



Environment, Housing, and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel

Bridging Island Plan Review Hearing

Witness: The Minister for Infrastructure

Tuesday, 29th September 2020

Panel:

Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade (Chairman)

Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville (Vice-Chairman)

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence

Connétable S.A. Le Sueur-Rennard of St. Saviour

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier

Witnesses:

Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour, The Minister for Infrastructure

Mr. A. Scate, Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment

[14:30]

Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade (Chairman):

Good afternoon, Minister. This is a review hearing with the Minister for Infrastructure by the Environment, Housing, and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel. It is really purely to address the bridging Island Plan review. I will start off by asking you whether, other than discussions through the Council of Ministers, what collaboration and regular discussions are you having with the Minister for the Environment on the proposed bridging Island Plan?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think we are all heading in the same direction, which is good news. It is a bridging plan, but we have to get things rolling for the next few years because obviously COVID-wise a lot of things have

been knocked sideways. From my point, obviously as you know, the Car Park Trading Fund is taking quite a hit, but we are holding things together and John has our support I think in most of what he is doing.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Are you in favour of this bridging Island Plan as an interim ... the plan?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

You are freezing a bit, Chairman, but I think I have got the gist of that. Yes, indeed. Yes, we really need this because I think things are going to change rapidly over the next few years and we have to keep one step ahead.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

In your opinion as Minister for Infrastructure, which projects or policies should be prioritised to feature in an interim bridging Island Plan?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are obviously collaborating on a few things. The Carbon Neutral Strategy is very close to the Sustainable Transport Plan so there is a lot of synergies there, that we want to reduce pollution and encourage a healthier lifestyle, so we do have more cycle lanes going in. We will need to segregate cyclists from traffic as much as we can. It is the way forward, I think. We are not talking about banning vehicles, but just encouraging people. If they would rather cycle than use their cars, then we would favour that. Also we are sort of promoting the cleaner diesel fuels, the biodiesels and so on, so we are more or less on the same page.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Are there any short or long-term implications, including financials, that you foresee with this new bridging plan process?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Financial-wise, as I say, we have taken hits on our revenue this year but I cannot see any major obstacles in the way of that. Would you like to come in on that, Andy?

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

I can. Thank you, Minister. I think the main pressure on the bridging Island Plan, mainly due to its shorter timescale, is probably on the Minister for the Environment and team, in the sense of the work needed to produce a shorter-term plan and then we will need to come back as a Government to then produce a longer plan. So I think the immediate sort of revenue implications of a shorter Island

Plan is the fact that it gets done on a quicker timescale and it is going to have to be done again in a relatively few years' time.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I suppose if I may ask then - and it may be for Andy - what is your view on the decision to decouple the shorter bridging plan from the longer-term policies such as migration and population policy? Do you think that is good or not?

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

I think it is a challenge for the Island Plan in every guise. I have certainly been involved in this Island Plan from an I.H.E. (Infrastructure, Housing and Environment) perspective, but also previous Island Plans. The problem I guess we have is the assessment that has to be made on what assumptions go in on population. I think as long as there is a working assumption that is added in for any planning document, whether it be the Island Plan or any other Government documents, and there is an element of flexibility within the Island Plan to revisit numbers if required, then I think that is the way to handle it. Certainly the bigger implications, often around housing, and to building some sort of flexibility in within a shorter time period, so the bridging Island Plan helps in this regard, I think, in the sense that we can go back as a Government and an Assembly to revisit housing sites, housing numbers, that sort of thing, if indeed population goes up or indeed it goes down.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What about the consideration for extensions to the sewerage system, which might be expected with the rise of population? We are aware that the sewage treatment works is being rebuilt. Are we going to have the capacity for the population and what effect might that have on the plant?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

