



Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel

Quarterly Hearing

Witness: The Minister for Infrastructure

Wednesday, 18th June 2025

Panel:

Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (Chair)

Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South (Vice-Chair)

Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement

Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South

Connétable D. Johnson of St. Mary

Witnesses:

Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John, The Minister for Infrastructure

Mr. A. Scate, Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment

Mr. T. Daniels, Director, Jersey Property Holdings

Ms. E. Littlechild, Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport

[10:35]

Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (Chair):

Welcome to this quarterly hearing of the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel. Today is 18th June 2025 and this is a hearing with the Minister for Infrastructure. I would like to draw everyone's attention to the following, this hearing will be filmed and streamed live, and the recording and transcript will be published afterwards on the States Assembly website. Please ensure all electronic devices are switched to silent and first, I would like to make the introductions. My name is Deputy Hilary Jeune, and I am the chair of the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel.

Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South (Vice-Chair):

Deputy Tom Coles, Vice-Chair.

Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Helier Clement:

Deputy Alex Curtis, panel member.

Connétable D. Johnson of St. Mary:

Constable David Johnson, panel member.

Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South:

Deputy David Warr, panel member.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Constable Andy Jehan, Minister for Infrastructure.

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

Ellen Littlechild, Group Director for Operations, Transport and Sport.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Andy Scate, Chief Officer for Infrastructure and Environment.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Tim Daniels, Director of Jersey Property Holdings.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. Minister, the panel would like to start this morning's hearing by asking for brief progress updates on some of the following areas. The first is what is the current timeline for the delivery of the South Hill skate park, particularly given that you have previously stated that a planning application would have to be lodged by this point in time?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Good question. I will have to defer to Ellen to see if she knows when that is due.

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

We are still working on getting the planning application ready, which we hope will be submitted before the summer break, and that is where we are with the idea that if it still moves ahead, there will be construction in 2026.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Okay. Thank you. In terms of Active Travel, are you able to update the panel on any new developments, including new cycles routes, on the east of the Island or cycle parking spaces?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, if I start with the second point first. We have done a lot of work around cycle parking in and around St. Helier, so we have moved the covered stand from outside Sand Street Car Park to Dumaresq Street. We are looking to put extensive covered area in Sand Street and tidy up that area. Earlier this year, we opened the cycle parking at Charles Street Car Park. We have had new cycle parking at Snow Hill. I think we are introducing around 80 new cycle parking spaces in and around St. Helier. In terms of Active Travel, yesterday morning I went to view the trial at the bottom of College Hill, which we are measuring the volume of traffic compared to pre-trial. The parents that I spoke to and the staff that I spoke to were very complimentary about the trial, and I had no negative comments from any of the residents that I saw. You could add I did not have any positive comments from the residents I saw but ... so that was good. We continue to work with both the Parish of Grouville and the Parish of St. Saviour to try and get them to agree to put wayfinding signs on some of their lanes because we have identified a route from St. Saviour School right through to Gorey, which we think would be a great way of encouraging people to come off main roads on to Parish by-roads. It is fair to say that progress has not been as quick as we would like. I think reading one of those Parish's Roads Committee meeting minutes, they are not overly keen on the concept although they were engaged when we went to meet them.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Why would that be, do you think?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Reading the minutes, they suggest that cyclists go on larger roads, which is ...

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Goes directly against what you have just pushed.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is an interesting concept but not one I agree with.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. So that, in a way, is the east cycling route. Your suggestion would be this wayfinding ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Parts of it, yes. Earlier this year, we put new signage up down at the Samarès area. We are still in talks with landowners to try and improve junctions to get people off of the main road on to La Blinerie. I think, again, that progress has been slower than we would have hoped. The Constable of St. Clement is very supportive of the initiatives. We have done some workshops with the schools in St. Clement to try and encourage young people to cycle and parents alike. Again, yesterday, it was great to see parents arriving with their children walking and cycling. There is some progress but not as quick as we would like.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister. Can you provide an update on the lease of the Lido at Havre des Pas and what is causing any delays to this agreement?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are in a tender process, and I was copied into a letter from one party recently, and so that has delayed the process unfortunately. We have got an independent panel. I could not tell you who the final 2 people are other than I know one of those parties because they copied me into a letter, but I am not involved directly or indirectly.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Do we have a date of when we think this will be ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I have no idea. Do you know, Tim?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Yes, I think that the process has been restarted. I think the intention is to reconvene the panel and I think it is for 3rd July, but those dates have been communicated to the applicants and both parties have agreed to that date. On completion of that, there will be a recommendation to the Assistant Minister who has been guiding the process, and then there will be a period of discussion and the winner of the tender process will be announced.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Okay.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Could I just quickly ask on that, were you suggesting the process had delayed somewhat because of actions taken that have involved extending who has been contacted?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, absolutely. My understanding is that second interviews were due to have taken place by now, but one party wrote to myself, the Chief Minister and other people and that delayed the process. I have not responded to that correspondence because I am not taking part in the process at all.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Okay. Thank you.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

What point in the programme delivery of the Bridging Liquid Waste Strategy has been reached? I say this because the panel is aware that the attenuation tank at Maufant has been approved by officers but, as of yesterday, a third-party appeal has been lodged. What impact does this have on plans, and do you have a contingency plan or other solutions if the appeal is upheld?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

At Maufant?

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Yes.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, you are more up to speed than I am because I am not aware of a third-party appeal at Maufant. We are looking at alternatives for Maufant, not because of a third-party appeal, but because of costs. We are at the Planning Committee tomorrow - I think it is - with the St. Peter's application. Do you know about the appeal?

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

I was not aware of that. The St. Peter's attenuation tank, we are ready to go for planning. Depending on whether that is approved or not, we are ready to effectively agree the tenders at the end of June, if that goes ahead. Prices have come in higher than what we had originally budgeted for and that has also given us a reason to relook at the option for Maufant, revisit the different options again and looking at the prices of that to see what is the most viable option. The other projects are progressing well with West Park/Westhill developments and the move to St. John. Generally, our projects are on track. Maufant may be slightly delayed while we are just spending this bit more time just reviewing those options before we move that forward.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. What is the next step in bringing forward the programme of works for the Island sea defences?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think you have had a briefing on the sea defences, so I dare say the next piece of work will be part of the budget process because we need to ensure that we have got funding in place for that, so dialogue continues. I think there has been, or there is due to be, some more presentations to stakeholders around more detailed design. The team have or are about to move to La Collette ... have they moved to La Collette? They have moved to La Collette so work is progressing there, and we can get you an update on the finer detail.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

If it helps, there will be a bit of practical technical work now going on around how you look at delivering the project, procuring the project, that sort of thing. Clearly, funding is going to be an issue, so we need to understand exactly how the project gets broken into its constituent parts, what the finance is required, cashflow and all of that, especially then how we go about procuring something of that scale and over the period of time that we are talking about. I guess a lot of behind the curtain conversations on practicalities at the moment.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Yes, but the first phase, I thought, there was funding secured for starting the ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The funding has been secured for the planning aspects of it and the exploratory works and then as we go into our next budget process, we need to make sure we have got funding there. I think I have said before, it is not a "nice to have"; we have got to do this work. It is essential.

[10:45]

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. Has an education officer now been appointed in line with the Collision and Casualty Plan?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not believe they have. I was with the lead officer on road safety last week at a conference in Birmingham where I am delighted to say we picked up an award from the TyreSafe charity for

community involvement, and that was in recognition for the work that took place in Jersey last October around tyres and tyre safety. We met the Comité des Connétables on Monday to discuss the Honorary Police using some of the equipment that we have got. We look forward to working with several areas of our community which we think are higher risk than others, and also doing some education around tyre safety for people who go off-Island and reminding them that it is an offence to drive in Europe with different manufactured tyres of the same axel. We are looking to engage with DFDS and Ports of Jersey to do some education around that piece. We are doing some work with the younger members of the community, and I forget who is doing that work but I was told.

