultural festivals, as well as support their efforts to run help and advice centres so their members are better able to integrate at work and in public services. Where particular policies may have a disproportionate impact on people from particular religions or nationalities, we will endeavour to consult them to make sure their voice is heard.

Sport

Continuing to provide excellent and accessible sports facilities is essential to help Islanders keep fit and healthy. The States should continually ensure that adequate provision is provided. The achievements of Jersey's talented sportsmen and women are rightly celebrated by us all. The States must support our sports clubs and athletes to make sure they are able to represent the Island in international competitions when that is what they aspire to do.

For ten years now, Jersey's main skatepark has been left to deteriorate, without an adequate alternative facility being provided. The States should provide a modern facility and support Jersey's skaters as we do for those in other sports.

Arts

We will support measures to improve access to the arts for young people and those from a poorer background, so that all Islanders can enjoy and take part in the rich offering we have in Jersey.



Reforming our Democracy and forging a new “Jersey Way”

“Reform Jersey believes that every Islander should have an equal vote in determining how Jersey is run and that as much power as possible should be in the hands of ordinary voters. Our democracy should be easy to engage with and should be designed to genuinely meet the desires of our community.”

Small jurisdictions have the capacity to be beacons of democracy because the power in the hands of an ordinary voter is much greater than in big countries with huge populations, where big money and interest groups dominate. Yet Jersey has the lowest voter turnout in the OECD and, at the last election, 17 States Members were elected uncontested. We believe that some of these problems are due to structural failings in our system, which have not been addressed by generations of politicians who have been incapable of putting aside their self-interests.

Many Islanders would have been disappointed to read the assessment made by the Independent Jersey Care Inquiry about the “Jersey Way”, which referred to the feeling amongst a large section of the population, who do not engage with the Island’s institutions because of the lack of faith many have in how they serve the public, rather than celebrate of our culture, generosity and tradition of voluntary service. We will work to overturn this perception and reform our institutions so that they are fit for purpose.

Composition of the States Assembly

Our electoral system is out-dated, over-complicated and unfair. For the States Assembly to be a truly democratic body which represents the views of the public, it desperately needs to be reformed. Having three categories of States Member is unnecessary and their constituency sizes vary so much that the value of your vote is vastly different depending on which Parish you live in.

We believe that every vote should be of equal value and the electoral system should be simple and user friendly. Constituencies should be multi-seat to allow voters a greater choice of candidate, prevent uncontested elections from taking place and abolish ‘safe seats’ for entrenched incumbents.

We **pledge** to bring forward proposals within the first year of this term of office to achieve equal sized voting constituencies, fewer States Members and a proportional voting system.

Making voting easier

Reform Jersey successfully brought forward a proposition in the States Assembly to approve the principle that voters will have the opportunity to vote online by the 2022 election. Work is ongoing to develop a system which is secure. However, for those who prefer to vote in person at a polling station, there is much more which can be done to make it easier and more accessible.

For a start, all eligible voters should automatically be enrolled on the electoral register, rather than requiring them to fill in a form every few years. This would end the situation where people often turn up to their polling station on Election Day, only to be told that they are not registered, so cannot vote.

In many Parishes, the polling stations are not placed in the most convenient location and are often out of the way for voters to get to. We will support a review being held to identify where the most convenient venues for polling stations are.

Lastly, there is no reason why voters should only be able to vote at one polling station. The technology already exists to ensure voters cannot vote multiple times at different stations. Voters should be able to vote at which ever polling station is most convenient for them.

An elected Speaker of the States Assembly

The Clothier review, Carswell review and Independent Jersey Care Inquiry have all recommended that the States Assembly should elect its own Speaker to preside over parliamentary sittings, rather than have the Bailiff removed from his court duties to preside. We believe it is not compatible with the principle of the separation of powers to have our Chief Justice act as parliamentary Speaker.

We will support introducing an elected Speaker to preside over States sittings and to undertake outreach work to promote democracy in our Island by engaging with schools, businesses and civic groups to improve how they interact with the States Assembly. Meanwhile, the Bailiff can focus on his judicial duties and reduce the need of the courts to hire expensive English Commissioners to do the work that he is qualified to undertake. This will improve democratic accountability and provide better value for money for the public.

A democratic Council for St Helier

When compared to similar towns across the British Isles, the local administration in St Helier has very few powers and lacks democratic accountability. The democratic structure of the Parish administration in town is based on laws which are hundreds of years out of date and do not reflect the level of service provision which has been taken up by the Town Hall. The current system of electing two Procureurs du Bien Public and a Roads Committee is unnecessarily complicated and is not understood or valued by most St Helier residents.

We support the establishment of a democratic local council for St Helier (a 'Conseil Municipal de St Helier') with enhanced powers to deliver services for residents, businesses and visitors in town. 'Conseiller' should be an unpaid honorary position, directly elected by residents in a public election. The Conseil should have bye-law making powers and enhanced powers on local infrastructure, business licences, planning and public entertainment.

Parish Democracy

Our long-standing tradition of honorary service in the Parishes is something which many Islanders take great pride in and which we believe must be protected and enhanced by ensuring it remains relevant for the modern age. Online information relating to Parish events and administration is not good and must be improved.

We believe that the elections for Parish Procureurs and Roads Committees should be synchronised across the Parishes, to enable a period of Island-wide focus on Parish affairs and boost publicity for these roles and their purpose, so that the public are more aware of what is going on in their area.