As you know, we have the new sewage treatment works under construction at the moment. That is due to come online in 2021 and 2022. It will take us way into the future. The present sewage treatment plan, which must be around 60 years old, has stood us very, very well indeed, but it was time to upgrade and we have gone for the new one. Very similar design, obviously upgraded. It will be more efficiently obviously, but it will take us well into 2035, I believe, or thereabouts. But obviously if there was an increase in population, we have to account for that regarding drainage and of course infrastructure such as roads, public services and so on. We adapt, but obviously we are trying to encourage as many people as possible to use pedal cycles or public service vehicles.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just continuing on with drains - always a subject I know close to your heart - the issue with drains, we have got now a new sewage treatment works, but of course will the actual network dictate where

housing developments might take place? Because clearly it is easy to connect on to the pipework, shall we say, the infrastructure if a development is close, but if we are across a green field or some suchlike, it is a different story. What is the implication of, shall we say, developments maybe away from the beaten track?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, sorry, Chairman, I did not answer your question. Obviously, the main priority is to get the new sewage treatment works up and running before we can really start extending the network out into country parishes. Regarding the urban parishes, at the moment there is an awful lot of construction going on in town with new apartments going up and so that is obviously putting a load on the sewerage system. As I say, it has performed very, very well. The sewage treatment works will be much more efficient, but it is the infrastructure that feeds into it. We have done major works, which are ongoing, at First Tower. There are 3 new massive pumps going in at First Tower to pump up towards Bellozanne. Some of the new systems will feed in from the top, so it will be gravity-fed, which will be very beneficial. I have mentioned in the past it is my desire before I leave office to have at least 98 per cent of the Island on mains drains. That is quite an ask, but it is not so much people near the main roads, it is people who live in outlying hamlets where the problems arise. As you know from your time as Minister, Chairman, lots of people in the smaller hamlets would like to join the mains drains, which may involve coming across farmers' fields, which is something that needs to be negotiated with the landowner. Sometimes there is a consideration asked by the farmer and sometimes this can be a bit fraught, so I always recommend have a chat with your Constable, who can maybe mediate between the 2, and that is one way of resolving it. With modern techniques now, we do not have to have a manhole cover every 25 feet across a field. There are sort of new systems where a boring machine can lay one continuous pipe across the length of a field, which is relatively maintenance-free and it saves disturbing the field and the farmers are much happier for that. The other alternative of course is to go down usually a parish road, but digging up asphalt, as you know, can be quite expensive. We are still continuing with our storm water separation schemes, because obviously we do not want to be treating storm water at Bellozanne, so the more storm water we can filter out the better, and it reduces the capacity on Bellozanne. We have just done a refurbishment programme in the cavern and so there is a flushing system there now which makes it pretty much self-cleaning, so that is much better for our crews who have to work there.

Connétable S.A. Le Sueur-Rennard of St. Saviour:

Can I ask a question, please? Minister, sorry to trouble you. Are there still a lot of homes in St. Helier that are not connected to main drains?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes. The Parish of St. Helier as opposed to St. Helier town, I believe there are, yes.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

All right, thank you.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just taking us back to the Island Plan and the implications on the plan by the lack of drainage infrastructure, particularly in the outlying areas of the Island, will there be any connection between, shall we say, the building of the infrastructure further out to those areas not supplied at the moment as a result of the bridging plan? Is there any linkage between the 2?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not believe there is on that, no, but as I say, as soon as we have finished the new sewage treatment works, the next major project will be to increase connections, but obviously it is not just connections, it is outlying pumping stations. Obviously, the satellite units are very expensive to build and of course to maintain. Most of the Island is covered at the moment, but some people are still on soakaways, cesspits, or tight tanks, which have to be pumped out. In an ideal world we would like everybody on mains drains, but that is going to take a few years, with the best will in the world, to accomplish.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So that is not linked. Andy Scate, can you add to that?