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

Is it Alice? I am sure it is Alice.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, so one of the team is engaging with some of the schools and we hope to do more when we recruit.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, and I suppose leading on from this, we saw in the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* this morning that you mentioned that you are carrying out a review of the roads law. Could you outline what areas of the road law you are reviewing and what does it entail, such as compensation or addition to e-scooters?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is a massive piece of work which I think is scheduled to take 5 years to complete, and I know I have attended some of the consultations in my position, before I was Minister, as Constable as part of the Roads Committee. So I think all of the Island's Roads Committees have been invited to various sessions. It is a significant piece of work reviewing all of the roads. Traffic law? Yes, so it encompasses everything really from maintenance of roads to who is responsible for walls and water coming on to roads, a whole range, every aspect of the Road Traffic Law. Some of those laws were written almost 100 years ago so it is absolutely time for a review. I think it has probably been slowed by the decision to reduce the amount of consultants working for Government because we did have a number of external people working on that project but I think the schedule for that is ... law drafting should be taking place between quarter 4 this year until 2028, so that will explain the size of the task with lodging in 2028.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

In that sense, the calls at the moment for things like e-scooters or compensation, potentially we are not looking before 2028 for those elements.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

In terms of e-scooters, I have been asking for the last almost 18 months to do something about e-bikes which are able to go more than 15 miles an hour. I am not sure where we are with colleagues in S.P.P.P. (Strategic Policy, Performance and Population) about doing some consultation about e-transport, which would include consultation about e-scooters. I heard on the radio this morning about the Roads Committee meeting in St. Helier. There has been no dialogue, to my knowledge, with the Roads Committee in St. Helier about their views on e-scooters. Yes, currently they are illegal to use on a road or any public area, so you cannot use them on the footpath from Bel Royal to West Park and you cannot use them around the track at Les Quennevais, for example, legally.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister. We know that this is something the panel will look into if it is still 2028 on the review front. Where are we with the Recycling Strategy? Recycling bring banks are being removed from a number of Parish locations. Where are we with the wider Recycling Strategy?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have only removed ... we have not replaced the bring bank facility at the FB Fields in agreement with the Parish of St. Clement. That was removed at the time of Storm Ciarán but no other bring banks have been removed. We have listened to the feedback, and we are not planning to remove any bring bank sites at this time.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

And the Recycling Strategy?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Work continues there. I am in dialogue with people about cartons because I am really keen ... I look at my waste and I see milk cartons and I used to see juice cartons, but now I buy bottles of orange juice rather than cartons because I get very frustrated that you cannot recycle them. Legislation is changing in the U.K. (United Kingdom) and Europe about recycling of cartons and the content of the cartons is also changing so we are following that very closely but in terms of the strategy ...

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

Again, slightly because of the restrictions with consultancy spend on that, we are developing a solid waste strategy almost light ... so a lighter version of that solid waste strategy looking at what we need to do on that in the foreseeable future. We are hoping to get that completed by the end of this year.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Interestingly, the recycling rate this year has gone up significantly compared to the same quarter last year, but that is more a result of us receiving less waste at the E.R.F. (Energy Recovery Facility) plant rather than more people recycling, I think.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Which is useful because to reduce your waste overall is ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, but I think a lot of that is down to demolition waste, commercial waste. We have also seen a reduction in green waste - a significant reduction in green waste - that we have received because there are now 3 operators providing services for green waste, and one of those is applying for a licence to be a waste operator.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Sorry, can I just clarify the Minister's point on the bring bank facilities and no more being taken away, I had understood that - certainly from my Parish - it was intended to remove it. It would be good news if it is not, but can you clarify that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, so at the moment there is no intention to remove any sites unless a Parish wants us to remove a site. We have got some areas where there are complaints about fly-tipping next to bring back sites, and some Constables have asked us to consider removing them so we will work with the Constables.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay. Thank you for that.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. Minister, have you made any changes to departmental priorities as a result of ongoing reviews or discussions from the Council of Ministers regarding wider governmental reprioritisation? You mentioned this in our previous quarterly hearing that there was this review going on, and so we were just wondering if you had made changes.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There is no change at the moment. I think we are just about to ... we will probably talk about funding and budgets later on but I have double-booked this morning because the Council of Ministers have got a workshop on budgets, so there is a lot of work to do around budgets and funding and therefore that will lead to priorities, I am sure.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

At the moment, you have not for this year?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

We are still on track.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. I think we are now going to Deputy Coles to talk about funding.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Okay.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Thank you, Minister. We have spoken on a number of occasions about the current and future funding of Infrastructure projects, and we know that sometimes projects are changed because unforeseen issues require more money than was previously anticipated and so therefore something might fall away. Can you provide the panel with an up-to-date picture of your departmental funding?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, it is a challenge; a massive challenge. We are seeing increases which are out of our control. We have got a £300,000 shortfall, for example, on rates. Now, we pay rates, but we are not given sufficient money by the Treasury to pay the rates that we get charged, so we are forecasting a £300,000 shortfall in that area alone. We have got challenges with waste in terms of exporting waste. That could be as much as £300,000 with changes from our shipping partners, and so the team are working on that and probably going to go out to tender again to look to see if we can do something more efficient in that area. I think it has been widely publicised around our challenges with the AquaSplash, so the team are due to present a paper to me very shortly about suggestions

on the AquaSplash. Quite frankly, I think we could do it cheaper ourselves, but we have got to go through a process in terms of that area. We have seen a downturn, again, in the aggregates we have received because the demolition industry are either doing their own thing on site - bringing less product to us - so we have seen a downturn in income, which clearly gives us challenges. Also, I mentioned the green waste, so we have seen a downturn in income from green waste. We have got challenges. We are considering how we manage those, and that may mean us reducing the scope or delaying some works. It is a massive challenge. Our job is to keep the lights on, keep things safe and keep people safe. Some things may be nice to have but other things are essential so, yes, it is a challenge.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Have you had any projects that you have been involved with that were planned projects that have shown ... I mean we talked about it last year that one of your pumping stations needed more work than you had really anticipated but have there been any kind of projects like that within 2025 or recently that has caused an additional requirement to keep the lights on expenditure which has meant that you have then had to delay another project?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not think that we have any particular overspends on any particular projects. I think the team are to be congratulated on how they manage the costs. Sometimes it is out of their control. Clearly, it is sometimes out of their control, but I think in general ... we can be very weather dependent, so we are like another emergency service when there is a weather event then the teams are called out day and night to cope with that, so it is a bit early in the year to say.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Yes, sure. I just want to carry on about this commentary you say is "nice to have" and I totally understand that, Minister, but, yes, how do you prioritise between ... we have obviously got this Gas Place issue coming up with regard to a new school, we have got youth centre major capital projects and things like that. How do you compare those as "nice to have" as opposed to essentials? Where do you draw the line between those areas? How do you identify the funding need?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I would say that a school and a youth club are both essential, personally.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Okay, and what then gets lost? What does not get done if you go ahead with those?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That would be part of the budget discussions that the Council of Ministers will have and then ...

Deputy D.J. Warr:

But there is a choice. Something has to give in order for these other projects to come forward.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

All of those projects and others have got to be funded, so the challenge comes when you get into the detail. What is it costing to maintain old schools and are there efficiencies to be gained? In terms of provision for youth, I think it has long been noted that we need a youth club, and the site has been identified, and work is going on there. That work is happening.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

But my point is what is the choice? What is the choice you have to make? What has to give up ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Not a choice that I have to make. It is Education that will fund schools. We will do the work to provide it, but it is Education that will fund the schools. It is a decision for the States Assembly in the Budget. It is quite simple.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Okay.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Thank you. I think we have covered most ... I suppose the last bit in this area was which projects or pieces of work will be delayed or removed from your programmes due to lack of funding and what impact have spending constraints had on common strategic priorities which are under your remit, such as the revitalisation of St. Helier?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, you can see if you walk along King Street or New Street, you will see work carrying on around the revitalisation of St. Helier. Unfortunately, the completion of that work is delayed until 18th July. I think it is going to be worth the wait and we have repeatedly asked for panels to be put in the hoardings so people can see what is going on. I suppose if I was a worker I might not be as keen as I am as a Minister for that to happen, but we really would like people to see what is happening. We have got some small works that we will probably have to delay but nothing major, I do not believe. Yes, that work continues. We have got savings from vacancies. We have got maybe to delay some reactive maintenance.

[11:00]

Deputy T.A. Coles:

What caused the delay on that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, they found a lot of problems underneath the ... not all of the utilities are mapped, is my understanding. There is a weekly update given to the traders in the area now. We met a few weeks ago with traders in the area and the Parish of St. Helier and now we are putting out weekly updates to those people affected. If you are digging up an old road and you find a drain that is not on the list or a gas pipe or an electric cable, whatever, it is in the middle of town so there is going to be stuff there that is very old and perhaps not listed, so they have got to ensure that we get the falls right so we do not have puddling. They are working as hard as they can. They have worked some weekends to try and minimise disruption. We really thank the traders for their patience. We have tried to improve signage to encourage people that businesses are open, but I really think it is going to, be well worth the wait. There is a coffee shop there and what you can see there it looks fantastic as far as I am concerned, and when the whole compass is unveiled, I think it is going to look great. If you stand there, as I did, and had it explained to me - because I needed it explained to me - if you look at the buildings on the 4 corners, they are all round and so the circle in the middle is quite complementary to ... the Design Team have done a huge, brilliant job there to really complement what is happening around there.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

I am going to move on now to the sports facilities and infrastructure.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

I will jump around a bit on my question plan, just so the panel are aware, because you have already mentioned the AquaSplash. That was going to be the question we had, linking it into that funding. What pot of funding does the money for the AquaSplash come from? You have got your rolling vote, are there other pots of money that you pay for for this or is it ... just to understand where that money comes from?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It goes into one pot, as far as I am concerned.

