

Firstly, there is a great deal of information today so, to give plenty of time for questions, we will extend this press conference up to 230pm, if needed.

The Bailiwick is in a very strong position today with 15 consecutive days with no new positives - and being down to 7 active cases. Thank you to *everyone* for working together in the spirit of #GuernseyTogether to deliver that fantastic position.

As a consequence, the Committee *for* Health & Social Care have decided that we can move into Phase 3, starting from one minute past midnight tonight, a week earlier than originally envisaged in the Exit Framework. Deputy Soulsby will provide the detail in a few minutes. You will have many questions following today's announcements. As ever, we may not have all the answers. Please use the helplines; but bear with them as they will be busy over the next few days.

If we can maintain our success, there is every reason to believe that we can concertina the phases that follow, which would obviously be fantastic for all of us.

The messaging elsewhere is changing: in England you are now advised to "stay alert"; in the Isle of Man you are now advised to "stay safe." Please feel free to do both of those things, but I want to be very clear, even though we are easing out of lock down and you will be able to do more, firstly, that does not mean you have to do what is permissible; and secondly, the central public health messages **have not and will not change**: wash your hands frequently; don't touch your face; keep 2m's distance from others; go shopping on your own, not with others, unless you absolutely have to; and, yes, "**stay at home**" – you can go out to exercise or you can move from your "household bubble" to your "work bubble" if you are unable to work at home, but then you return to your household bubble. "Stay at home" remains key for all of us as much as we possibly can.

I said last week that we would say something about education this week. More detail is set out in a dedicated press release today and much more information will follow from Education next week, but what I can say now, is that the Committee *for* Education, Sport & Culture have decided:

- For primary schools, from 8th June, students will be able to attend school on **two** days each week. Approximately half of students will attend on Monday and Tuesday with the other half attending on Thursday and Friday. Siblings will be kept together. Primary schools will close on Wednesdays for deep cleaning and for teachers to develop home learning for students when they are not in school. Vulnerable students and children of essential workers will continue to be supported on the four days primaries are open, if needed by their parents, so please discuss that with your schools.
- Primary schools will contact parents directly during half term to provide details on how it will operate at their school.
- Secondary education will continue to be delivered by Distance Learning, for the time being, as the advice from secondary school leaders is that this is the best option educationally while complying with public health guidance. Vulnerable students and children of essential workers can still attend.

In the last week, there has been much talk about R-numbers – the rate of reinfection – from the UK to Germany, from Jersey to Japan. We don't have an R number – simply because we've not had the new infections to provide the data from which it could be calculated. Now, at the outset, you will recall the objective of lock down was to 'flatten the curve.' You have heard Nikki subsequently say that, in fact, we've managed to 'crush the curve,' exceeding all expectations. And that has given rise to talk of the 'elimination' of the virus from the Bailiwick. Dr Brink can answer questions about the challenges of

defining 'elimination.' But it would be a perfectly reasonable challenge for you to ask, 'when did the objective move from being to 'flatten the curve' to 'eliminating the virus?' Let's be clear, the strategy was and remains 'test, trace and isolate.' The *consequence* of our success in applying that strategy, is we can realistically aim to eliminate the virus in the Bailiwick and I want to explain why that may now makes sense for our economic life.

Our initial economic modelling indicates a reasonable expectation of a contraction of the economy this year of 9-10% - that's a loss of economic output of around £330m this year. (As an aside, without any intervention by virtue of our Recovery Strategy, we estimate that our economy will not be back at its pre-Covid size until 2027.) By comparison with some other economies, our estimate of economic contraction is relatively low, reflecting as it does the dominance of our financial services sector in our economy in comparison to others and its ability to continue largely to trade through the crisis so far – and we thank them for that. However, we estimate that a worst case – a slow exit followed by a second wave and further lock down measures – could see that contraction double. So the stakes are high and we need to get our exit right.

For that reason alone, quite apart from the public health reasons, managing the exit in series of measured and controlled steps through the remaining phases, makes more sense than a single leap to re-open the whole economy in one go. In short, the reality is that much of the economic output has already been lost and much for some sectors – particularly the inbound visitor economy – will not come back for much of this year anyway, whatever we do now; so the marginal gain of a single step is simply not worth the downside risks of that approach. We've had the economic pain and we must not now squander the very real and visible gains by moving too fast now and risking even more economic damage later. Our approach should

enable us to effectively re-open the whole internal economy within a few weeks.

I've said all along I will level with you. And I will do so again now. I don't know – no-one does – whether we have got the speed of our exit right – is it too fast or too slow? Should we be allowing more or fewer types of business to restart? Everyone will have their own view on that. The picture is even more confusing when you look outside the island – every jurisdiction is doing something different: you can get a haircut in New Zealand today; bars can have up to 10 customers in New South Wales; there is some al fresco dining in Jersey; you can drive to a park in England but not in Wales, and so on. It is only in 2 or 5 years' time when hundreds of academic papers from all around the world have looked at all the different approaches, will it be possible to judge whether our decisions today are the right ones or not – and even then, those papers probably won't all agree. We are now at the stage of making difficult, subjective political decisions. Not everyone will like them, especially if they can't do what they want to do. What I can say, is that these decisions are taken on the back of the best currently available – that's an important caveat, currently available – advice and data. I asked you to trust us on the way in to lock down and I ask you to trust us again on the way out.

When our decisions today are judged in the future, with the benefit of hindsight, in the big picture, it won't really matter whether we decide to allow nail bars to open next week or next month. What will matter is: did we manage to save lives? Did we prevent our healthcare system being overwhelmed? Did we mitigate the economic damage? And did we enable as swift a recovery as possible? I hope the answer to each will be 'yes' but those judgements cannot properly be made until this pandemic has passed.

A quick thank you to all who have contributed to the appeal funds. The Covid-19 Response Appeal is currently standing at £90k and the Social Investment Fund stands at £140k. On behalf of both, thank you.

Finally, I want to pay tribute to the other islands of the Bailiwick. Herm, Alderney and Sark have all remained blessedly free of corona virus; though separated from us, you too have been very connected to our shared community commitment to the Bailiwick's' strategy - and you too have suffered the same privations and impact as Guernsey. I'd like to thank you for your hard work, sacrifice and your own island's community spirit.