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I think the starting point for any development in the Island Plan is the spatial strategy behind the Island Plan, which predominantly focuses on the built-up areas of the Island and effectively where development is already and where transport connections focus into. By virtue of that, that is also where most of the mains services are, including drainage, so the new Island Plan, while it will have to have a conversation around sort of parish housing certainly and housing in parish centres, I think the majority of built development will still be focused in those areas that are already built on or we will redevelop.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

As you are probably aware, whenever possible we like to liaise with our colleagues at Jersey Water, so if we have the road up putting in a mains drain, it is always good to have mains water in at the same time if that is required.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Indeed. Also considering other areas of waste management such as solid and liquid waste, I presume there will be a linkage. If so, how and to what degree? If not, what implications might this have on services delivered to the Island?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Sorry, I did not catch all that, Chairman.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The Island Plan will have an implication on other areas of waste management, such as solid waste particularly. How do you envisage that might be dealt with within the remit of your department?

[14:45]

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Solid waste. Because we have been recycling more, we have spare capacity at the energy recovery facility, so that is not a problem. There is years of life left in that one, with careful maintenance. The solid waste, the infill site at La Collette is filling up fast, so that is something that we need to look at in the not too distant future. Our contractor down there, A A Langlois, are doing a fantastic job and they are doing a bit of mining, if you like, on some of the existing infill to see what can be reused, which will extend the life of the infill for a while, but it is something that we have to take care of in the not too distant future to look for possibly an alternate site unless we start to super-fill, so that would be an option.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

In terms of water, has any further work been done with regard to the use of La Gigoulande Quarry as an additional reservoir?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Obviously, that would be down to our colleagues at Jersey Water, but we have not heard much about it. The quarry is still in use at the moment, but there are probably several uses for that quarry, should it cease to be used for extracting stone. I know that Jersey Water have expressed an interest, but ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I am wondering what you are doing to provide, shall we say, further additional water supply to link in with the bridging Island Plan. Clearly it will be necessary if there is more housing.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes. Obviously ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Have you done any work?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We ourselves have not done too much work, not to my knowledge, but obviously we will assist Jersey Water wherever we can. Could you expand on that, Andy?

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Yes, I am happy to, Minister and Mr. Chairman. The Minister is right, that the future supply of water is being assessed by Jersey Water. There are a number of pieces of work that they are looking at, not just in terms of demand. In effect, it would be raw demand in terms of how many people we have here and the demand of that, but also demand management measures in terms of how people do use their water. Also things such as leakage and other things which affect the water supply, but also importantly water quality, which also affects the raw amount of water we have for water supply. There are a number of fronts of action where Jersey Water themselves interact with us in Government, certainly within I.H.E. they interact with us around water quality. I think from a practical perspective, when a trench is being dug in the road, we certainly try and align our activities so that we share the trench, so to speak. But I think again going back to the point around where development is going to be focused, the primary point is around the majority of development is still in the built-up area, where a lot of water mains already exist. I think strategic water reserves such as a new reservoir are not required immediately, but I think what Jersey Water have signalled is that if trends continue and climate trends continue, we may need more strategic storage at some point in the future. Obviously, the Island knows how long a new reservoir takes, obviously Queen's Valley being a good example of that. The lead-in time for such facilities is quite extensive. I think what they have done at this stage is signalled that they would like a conversation about water storage, but from my perspective I think we need to do a lot of work first on water usage, standards of water usage in terms of new developments and appliances, but also all of our own personal behaviour around water usage, which makes the resource go a lot further, before we need to build infrastructure.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

In that case, would you agree that this is an integral part ... Island Plan, let alone the 10-year one? We had to kick this off at an early stage.

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

I think it is important that the Island Plan does set a framework for sustainable use of resources. Our entire strategy, whether it be transport or natural resources, is generally around reduce, manage, and invest. It is a lot easier to reduce our demand for things and then manage what we have in a better way before investing in new facilities and infrastructure, because that very much is the expensive end of the equation. I do certainly think that whether it be new building bye-law standards, new energy efficiency, a lot of our policies in Government really are around reducing the amount of resources that we use. That again is still the primary goal for us at the moment.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I did mention earlier on that we are doing quite a lot of work with storm water separation for the sewerage system. I mean, that is key for independent households, if they can have a water butt in the garden and collect storm water and even use grey water. It just takes the pressure off the system.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Picking up on that, Minister, has any work been done on grey water recycling?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Not to my knowledge. Andy, have you seen ...