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

It is funded from revenue, so it is funded from our revenue budget within sport.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Can you tell us more about the grant which is made to Serco for the AquaSplash and by how much that grant has gone up in the recent years, and do you have any knowledge as to what causes those increases?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am sure Ellen can give us more detail than I can but employment costs, energy costs will have contributed to that. It is an historic agreement but, Ellen, do you want to give some detail please?

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

Yes, a new contract was updated. As part of that, some of that was to do with the living wage. The living wage was not paid before so there was an increase in staff costs. Yes, utility costs have gone up significantly as part of that, chemical costs on those sides and, again, some additional costs to do with that contract as and when we went out, so we have done a very detailed review of that work and, as the Minister has said, we are about ready to come forward with some options about how we do things differently. I am just very conscious that there is some commercial sensitivity so, again, at some point, I am sure we can give a fuller briefing on that contract.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Okay, because where we link through this is we run an indoor swimming pool up at Les Quennevais so I was wondering, how have those costs increased compared to the cost increase that may be taking place at Les Quennevais as well?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Not only Les Quennevais; we have got Langford and Haute Vallée where we have got indoor swimming pools and when the price of chemicals goes up, it does not go up in isolation. It goes up for all of our facilities. The energy prices go up for all of our facilities. We use different forms of energy in different swimming pools. That has been an impact of us. Energy prices have significantly increased. We are currently working with - I think I am right in saying - 3 potential providers for solar power to get a framework agreement where we can get solar on our buildings, whether that is swimming pools, car parks, schools. I want us to have a framework agreement with one of those 3 providers or all of those 3 providers so that we can generate energy and try and reduce our running costs. We have not been hit to the same extent by the living wage, although differentials is a challenge when it comes to living wage.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Does running the Active Group through Les Quennevais Sports Centre help offset those costs and make it more affordable?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The dry sports certainly help fund the wet sports.

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

That is fair, and I think we have certainly seen increased costs on chemicals and utilities not just within the sports but across both Tim and my budgets, which has caused some of the funding pressures that we find ourselves in today. For the chemical costs, we did put a business case in, and for utility. We have had some additional short-term funding to be able to support us for the rest of the budget. It is not such a surprise with the pressures that the contract is currently having.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

You mentioned there might be some commercial sensitivity around your agreements with providers. What information can you provide, especially around that agreement with Serco, how long it has left to run and ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Can I suggest that we give you a private briefing on that. It is not that we do not want to share the information, but I am not sure what is sensitive and what is not sensitive. We would be happy to share a paper or briefing with you on that.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Yes. Does that include in your observation earlier that maybe the States should run this pool as opposed to a private organisation? You made that commentary earlier on. Would you lean to that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I better clarify, that is a personal opinion. I have not had a paper that tells me one way or the other. But my personal view is, if you are running 3 swimming pools on the Island, it would be more efficient if you ran 4, than somebody trying to run one. That is just a basic business observation.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Sure. Okay.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

We can say we have got a number of in-house services, or a number of services that are contracted out for us. Clearly, those external contracts are subject then to external cost pressures. So, labour costs and inflationary costs on those contracts. So, we see both our direct costs that we have ourselves, but also those external contracts are subject to externalities that we cannot control, especially if they have got inflation escalators in them. Our finance generally is a constant juggling act. We know what our revenue limits are and our capital limits, and we have a lot of moving parts with a lot of small scale projects underway constantly, and we are for ever working with the Minister to juggle which ones are coming forward or slipping back, and to live within the budgets we have. But, yes, everything is generally tight across the board.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I should just clarify, it is a personal view, because I am aware that we pay some or all of our staff pension contributions. I have no idea what happens, but I can guess what happens at the AquaSplash. So, I have to reiterate, it is a personal view, not based on information I have received to date.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

I am going to go back more to the structure of our question plans, so the panel are aware. Following the end of the consultation at Fort Regent, what is the next step there for the plan of the project, and when do you expect to go for pre-app advice? I mean you said in the Assembly that you would.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes. There are a couple of pieces of work that are running in tandem. In about 2 weeks' time, we have got someone coming to talk to us about cinemas, and I think there is a public meeting being arranged about that. I went to the cinema on Friday, along with 7 other people in the cinema. We have got an expert coming to talk to us on that, and also the Jersey context. We will be putting in applications to do the remedial work, which we hope to start at the end of quarter 4 this year. We are looking also to engage with people who know more about skateboarding, for example, and climbing, and pump tracks than I do, and others do. So, we are looking to engage with those communities as we move forward.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

What for you is the headline from that consultation? What is the big thing that you liked, and what surprised you the most?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think what was really interesting is when we consulted with the young people, a show of hands was taken at the start of the meeting to see how many people used for Fort Regent, and very few hands

went up. Then after the presentation: “How many people would like to use this facility?” Then almost all the hands went up. That was really quite interesting to do those different group sessions with people. I was really pleased with the number of people that responded. I think that is good. Clearly, we have got a lot of work to do still in terms of detail and also engagement. Last night I was at a meeting with the Sports Council, Jersey Sport, Commonwealth Games, Island Games, and talking about the concert hall and the show court. There is fantastic potential there not only for local users, but also for sports tourism. So, we need to find out what do we need to install and find out good examples that we could learn from.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

This is a bit off-kilter, but part of the costs, because it is going to be about costs and being able to present the right things, there are many new stadiums around the world that have multiple floor types that can be laid down for varying purposes. Is that something that maybe would be considered to ensure that sports clubs of varying types would be able to use that show court?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Absolutely. We have got many sports that compete in UK competitions, potentially to compete in international competitions. So, yes, we need to make sure we get the best usage out of that space. The idea is that you could have a completely flat area where you could hold a function, you could have a dance event, or you could have a theatre-style combination of both, and so the floorings are really key, and the technology that is available now to enable different sports to take place, some flooring use lights for the lines. So, you do not see a multitude of lines on a court when you are playing. If you are playing basketball, the basketball court is lit. If you are playing netball, the netball court is lit, and so on and so forth. So, we have got to go out there and see what can we afford and what is the best value for us.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Could I ask on the consultation piece before we go far? S.o.J.D.C. (States of Jersey Development Company) or yourself published a consultation response, which is rather brief in what it contains. It is rather about the statistical numbers. I just wondered, are you planning to publish more about the free text, the broader narrative that came out of that consultation, and have you had a chance or have you been briefed on some of the more nuance that came in with the responses? Because I am sure with the depth of responses there might have been some real gems in there that we cannot really see.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes. I do not see why we would not share that information. We went out to ask people their views, and we are interested in their views. If you looked at all the responses, you would probably be

provided 200 different activities. So, we cannot do that, but there are a number of themes there, which are quite interesting. I will see what we can produce.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Okay. I would note that the offshore wind power consultation response, which of course was on a controversial, or potentially controversial topic, provided the verbatim pretty much response of every consultee in free text, which I think helped build trust that the system was working as such.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I will try and sort that out. Good point.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Just with regard to the shutdown for 3 years, which is the proposed period, do you feel that is a realistic timeframe?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes. Hopefully it can be done in a shorter timeframe, David, but we have got to be realistic. There is significant work there, and as I said at the meeting last night of different sports bodies, Fort Regent could be closed tomorrow.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

I understand.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

If we had an enforcement notice, we are literally on a wing and a prayer at the moment. There is a massive amount of work to do. Hopefully planning will be a thorough process, but also a timely process, and that we can get contractors to do the work in a timely manner.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

One concern is that once we shut it down, reopening these sites, as we know, there is historic evidence that reopening sites is really, really challenging. That is why I am saying, how confident are you sticking with the 3-year reopening schedule?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes. We have to be confident. That is what our advisers are telling us. I do not think it is unrealistic. The structure is there. We have got to make it safe. We have got a lot of work to do with the mechanical engineering, for example, the plumbing, all those things. But once that is done, it is like a refurbishment. I am confident, and I believe colleagues are confident around the table.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Just a couple of quick ones. Can you provide an update if the soft play area from the Fort to the Waterfront is on schedule, and if there is anything holding that up?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I have not been told it is not on schedule. I am presuming it is on schedule. We can get back to you on that with detail.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Is the plan to hand over Oakfield at the start of September still on course?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is. The panel has been invited, along with the Economic and International Affairs Panel, to go and view the facilities. Yes, it is on schedule, and it is going to be a massive addition to our sporting facilities on the Island. It is first class.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

We will have a 5-a-side game of officers versus panels.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Walking football.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Are service level agreements now in place between departments and Jersey Property Holdings, and does this now enable the use of facilities for other groups, such as sport and school facilities?

[11:15]

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes. I am really pleased. We have got service level agreements in place with all of the schools. We have a quarterly meeting where I meet with the Minister for Health and Social Services, the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, and the Minister for Children and Families. We had a very positive meeting yesterday, and, in fact, I had a very positive meeting last week at one of the secondary schools where we have made more progress in the last 2 months than we have made in the previous 12 months about accessing school facilities. We have got a lot of untapped potential with schools and we are making good progress. I was really pleased with the co-operation we are

getting, and also the time that we can access some of the sites, which has, in the past, been more challenging than it should be. We are making good progress there.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

What was the process for consulting with the schools and developing the service level agreements, which might provide the right benefits and safeguards for the schools and the public, and Government as well?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Before we launched the service level agreements, there were several meetings with headteachers. We started off with a small group of headteachers to test the concept, and then we had larger briefings with headteachers. Anything you want to add to that?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

I do not think so. The first S.L.A. (service level agreement), there were a number of issues that were raised that were then adapted. The ultimate S.L.A. with schools had constructive input and we are currently in the process of going through a series of meetings with the school heads and the caretakers to review the inception of the S.L.A. and to talk about progress and discuss prioritisation. We are receiving positive feedback from the schools that things are working well, and it does give us the opportunity, as the Minister said, if we have to delay or prioritise our reactive maintenance works, at least the schools feel now that they are being consulted and understand the reasons for those delays. Our engagement is much better, and both sides are seeing the benefits.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

You were just saying that you are meeting much more regularly with the headteachers to go through the S.L.A.s; is there scope for changes within the S.L.A.s or are they set following those initial periods?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

The S.L.A.s are something that apply to the estate as a whole. We would not be intent on making any adjustments. But our approach to the work that gets done, the regulatory, the statutory requirements, and then the sort of nice-to-haves, if you like, and at least we can have a discussion where both sides understand why things are happening, when things are happening.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

The S.L.A.s we have in place, the formal S.L.A. is really around property responsibilities, who is responsible for what property-wise in terms of the buildings. We have also got user agreements that are developing around activities in school buildings, especially in the sport area. A lot of school

sport facilities, clearly during the school's day are for the schools until about 3.30. There is a window from 3.30 until about 5.00 where clearly there is after-school provision provided in some schools, and we are keen to see more under-18 use in those facilities. Beyond 5.00, clearly school children are no longer on site, and then they can be opened up for wider benefits to the community. A lot of schools already do this, but we are doing a bit of work at the moment with the C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills) Department just to make sure we are understanding where the capacity lies so that we can direct appropriate users to that capacity. It is a win-win for us. It is a win-win for schools really as well.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

So, maybe there will be a questionnaire for future then more about these user level agreements that we can see about how those develop?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Yes. Some of those are really practical things in terms of who is opening the door, who is locking the door at night, who is tidying up, who is clearing the sports equipment away. It is those sort of practical arrangements that undoubtedly schools do not think I, unsurprisingly, want to understand. Because come 7.30, 8.00 in the morning, they want to know that their school hall is available again, sort of thing. So, yes, it is just that practical conversation we are having.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The other thing is around consistency of pricing. So, the headteacher I met recently was very grateful for working with the sports team because it had identified that their pricing was not consistent and they are working with their users.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

If you are talking about funding and charging, who would be the beneficiary of those charges? Would it be the school or would it be your department?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It will be the school, but if additional resources are needed to lock up, then that needs to be paid for. So, that is the detail that we are discussing.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Yes. Just in terms of the structure of how that funding is on the maintenance of schools and things like that, is it basically a central budget which is allocated to different schools, or do schools turn around and say: "We need to spend Y amount of money on this. This needs to be kept upright." How does the conversation go? Does the conversation go: "Well, sorry, we have only got 50 grand

of the 100 grand you need. So, we are only going to be able to do this much.” I mean is that how the fundamentals of that works?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

What the service level agreement does is it makes it very clear as to who is responsible for what element of the maintenance. So, any major works are the responsibility of Property Holdings, and therefore the budget goes with Property Holdings. Minor things will be done by the school, and therefore they will get some money.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

But if there is an argument between the school and Property Holdings about ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There should not be an argument there, because we now have a service level agreement, which is signed by both parties, something that took 20 years to put in place. So, hopefully, as Tim says, it is bedding in. Both sides are going to learn. We are going through the budget process at the moment, but we are in a much better position than we have been for the last 20 years.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Okay.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

In terms of how maintenance works, so where the responsibility lies with J.P.H. (Jersey Property Holdings) in terms of the building, wind and watertight, the building fabric, there is a single pot. So, we have a reactive maintenance pot and it is under immense pressure, as you can imagine.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

No, I can imagine. That was why I was wondering ...

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

So, we do not allocate that out independently to individual properties. It is a single pot.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

In addition to that, if I may, sorry to prolong the discussion. There is also a proactive preventative maintenance budget where we have statutory obligatory requirements to make sure that the safety systems work, that legionella is tested, and so we have our obligations that we undertake for each establishment, and those are fixed.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

I understand that. What I am just wondering is, is there an opportunity here to say the school recognises the need and recognises how much they need in the pot, and how effectively they can spend that money, as opposed to one central pot being used, which is then allocated around the different outlets? Is there any thought around that change of emphasis?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

No. It tends to be central, because otherwise each school would clearly have their self-interest at heart. So, we are in conversation ...

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Obviously. Trying to keep the place upright.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

... with the C.Y.P.E.S. Department. We use their prioritisation, and if there is a departmental view, then we would have that discussion. So, our communication is with the schools to make sure they understand what is happening and why, and with the central Education Department to discuss prioritisation and approach.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Okay.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is important that we get efficiency. So, we are not using 30 different contractors. We are using contractors that are used to the school estate. It is also about priority. So if school A and school B have both got the same issue, we would identify which one is the priority with Education.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. I think we are moving on to Deputy Curtis now, thank you.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

So, Minister, now we would just like to take a little bit of time to talk more on the broader themes of delivery and affordability. These are areas that the public often want to know where the cost involved in delivering infrastructure you deliver goes and how you manage that. So, being aware that the cost of construction and delivery of infrastructure projects has gone up, and there are examples of projects within the department's remit which are now more costly to deliver than originally budgeted for, we would just like to have your original take on what is being done to reduce the cost of project delivery, or at least ensure budgeting is accurate from the start.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, in terms of reducing costs, the department should be congratulating on saving a third of the consultancy spend last year. We are targeting to make similar savings this year, and that is a significant number, which I do not have to my hand. I have spoken at this panel before, we are going to have to introduce some charges going forward because it is not sustainable to provide the level of service, or the services that we want to provide, at no extra cost. We are working on at the moment, I have spoken before about liquid waste and solid waste, and it is still my intention to bring proposals during this term for the introduction of some form of charging for some of the services. The vast majority of our services we provide are not nice to have. They have got to continue. We get criticised for using micro asphalt on roads. What the micro asphalt does is allows us to cover 20,000 square metres for a fraction of the cost of resurfacing, and what that does is protects the road surface from water ingress, and therefore reduces the amount of potholes. We are reviewing that against putting a top layer of tarmac on, but we need to continue. We will find out when we get to the Budget, but I have continually, around the Council of Ministers' tables, spoken about the importance of investing in our infrastructure, whether that is sewage, solid waste, roads, sporting facilities, education facilities, whatever that infrastructure is, we have to invest in our infrastructure. We currently invest probably half of the recommended investment in our properties. That is not sustainable. I will make sure there is a business case that makes sure that Fort Regent is sustainable going forward before any work starts, because we cannot do what we have done many times. The challenge of that is, you think of Oakfield, the people that are moving from Fort Regent to Oakfield are guaranteed 2 years at their existing prices while we review the costs. It is not fair and consistent to charge Club A £15 an hour, and Club B £48 an hour. That is not fair. We have got work to do there. But we have given assurance for people that we will honour their rates for a 2-year period during that move.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

On the cost of delivery though, from your side, there are a few examples that I think are really interesting, the public will be interested in. Going way back, let us start at Fort Regent, the public are proposed there is a there is a £100 million, £110 million scheme; is it clear what is driving to your department across how you deliver, especially regeneration, the cost of this? I believe the costed scheme for the 1967 scheme was about £2.67 million, which inflation-adjusted is £40 million for the entire refit.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I think it would cost almost £40 million if we did nothing to make it safe.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