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Certainly, I can add something from a building control perspective and building bye-laws. It is technically possible. Effectively grey water recycling does generally need 2 types of plumbing systems within a dwelling to move that grey water around, so it can be done. We do not see a huge amount of it. I think one of the issues that we have in the Island, water is still relatively plentiful and it is still relatively cheap. I think as we see water scarcity increasing or water becoming more expensive, I think it then does drive different approaches to water as a resource, but at the moment I do not think the economic levers are there that really pushes grey water recycling into people's minds or habits.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you. Moving on the Shoreline Management Plan, it was intended to ...

Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville (Vice-Chairman):

Sorry, Chairman, can I just ask a question on the last subject? I did put something in the chat, but I do not think you noticed it.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Indeed, please go ahead.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I was wondering what assumptions are being made about ... I appreciate that population might go down, but history has shown us that it tends to go up. What sort of upper limits of population are you looking at when you are planning?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

As I say, that is a piece of work that is ongoing, but as far as I am aware, with the sewage treatment works, I think we are looking about a capacity, I believe, around 135,000 it could cope with. I am not saying we are planning for that, but I believe that is what it can cope with. As I say, that is a piece of work for the Council of Ministers and the States as a whole to do.

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

I think in terms of Island Plan assumptions, the assumptions that were being used in the previous Island Plan effectively were 350 persons per annum. I think the statistics show that that is a lower estimate, so the new Island Plan is certainly looking at higher estimates of population as a working assumption based on the housing needs studies that have been done as well. It is probably more in the region of between 700 to 900 persons per annum as a working assumption.

The Connétable of Grouville:

The trouble is we are letting 1,000 people in a year.

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Yes. I think it is important that any plan we produce has some flexibility within it and it allows a migration policy to catch up and then it will be reflected in the Island Plan. I think that it will be quite interesting to see where the population statistics take us in terms of what has happened to the Island's population over the last 6 months. There has been some movements in and movements out due to COVID, but I think it is one of those eternal probably issues in Government as to wherever we pitch the number for planning assumptions, it is undoubtedly wrong. I think the team in the policy department are probably trying to make the best assumption they can at the moment.

The Connétable of Grouville:

If we are short of houses now and we are projecting less than we are letting in every year, that situation can only get worse.

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Yes. I think in terms of the housing numbers, the objective assessment of housing need that was undertaken not so long ago does show that there is a significant backlog of housing that the Island needs in terms of its delivery, plus additional housing to meet current needs, so the new Island Plan will need to take that into account in terms of trying to catch up with where we have been and also to try and project into the future, otherwise the impact of that is higher house prices, scarcity of supply and more housing difficulties for Islanders.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Minister, the Shoreline Management Plan is intended to inform the development of the Island Plan, among other wider strategic planning. Is it your expectation that a shorter plan would factor in the aims of the Shoreline Management Plan or is it envisaged that the linking of the strategies will be delayed until the next 10-year plan?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, I should not think so. It is quite comprehensive and I am very happy with it, but obviously there has been lots going on with the shoreline of recent times, but no, the Shoreline Management Plan I believe is secure. Hopefully, we will get the encroachment business sorted in the not too distant future. Obviously, both rely very heavily on experts like Tim and Andy and of course the Law Officers' Department and the Crown Officers, but all seems well at the moment.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It is really not so much about the encroachment issues, of which we have heard much recently, but in terms of the shoreline management generally and this plan maybe, Andy, you could comment on that.