So, what is driving ... hopefully as a department ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The previous Government before last had proposals which were £240 million for Fort Regent. So, what we are trying to do is to come up with something that is achievable, is deliverable, and is sustainable. To make Fort Regent safe is going to cost tens of millions of pounds. To put in new facilities in Fort Regent, it is also going to cost tens of millions of pounds. It is really key, for example, that we retain a nursery at Fort Regent, because that generates significant revenue that can be used to maintain Fort Regent going forward. It is also a very well-used facility in a good location for many people working in and around St. Helier.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I am trying to really focus in on construction costs, because we have talked about infrastructure, we have got a department responsible for infrastructure that has got, as a committee, 100 years-plus of delivering some of the core infrastructure that now is at its life expectancy, and we are facing costs that we are seeing that seem to be perhaps disproportionate to the value we will get out of using it, or prohibitively expensive. So, what is the department doing to understand why the costs are where they are, benchmarking that to the past, and how are you then assessing what is really deliverable in a construction market like this?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

At this stage, it is probably too early to say what the actual cost is going to be and what is made up in that cost. What we have done is our best estimates using space and size and industry standards to calculate the costs, because we have to have an idea. But, as I said, I believe the cost is between £30 million and £40 million if we do not do anything to make the site safe. If we went back to a fort, that is what it would cost.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

I think, if we use the Fort as an example of a construction project, a number of variables there that are driving the cost, that firstly there is an age variable, the asset is getting older, so comparing us today to a 1970s facility, we would have obviously aged. So, as our assets are getting older they will cost more to repair or replace. The other big variable is public expectation and desire. What counts today as a leisure or entertainment opportunity is definitely different from where we were in the 1970s. I know that personally. What was entertaining in the 1970s, probably is not entertaining anymore to our younger people, and so that is also a big variable in terms of what do people expect from a facility moving forward.

[11:30]

The other big variable are just regulatory standards. They are for ever increasing. So, to meet higher regulatory standards and technology standards, they generally are more expensive to meet. You then overlay the cost of materials, labour, construction, and then the other inputs into construction. So, what we can say is all of the construction materials are more expensive, that we are in the lap of the gods there in terms of geopolitical markets. So, where construction materials move around the world and how they are produced. There are a lot of variables outside of our control. We do not truly know the price of something until we go to tender and we get some prices back. We are no different to any other client. You start a project with an anticipation about what you think it might be; until you get those prices back, you do not really know what those prices are going to be.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

To what extent, given you procure a wide range of projects, do you understand the impact of each of those variables: regulation, construction materials, labour, and perhaps, lastly, expectation of provision? In the past, this level of detail was quantified. We had a Committee of Inquiry in 2002 specifically into this. Now we have a department, so is this the level of detail you are going to?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

I do not think it is, no. But I do not think we can go to the level of detail. All we know on all of those variables, they are probably all increasing. But with any certainty and confidence, I do not think we ever see prices disappearing in the reverse. Construction and inflation never seems to reverse itself, it may stay, but it never seems to go back.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The price of regulation, for example, is unrecognisable compared to 30 years ago. The responsibilities of somebody with a building, in particular a public building, are quite demanding in terms of the frequency of testing, whether that is for legionella, whether that is your electrical testing, and so on and so forth. You can talk to electricians who will say: "Well, that fuseboard is okay for 10 years, but it will not pass the test." So, you have got to upgrade your electric board and your electrics, and that is with any public building, and the responsibilities, and the regulation has arrived because of events around us. I am not saying that the regulation is wrong. The standards are unrecognisable from 30 years ago, even probably 10 years ago. So, a lot of our money is spent on ensuring that we meet those safety standards. So, whether that is the frequency that you test the lift, the lift may never get used. We have a lift at St. John, which got used for a week at Liberation, which has never seen it in its whole lifetime. It might get used once a fortnight, once a month. But you have to have it tested at the time periods to get your insurance and your certification. That is the same for every public building. Access to public buildings has got to be better. We all understand

why that is, but it all comes with a cost. It is very difficult to compare what was happening in 2002 and 1967, because the demands on us are far greater.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

We have to move on, but this is an area we may want to explore further, because that is a question, while it is hard to compare, the panel want to see that comparison. So, at least either the public are understood, but also that the department know where the burden is coming from and if it can be optimised. But we will have to move.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

You spoke about expectation, and I was in this room last week talking about expectation. There are enough bowls players for one facility. The Government provides 3 bowling facilities. There are 4 outdoor bowling clubs on the Island. But the expectation is, is that we will maintain those 3 government facilities. So, it is a challenge.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Brilliant. Moving back to the delivery side, what is happening to the projects which fell within the scope of Project Breakwater?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, work continues on Project Breakwater and investing in Jersey. I think I have got that right this time. As I said, I should be at a Council of Ministers' meeting today discussing budgets, which those will form part of the topic. If we think about Les Quennevais Sports Centre, which we spoke about earlier, Les Quennevais Sport Centre, we have had lots of disruption in the last 18 months. That building has got a timeline where it is going to either need refurbishment or replacement. So, we are working on schemes: "How do we do that kind of work?"

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

So, is Les Quennevais Sports Centre part of the set of regeneration within Project Breakwater or whatever has replaced it?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Our sports requirements will be part of any major projects.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

We have heard in the Assembly that Project Breakwater is perhaps evolving into a wider programme. From your understanding what, if anything, is replacing Project Breakwater as the oversight or mechanism for the delivery of projects?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are still in discussions. We have got some ambitious things to do but equally we have got some things that are not nice to have. As I have said before, we are going to have to do these things. It is about how do we package those and, more importantly, how do we pay for those. So it is about the timing of those things and that debate and discussion is ongoing. As I said earlier, I was away last week but there was a meeting specifically for those topics last week which I was unable to attend.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Naturally you have got a decision between balancing purely delivering the essential work, to the nice to have. To what extent are you pushing for the largest amount of work being the necessary work versus expanding the remit of regeneration to include stuff that is nice to have versus the big backlog of essential work? With your hat responsible for so many pieces of essential infrastructure?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is an interesting challenge. If we do not invest in St. Helier will people still come to St. Helier, whether that is Islanders or people visiting the Island? So you have got to keep all the plates spinning I think. I would love to resurface more roads every year, and that is the dialogue we are having around the Council of Ministers table to say infrastructure is vital; whether that is the sewers, whether that is solid waste, whether it is tarmac, whether that is public ground, sports facilities; we have to take infrastructure more seriously than perhaps our predecessors have done.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Lastly, looking at the delivery model your department uses, it is understood obviously that a lot of infrastructure projects are performed through outsourcing operations now, but to what extent have you kept that under review? I will give an example, the Government website says that the provision of drainage connections is something that can be done by the department at cost, but I do not believe the department have that provision internally anymore and point all of that provision to outside contractors.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is a real interesting concept. We have constantly been asked to make efficiency after efficiency after efficiency and the team should be congratulated on the work they have done in the past. That does not mean to say we do not keep it under review. We have got some really good people who manage some of those contracts with outsourced solutions. I get excited when I see grass too long in some of our key sites, and I think we have got a good handle on that now with new contracts in place with some of the people that provide those services. We are looking at trying to be more

efficient because Property Holdings have got some sites that they get looked after and Infrastructure have got sites, and it should all be together and it should be simplified. So we are making efforts there. In terms of outsource, the model is interesting and I think U.K. councils have seen this in the past when they have outsourced refuse collection and found that it was great for 3 years and then it is costing them twice as much. You would not want to be living in some parts of Birmingham at the moment because that is not very nice. So the team continually review that. Whenever we go out for tender I have every confidence in the team that look at those tenders to ensure they are getting best value for money and that they consider insourcing as well as outsourcing.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Thank you.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister. We will head to Deputy Warr.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

It is interesting here, all this conversation, Minister, about you think you have got 50 per cent too little money for the level of investment you need to make. You obviously talk about rising costs, your expectations, regulations. My question really is how will the mechanisms we have discussed today inform the Council of Ministers' discussions in the Budget for 2026 to 2029, which will be lodged in September? How do you get your message across?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I constantly try. It is education, education, education, as Mr. Blair said. It is not me that is saying we have got half the money; the budget is in the region of half the best practice figure, according to the Institute of Asset Management. I am guessing that Institute knows more about building maintenance than I do as a Minister. That is an industry standard and when we measure against the industry standard the budget is around half the best practice figure. That is a fact.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

So why do you think it is so hard to get that message across? What is the challenge? I mean, we have obviously got health challenges, we have got education challenges, we have got infrastructure challenges.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

You could ask all of my predecessors, and you have been part of Government, you have been part of the Assembly that has voted through Budgets for the last 3 years. I will continue to bang the drum for Infrastructure, for Property Holdings, for Sport, as loud as I can, but I am up against Health and

Education. But as I tell my colleagues, it is no good having a hospital if you cannot get the sewage out of it; it is no good having a sports centre if the roof is falling off. I think the message is being heard, and that is why we are looking at things like Project Breakwater and investing in Jersey. I hope that we will get to a stage where we can share that information with you and get the support of the Assembly to invest in the Island's infrastructure in a serious manner.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