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, you are right in highlighting the issue. I think what we expect the bridging Island Plan to do is start setting the framework for longer shoreline enhancements. We do know that we are under pressure from a climate perspective and an age perspective both in terms of the age of the defences we have, sea defences, but also what is happening with the climate and sea levels and storm events, that we are likely to see greater pressure certainly on the south coast, as an example, on our shore defences. This Island Plan coming will start to set the scene for some of that longer-term investment, but the Shoreline Management Plan certainly talks in decades of timings rather than just a few years for this plan. But we would expect this Island Plan version over the next 2 or 3 years to start setting the sort of strategic policy context, whether that is to highlight where we need to improve some of our sea defences or possibly extend them.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am delighted with the work that has been done thus far down at the gun site. I think that is an excellent initiative. Our engineers have done a fantastic job there. There is a small increase in height and the curb on the top to throw the waves back. It is just very, very simple, but extremely effective and that is something I would like to extend further to St. Aubin when money allows.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Indeed. How do you consider that the bridging plan can respond to travel and transport objectives, such as those included in your Sustainable Transport Policy? To what extent can it be addressed in the next 3-year plan?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

As I mentioned, we are steaming ahead with the S.T.P. We are doing everything we can that does not take huge amounts of money. We do have a few cycle lanes going in. We have got a cycle lane being constructed on the far side of the seawall - on the Esplanade side, that is - which is to separate pedestrians and cyclists to make it as safe as possible. We need to do a bit more with the education. We will be taking on a cycling expert to administer that. There is a lot of separation needed and a lot more tolerance needed between cyclists and pedestrians and indeed cars as well. We need to slow people down on cycles because when we were young, if you got up to 15 miles an hour on an old Raleigh bike, you were doing well, but now with these new carbon fibre bikes, you can go up 40 miles an hour plus without bursting into a sweat. But this is something we need to take on board, that we need to keep everybody safe and to separate cyclists from the main traffic flow as much as we can. Often that can be done with a bit of paintwork on the road and doing some paperwork to maybe remove a little bit of parking.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

Going back, you know how I feel about cyclists, bless them. Do you have anything that you want to sort of tell cyclists or to educate cyclists how to use the roads compared with everybody else? Because at the moment they can go up, down, around and do whatever they want and it is very unnerving, especially when you are in St. Helier, to be down a road and then suddenly be confronted by a bicycle and get abuse some of the time too, which is not very pleasant.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The law is already there.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

We know that, but they do not.

[15:00]

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is one of enforcement, that maybe we need to change things slightly, that if someone is reported to maybe a parish hall that ... not necessarily names and addresses, but several people were booked for cycling the wrong way against traffic or something of that nature. It can be a problem. Where I live down this end of St. Saviour, I walk my dog about 9.00 p.m. at night. I normally see about between 5 and 12 cyclists. If one of them has lights on, it is a bonus, but as I say, it is one of enforcement, that we need to educate people, inform people. It is all in the Highway Code, which is not just a code, as such. A lot of it is based in law and ...

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

But a lot of them do not know the Highway Code because they do not think it necessarily applies to them. Do you not think we could ask the people who are selling the cycles, we could say: "Could you just let them have a Highway Code?" because it is important. I know there are quite a few accidents with cyclists, but we never get to hear about them. Have you any idea why, Minister?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We get statistics reported to us if there is an accident on the cycle tracks that we administer, obviously, but regarding incidents with cars, if there is an injury that is reported to us, but minor taps, I do not believe they do get reported.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

No, they do not.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

But in our Transport Office they have a map there with the little stickers on pointing out the hotspots. We have our own safety team and they do work to that, but ...

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

It is a pity the public is not made aware and other cyclists of these accidents that occur, because it maybe would make them think. At the moment, it seems to be brushed under the carpet. You are on a bike, you are doing the environment the world of good, so: "Thank you very much, we are not interested if you have an accident" and I think that is a bit of a shame. Anyway, I digress and I am sorry.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Perhaps it would be a good idea for everyone who buys a brand-new bike at a shop, they are issued with a copy of the Highway Code. Also it is free online on the gov.je website, people can download

it if they are that way inclined, but I agree. As I mentioned previously, the new modern bikes, you can get up to 40 miles an hour no problem at all and that little bit of polystyrene helmet is not going to help you.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Andy, I think you had a comment to make.