But something has to give, does it not? There is only so much in the bucket.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I repeatedly say - and it is not popular - that we will end up having to charge for some of our services, whether that is liquid waste, solid waste, both, and/or other things. We have been through a cost-of-living crisis. My personal view is we should have put car parking charges up by much more than the 2.5 per cent we did, but we have a government strategy to try and help people through the cost-of-living crisis so we only put the cost of car parking up by 2.5 per cent. That is an area I think we should have put them up more. It is not popular, as I say, but it is a fact.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

These are the harsh realities to make, yes. I will carry on with these questions here. Have discussions advanced on the potential for increased or additional service charges? We were just talking about that now. Sorry, I am carrying on with these questions here because I think a lot of these questions you have already pretty much answered, and these challenges are do we start charging more for services, do we charge for service that are currently free; these are harsh discussions that need to be taken with the Jersey public.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

One thing we have got to do is be consistent and we are not consistent. I have given an example of a club that pays less than £16 for a large area and other clubs are paying 3 times the amount. That is not fair. That is not consistent. We have got to find a way of being consistent - and, as I said, I should be in a different meeting at the moment - but I will be proposing that in the next Budget we take forward the way of charging for certain services. What the cost will be and what the collection method will be is up for discussion, but I do not think we can ignore the fact that we have got to do stuff. We have got Victorian sewers in St. Helier and other parts of the Island; they will not last for ever.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Do you see the private sector getting much more involved in this? That Government gives up some of this stuff and gets the private sector doing it and identify which areas Government should stick to and which they should not stick to?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Last week I said in a hearing which is recorded, public record, that we need to do more in sport in terms of public and private partnerships. I am continuing my discussions with interested parties in that because the Government cannot do everything for everyone. Should water and sewage be separate or should it be together? What the model is or looks like, I have different ideas on it and different suggestions, but we cannot keep doing the same things and expect a different result so we need to change, yes.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Minister, we have talked about this a little bit before in other hearings, and what I am hearing from you is that you are proposing these kind of charges will be presented in the Budget; is that the idea? I was wanting to ask when we will see this but is your idea that these will become part of the Budget discussions when we see the proposal launched in September?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

My personal view is that is the time to have the discussion.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

So you will be putting that towards the Council of Ministers and putting that within the Budget for us in the States Assembly?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Whether there is a revenue stream in 2026 or whether that is in 2027 I do not know because of the time for the legislation, but I will certainly - as I have said to this panel before - look to bring proposals to the Assembly with some of charging mechanisms.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Okay, thank you. Connétable, for you to deal with Jersey Property Holdings.

[11:45]

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Thank you. My area relates to Jersey Property Holdings. Following the publication in May of the *Jersey Audit Office Report on Strategic Property Management*, can you detail please which of the

recommendations made in that report we are now prioritising? In asking that question I take note of what you already said about the S.L.A.s being advanced.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have some interesting discussions around the Council of Ministers' table, and some people say we should be selling off properties left, right and centre, and other departments want more properties or need more properties. The challenges around young people, for example, they need more facilities, not less facilities. I think the C. and A.G.'s (Comptroller and Auditor General) report was helpful, it demonstrates that we are not as mature as we should be 20 years after Property Holdings was set up. I am working to change that. The team are working hard to change that, but it requires the support of colleagues in the States Assembly. I think the progress we have made with the schools is good progress. It is like everywhere I go, it is slow progress, but it is nonetheless that. I do not underestimate the effort that the team at Property Holdings have to go through, and their colleagues at Education, to get those service level agreements. Why is it taking 20 years? It is incredible. The Guernsey model I think is a good model with the Property Services Department where they have hard and soft facilities all in one place. We have got 52 people in Property Holdings and in Government there are 141 people working on properties. It does not make sense to me. We have got a long way to go but we are chipping away. The *State of the Estate Report* was a good piece of work and is a good benchmark, but we have got a lot of work to do.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Just before I go on to my questions here, you mentioned the personnel within Property Holdings itself and others working in the same area. They are under different Ministers, is that what you are saying, rather than the standalone organisations?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, so there are people working in or own properties in other Ministries that are not connected to Property Holdings. We use the example of the schools; should a school caretaker clean the gutters or should it be contracted out? Now, all of that is now agreed. Please do not ask me which way it is, I am sure it is contracted out from a health and safety perspective, but that is where the uncertainty was before as to what does a school caretaker do or not do. The Guernsey model is they all report into the Property Services rather than into a headteacher. Clearly they have got a link with the school that they work with in Guernsey but it is a different relationship.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Minister, in a way you are highlighting something that is kind of a step back in looking at this. Is this work going on at the moment? You are saying chipping away but in a way it needs one big look at it rather than chipping away.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are working on it. The chief officer has taken a paper to his colleagues, the chief officers. We are looking to take a paper to the Council of Ministers. Once we have done that we are happy to share that work with you.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Is this something that you could see happening within this term of office?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I have learnt not to overpromise and underdeliver so I will under-promise and hopefully overdeliver.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Going back to the chair's comment about the overview, obviously you are working on that but one of the conclusions of the report was: "The approach to estate management and budgeting remains fragmented. Although J.P.H.'s role is described as the corporate landlord, in practice this is not the case. Leadership and commitment is required at political and officer level to implement the corporate landlord model if this is still the strategic aim of the States." You say you are happy to agree with that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

One hundred per cent agree with the C. and A.G. and I am delighted to say the C. and A.G. is going to become a tenant of ours because we are finally getting people into Jubilee Wharf. We came out of Jubilee Wharf on the Esplanade when we moved into Union Street in January, and we are finally getting tenants who are connected to the Government, so the C. and A.G., and I think Overseas Aid, are going in there and we have got a number of other people going into there. But we had hoped to get £300,000 worth of rental income from that property this year. The fact we have only got people going in halfway through the year, you can do the maths, we are not even going to get £100,000 of income. But what we will do is end up with what I call government entities - although they are arm's length - so the wooden dollar goes around. Hopefully that will help us.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

I note your general overview and aim. Can I go back to the recommendations, are any of these being prioritised? Have they been prioritised for the current term?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think we need a rebranding and a relaunch basically but reaffirming why Property Holdings was set up in the first place and just trying to get colleagues to work with us. We want to be a facilitator;

we are not there to do anything else but provide the best, most efficient service. That is what we are trying to do.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

In terms of recommendation, if it helps, we have got a period of time to respond formally to the report, so this month is the deadline effectively. By the end of June we need to have a formal position on the recommendations in the report and we will send that back to the Public Accounts Committee. Unsurprisingly we will not disagree with some of these recommendations because they do reconfirm property as a corporate resource. All of government services run from most of the property we administer, so it needs to be seen corporately. It will be clear to the panel which recommendations we are going to accept and that will form an action plan.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

One of the other main features of the report is the alignment with the other States-owned bodies. Is that a problem to you in your administration of the portfolio?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not think so. I think we are demonstrating working in conjunction with the Jersey Development Company on the design for Fort Regent, for example. We are utilising the expertise that that organisation has got, and so I think we could do more of that. I think, again, we are having discussions about how we allocate some of our housing stock for essential workers. I believe that some of that could be outsourced to one of our A.L.O. (arm's length organisation) - I think it is pretty obvious which on - and that debate is going on around what does it cost us and what would it cost us if it was an outsourced model, back to the point earlier. Is it better value or not better value? We are not going to outsource if it is going to cost us more money but if we can make efficiencies then I would do it tomorrow.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

That is a question we are going to raise in any case. Given your role regarding Fort Regent and the co-operation with the States of Jersey Development Company, are there further areas where the 2 forces could almost be integrated in certain areas?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is interesting. I think the challenge is where do you draw the lines. If you look at our estate, it is very, very varied and there are areas where undoubtedly both Jersey Development Company and/or Andium could help us. We have got a property that I think we should have divested a long time ago. We have got one unit of accommodation there which is causing us challenges but we should be looking to divest in that and work with our partners to do so.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Shall we move on?

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Yes, please, Connétable, to waste. It is you next as well.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Moving on to waste, if I may. Thank you for your confirmation on the parochial matter about the bring back, that is useful. Can you please update the panel on solutions that have been identified for legacy inert waste?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Good question. Have we got the planning obligation, whatever they are called?

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

Yes, we have.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have got them, have we?

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

Yes.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Do you want to update on the latest position?

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

I am just not clear of the question, is it inert waste or hazardous waste?

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Inert waste, although we do touch on hazardous waste later as well.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

It is the legacy waste; it is the mound. We have had the briefing on the contract that the contractor is dealing with new inert waste but they were not contracted for the mound.

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

The mound at La Collette of inert waste, that is to be recycled and used. So it will be used for shoreline management as we are looking forwards to the future. So there is a small mound for temporary use that we are looking at using for the shoreline management project moving forward. In future with the inert recycling, as you know, we have got a new contract for that and those materials are effectively going offsite and being reused.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I guess part of the question on inert waste might be is the current forecast receipt of inert waste and storage of it likely to exceed the capacity you have approved for in the site before you have a plan for it, which would be the shoreline management plan?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think I mentioned earlier in the hearing that we have seen a decline in the amount of waste that we are receiving now. There are plans for the waterfront which may or may not include excavation; it will depend on what the solution is for parking there. I think the amount of waste we are receiving is less than we expected, so that would suggest it would last longer rather than less time.

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

We have approval to be able to temporarily store inert waste material. What we want to make sure is that we are not storing more than what we need, and that is just trying to balance that out with what we require for the shoreline management plan. The team are monitoring that constantly and again having regular meetings with the contractor.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Given there are potential concerns, can you please confirm whether Jersey is operating within the licensing and statutory operations for testing and maintenance of ash and hazardous waste? I am sure you will say yes.

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

Yes, we are.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have to.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

My final question then relates to the Energy from Waste plant. Again, that is operating within standards and requirements?

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

Yes. So again we are regulated on the Energy from Waste plant. We send our results on how the plant is operating to our regulator on a regular basis. So it says if there was an incident where we were not within our parameters we would be having those conversations with the regulator, but the energy recovery plant is working well.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think what is interesting is that 72 people have been around the Energy from Waste plant this year to have a look and we are really keen to encourage young and old alike to come and see what we do. I think 53 people have attended the La Collette tour and other people have been to see the green waste. We are engaging with schools and other groups. We want people to come and see what we do. I was there one day this week, a Saturday, taking my green waste, and I am always amazed at the level of service I receive, and I am sure everybody receives, when they go there.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. To Deputy Curtis for single use plastics.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Minister, we will just briefly touch on single use plastics, a responsibility you share in part with the Minister for the Environment. If you could provide the panel - that has had a briefing - for the hearing's purposes some more information on what has informed the further amendment to the restrictions on single use plastics.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think it is around the ability to enforce what is already in place and make it very clear around the wholesale sale of bags, et cetera, and also the charity operations, so where people reuse or recycle bags. I think that is at the Assembly next week. Hopefully we will be able to get that slight amendment changed, but I think it has come from the Trading Standards really, the feedback from them around enforcement. That is the driver behind that. The single use vapes got Royal Assent on 11th June, and I am hoping it is going to go to the Royal Court this Friday, which will mean that we can then write to everybody and give them 6 months' notice. So we will start a communications plan on that.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

On single use plastics with regards to the vapes, are you aware of whether the regulations as drafted - and hopefully will go to the Royal Court soon - will be effective to what they require and whether you are seeing new products on the market that perhaps are now circumventing that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think undoubtedly we are seeing in other jurisdictions new products coming online which is always the challenge, is it not. Somebody told me this week that they are used as assisted breathing devices, which was kind of alien to me.

[12:00]

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Whenever a regulation is brought in there will always be a section of the market that looks to circumvent the regulation in one way or another. This will get us into a strong position on this. Whether that position has to be amended at some point in the future, I would probably foresee that we would need to reflect that at some point in the future if the market is trying to get around the regulations.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I think the market is showing new product so is there capacity within the team to act nimbly on that or is it expected that the regulations, as worded, will be what we have for the time being?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I would need to talk to the officers working on that area. I would like to think that we are going to be nimble but I suspect that the innovation is going to be pretty clever, so it may take longer than we hope.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Moving on to the fuel farm and energy. You informed the panel that Jersey Property Holdings have started a valuation of the land and discuss the possibility of break clauses in preparation for lease negotiations with the owner of the fuel farm facilities. We appreciate the details will be subject to those negotiations but can you expand on what you expect these break clauses to be?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think what we want to do is to give the operator some kind of surety to ensure that they can continue to invest in the facility, but also be mindful of the changes to the requirements for fuel on the Island, whether that is the introduction of new fuels, different types of existing fuels. So I think we need to have some flexibility in there, and that discussion is ongoing.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

What other arrangements for enforcement mechanisms to ensure the safety have now been discussed and how will these be reflected in contractual agreements?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

My understanding is they have to have an annual inspection from the fire service and work closely with the fire service. Tim, have you got any more detail on that?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

I do not. I mean, they have to meet the operational standards, the regulatory and statutory requirements to operate a fuel farm, which they do. As the Minister says, they also have inspections and meetings with the fire service to make sure that if there are any local specifics of the site that those are discharged, and they have been.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think it was suggested in the Assembly recently that investment had not taken place in fire safety. That was an incorrect assumption by the individual who said that in the Assembly. The fuel farm is licensed and the operator needs to meet the terms of their licence and - as Tim explains - with the fire service, regular inspections. Again, it is an area where regulation is changing as events happen around the world and in other jurisdictions, we see different regulations being brought in that mean that the bar gets raised. So continued investment will be required and that is why we want to allow sufficient time for the operator to invest, but equally have break clauses should the requirements change.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister. In your letter that you sent to us - that was very detailed so thank you for that - you talked about the fact that this is of course a land lease at La Collette. Is this different from a standard land lease and, if so, what is the difference? It is interesting to see that model and we wanted to understand it more.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

My understanding is that in some land leases, at the end of the lease if you have built a shed, for example, the landlord is entitled to keep the shed. In this case that is not the scenario. In fact, the responsibility on the person or organisation that leased the land is they have a responsibility to remove their equipment or to sell their equipment to the Government, and also to ensure that the land is clean. Have I got that right?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Yes, absolutely.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Was that written into the lease in the beginning when the land lease was developed, that those were specifically ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Is that a type of model that you would use in other areas as well for land lease, or is this specific related to ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think it would be for specific events. I know that we have had leases that have finished since I have been Minister where structures have been built and the structure was due to return to the landlord, but I think it is specific, is it, Tim?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

With leases generally there is an overall sort of approach in terms of optimising the site, but for specific uses of operation there will always be clauses that are discussed between the 2 parties to make sure that they meet the needs of the operators and the landlord. So I think there will be nuances and clearly we are aware of the requirements. We have diversity of supply, sustainability and resilience, and so we have that direction as our approach to the lease negotiations.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. Moving on to some final questions, Minister. The Assistant Minister for Infrastructure has recently brought a proposition that includes a request to analyse the impacts of increasing green space in town. Are you supportive of these proposals and do you believe that St. Helier residents have enough access to open green spaces?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am not sure what the question is. We plan to create more green space and more public realm in St. Helier, but I disagree with the Constable with his view on the provision of a school.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

You were saying you have plans for more green spaces; can you expand maybe a bit more on that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I think it is widely known that we plan to do some work in Broad Street. When Springfield School closes we plan to make that a green space. We would like to do something around Rouge

Bouillon. I do not know if they are called pocket parks but we are planning to do more work, so I do think if we want more people to work and live in town then you have got to make town a welcoming place. I think Broad Street is a good example where we could do better.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Minister, you have brought up Broad Street so maybe - given it can always be a hot topic - could you provide a bit of a timeline for when you expect plans to come forward to Scrutiny, to the Assembly, to the public, and then a timeline of work?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think it has been approved by the last 3 Governments, Broad Street. I believe work is due to start in September.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

It may have been approved by the last 3 Governments but it has always been a point of political risk, I believe, so have you got any particular steps to de-risk any delay on that timeframe? Are you approaching this one any differently to any other project you normally would, with regard to the public realm, to ensure delivery?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think it is vital that we invest in St. Helier. As I said at the start of the hearing, the work that has taken place in New Cut I think is terrific, and I see the vision for Broad Street in that area is going to be really fantastic. The consultation has happened. I was stopped at the airport recently by a retailer on Broad Street who wanted it to start yesterday. I think the discussions are well-progressed, the work is going to start I understand in September.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

I think the best way to de-risk the project is to start the project, in a very simple answer.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. What feedback have you had from users on the new northern bus route, and how are you judging the demand for it?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I was pleased to see people on it. We are going to make some changes in July. I think people are disappointed that it does not run in the afternoon and at weekends. In July it will run less frequently but it will run later in the day and at weekends. The people that use the Enid Quenault Centre that I have spoken to and that have used the bus to get there have been really pleased

because they may have struggled to park or may have found it more relaxing to go on the bus. But predominantly, because of the times of the bus, it is going to predominantly be concessionary fares or people with passes that are going to use the bus in the mornings while people are at work. But there are a lot of people who have been requesting a northern bus route for a long, long time, from right across the Island. I think it will help those rural communities. I can think of a number of areas across the north of the Island that will benefit from it. If we think David's facilities in St. Mary. I know the precinct at St. John would welcome more visitors. So, yes, I am hopeful that it is going to be successful.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Of course from a tourist perspective, because there are a lot of attractions on that kind of northern run, and so it is much easier to get to.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Absolutely, and if you change the bus at the airport you can go down to St. Aubin, and if you change the bus at the zoo you can go down to Gorey, so you can go around the Island on a bus, which is something you have not been able to do for many years. The old route 10 used to allow you to do that. I believe it is in the Parish magazines in terms of promoting it and I have seen leaflets. I spoke to the publican at St. John recently and they had the leaflet on the bar, and he said that he had seen a few people coming in, so that is encouraging.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

What information can you provide on the options available to Islanders for scrapping hybrid cars and also electric vehicles, and the costs involved?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The hybrid and electric cars are challenging in terms of repurposing those vehicles. We have written to the motor traders to explain that to them but it is not a cheap process to dispose of an electric vehicle. They have got to be sent off-Island, but I am not sure if I have got the information in front of me. I do not have the information in front of me. That is something we can write to you about for sure.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

That would be very useful. I believe there have been a number of public asking questions of where is the information and the options to be able to do that scrapping of the cars.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think it is worth saying that we changed provider for the metals and I think that is working very well. It is really encouraging how that is going. We need to give them some more training about how to handle the electric vehicles, but I do think that that process has worked very well.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Picking up a point you mentioned earlier around this about exporting waste, you said that we have changed shipping partners so that has meant that the charges have changed. Could you maybe expand a bit more of that. Have there been any changes to those exporting waste, such as any options on electric vehicles, et cetera?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is an area that I know reasonably well, logistics, and I am waiting to catch up with the person that does that in the department and looks after the contracts for the waste. But we have been told by our provider that of course they are going to rise significantly. I cannot see the reason for that, seeing that everybody knows now the prices of shipping across the Channel. So work is underway there to see whether we need to go out to tender again.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Is the cost because of the different kinds of waste that we are seeing, the new waste, or is it the cost of the provider?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, it is predominantly the bottom ash, the incinerator ash, which may have been treated as a commodity before and may not be treated as a commodity now. I am not quite sure of the detail but it is something I look forward to finding more detail on.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Has that resulted in any change to the storage and staging of bottom ash and fly ash within the process from the energy from waste?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No ...

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

No, it is all business as usual?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

... as I say, I was at La Collette on the weekend and there were not any trailers, so I presume trailers are moving still frequently.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

So it is all moving still, okay.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Would that be right?

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

Yes.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do look.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

It is happening but the cost is meaning that to find an alternative ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I think the panel would want to see some more information on that.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Those are the 2 main ones; do they impact other waste streams in particular? But it is really about ash exporters, that is going to be the ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think we are due to go out as a matter of course for some of our contracts, they are due up anyway. I think it is the bottom ash that we have seen a potential change in the pricing of that from our provider, so I have asked for more information on that.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister. Really the last area that I have for questions is that the Government has issued a detailed response to the Arcadis Hydrological Risk Assessment Report, and there are 2 recommendations you have responded to. One relates to the P.F.A.S. (per and polyfluoroalkyl substances) management at La Collette containment cells and the other around inputs and

discharge of P.F.A.S. from the Bellozanne Treatment Plant. Could you expand on why you have instructed officers to take an evidence-based approach when considering changes to P.F.A.S. acceptance limits?

[12:15]

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is based on the advice that I have received, and it is not an area that I have had any experience in, in the past, so I have asked officers for advice and the advice I have received is that we should be getting evidence for this. Do you want to comment, Andy?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Yes, if it helps. In terms of the wider debate on P.F.A.S., clearly we have got some scientific work going on with the expert panel. We are expecting to see some clear recommendations from that expert panel in their report. From this side of our government business we are a waste operator and we are a liquid waste operator, so if that scientific evidence and those recommendations equate to a change in operations we will obviously have to reflect that as an operator. We are not clear what it will do at this point but I think as the debate continues in terms of where P.F.A.S. is being found or not being found - apart from a clear point source pollution incident at the airport, which we all know about - my view is I do not think we are seen as anywhere different from any other developed jurisdiction who have also been widely using these sort of chemicals for a variety of purposes over the years. What we do need to do as an operator though is reflect whatever that advice from our regulators will be, on our business. So whether that has implications for our waste operations at La Collette or the sewage treatment are yet to be seen, I think, but we are engaged with that dialogue.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Just to unpack that, when we are talking about work on looking at the containment cells are we looking at P.F.A.S. that potentially could be there now, or potentially to be able to receive contaminated waste with P.F.A.S. levels?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Yes, I think it is probably both. The leachate from the cells, we treat it here on-Island through the S.T.W. (sewage treatment works), so is there going to be an issue for us doing that in the future? We do not yet know. Will there be any further restrictions on what we receive at La Collette? Again, we do not know. I think where we are as a jurisdiction, we are at the sort of leading edge of this debate, certainly in Europe, and that is going to throw up a number of questions for us as an Island as to what we do here, or what we not do here. I think there is a real debate to be had around

P.F.A.S. and about the potential impact or not impacts versus the cost and benefit of that, compared to a lot of other things in our environment or in our health environment which causes harm to the public. So I think there is a much bigger public health debate on where we spend our money as Government, whether it is in this area or whether we get better health outcomes or better health preventions by investing in other areas. But that is a really big debate for us to have.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think it is fair to say that the awareness is now there, so it is probably back to the cost of doing things. We did not know about doing this, and now we do we need to make sure we get the data in.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I can see that as your recommendations were to do that and also with the S.T.W. to do a review on the trade effluent permits as well, and what kind of timeline ...

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Yes, the other thing on the S.T.W., clearly the majority of what we receive is not ours, if you like, it is the Island's water that comes to us for processing. That is why we have to be part of that bigger debate around what we are allowing into the drainage system or not, and can anything be done about that and, importantly, should we be doing anything about it, because - depending on all compounds life - the more you look for things the more we will find at various levels. We will find various things at all manner of levels, but some of these are very, very low levels. There is a debate for the Island to have as to whether we want to deal with that, what standards are we meeting. We currently meet, for instance, the European Drinking Water Directives on our drinking water; we are well within that from a public drinking water perspective. So, yes, it is a bigger debate as to what we are seeing and what standard we should meet, and then the impact on our operation of business.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

You mention the trade effluent permit and that is another area that we are looking at, those permits.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Yes, we are yet to see the hydrological risk assessment report. I think one of their recommendations for the medium term was to potentially remove some of that contaminated P.F.A.S. from the airport and then potentially put that at La Collette. That is my understanding and reading of it, and why you are setting up this kind of baseline?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Yes, certainly as a receiver of trade effluent we have a position to decide as to what we receive. Then there is also a position for the Ports of Jersey to understand what issues they are facing and

what options are available to them. P.F.A.S. is an issue that is dealt with in other places as well, so there are other disposal routes as well. Certainly all of this will have to be looked at. We will get the P.F.A.S. expert panel's recommendations in some of these areas, and if that means us having to change our business in certain areas or tweak it, we will have to deal with that at that point.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I suppose my final question on this is the response of saying what you were doing; what is the timeline on this, reviewing and doing this evidence based approach on these 2 areas at La Collette and also at the S.T.W.?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

I think we have got to tie our work in with the expert panel effectively. The expert panel is really going to be pointing the Island into the direction of where we need to be either evidencing more or investing in more. I think as both a solid and liquid waste operator we should wait for the expertise to come from that panel, and then that will inform where we need to change our business. What we would expect is if that business is to change we would expect different regulatory standards then to be applied to us, which we would then obviously have to comply with.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Would that mean that you would then need to do like an environmental impact assessment if, for example, there was a decision to move the contaminated P.F.A.S. soil from the airport to the containment cells? Would there be ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We cannot receive it until we know what it is we are receiving and the level of risk and what is the mitigation we are going to put in place.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

I think most of the debate on P.F.A.S. has been around drinking water impact and impact on drinking water supply. If some of the work of the panel is going to look at P.F.A.S. in other environments, the built environment, as an example ...

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Or a Ramsar site, for example.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

... and whether that actually does create an impact or not. The science is so new in some of these areas we do not really have the answers at this point, so I think we have got to wait and see what the panel are suggesting.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

This panel has already told the Minister for the Environment we will be doing a hearing later in the year. Of course, seeing this also ties with your responsibility we may ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, and I meet with both the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Health and Social Services on this subject, and officers. I forget the name of that group but we do meet together.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. I have no more questions, but I am just looking at my panel.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

No, thank you.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

No more questions. With that we will be able to give you a few minutes back, Minister, in your day and maybe go to the Council of Ministers' discussion around the Budget. I would like to thank you, Minister, and officers, for your input today, and thank you to the public for taking the time to listen to the hearing as well.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Thank you all very much.

[12:23]