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just going back to the sort of alignment of the S.T.P. to the Island Plan, I think certainly in terms of whether it be S.T.P. or even carbon neutral, the fundamental point is to make sure development is in the right location, which reduces, where possible, the need to travel in the first place in a car. That, by virtue of that, reduces travelling on the highway network, it helps with commuter reduction. The other point I was going to just flag is the work we are doing as part of the Island Plan with the Island Plan team around a movement strategy for St. Helier, which is looking at how St. Helier does get access in, how people want to access it, how they want to move through it. That will inform where we need put public realm improvements in place or indeed cycleway improvements or indeed other road improvements. I think the best thing for cycling is to try and separate cyclists from other road users. That does show that it helps all parties, so hopefully the movement strategy will help inform that work going forward.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Also we are very keen on the Safe Routes to School scheme. We are doing a lot with the parishes. We are working with the Parish of St. Saviour now, we just helped out with Bagatelle Lane and we are going up to see the Constable I believe next week or the week after.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

Yes, you are.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We need to keep the children safe because it is a vicious circle, in the sense that in the Parish of St. Saviour, for instance, we have about 11 schools in and around the parish and the more that parents feel that their children are not safe, they then drive them to school, which then perpetuates the whole problem. If you will pardon the pun, we need to break that cycle, keep children safe for walking and cycling to school and that will reduce a lot of traffic on the roads.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Does this, Minister, form part of the ... 10-year plan?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am sorry, we lost you then.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Does this form part of the longer-term 10-year plan?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is part of the long-term plan, yes, the Safe Routes to School scheme. It has been ongoing for some time. Oh dear, we have lost you again. We need another 10 pence in the slot.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, we are having connection problems out west today, I can tell you. Minister, sorry, I get disconnected, it seems to me, on a regular ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Basis.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

... part of the 10-year plan. What I am trying to explore is the linkage of the S.T.P. first of all to the 3-year plan and then the consequence on the 10-year one.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Right. They do dovetail. Do you have the timeline, Andy?

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Yes, certainly. I think what we are sort of expecting, the longer-term strategy is embedded as much in the short-term plan as the long-term plan. The direction the Island wants to travel with its spatial planning and land use policies effectively is to make better use of the land that we have already used and the buildings that are already regenerated. We do have significant land that is still available that can be reinvigorated to provide housing and other uses. I think that the strategy that we see in this Island Plan is very similar to previous Island Plans in the sense that we focus on those built-up areas. The key challenge for this Island Plan is housing numbers. Certainly, we will be expecting to see different density policies and possibly different approaches to village envelopes within the parishes, working with the parishes, of course, in terms of parish housing or sort of centre viability and vitality, really. I think there is still a need to ensure that we are building appropriately where parishes require parish housing as well. So the longer-term plan is interwoven into the short-term plan. I think the focus will be though on housing delivery in this first instance because that is where the pressures really are.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So there is no specific cycle strategy in the 3-year plan at present?

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

There is not anything particular. I think we will see the movement strategy indicates where we need to improve various movement corridors in St. Helier, which hopefully we will then align our public realm investment on the back of that. I think there is a wider conversation then around developer gain and whether developers are providing any investment into improvements into the public transport network as well. But the overall strategy I think remains the same for the 3-year and the 10-year plan.

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier:

... do it later, because it is kind of connected. I think, Andy, you mentioned a lot about the housing need and we all agree there is a housing need, but I am getting more and more worried about mentioning housing without balancing with, for example, community centres that we are promised in St. Helier for a long time. Again, it feels the cycling route and development of St. Helier, it should come hand in hand with the public realm, with public spaces, specifically community centres that have been postponed for a long time, from our perspective, and how that would come with the Island Plan. Where can I see it coming?

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

I certainly agree. Certainly from a departmental perspective we are very clear that it is not just housing numbers, it is also about urban quality, it is about public open space, it is about public realm. I think to make a place liveable, you need not just the house itself, we need to focus on the inside of the house, the standards for the property itself in terms of living space standards, but also private amenity space and then public amenity space. There is a challenge in all of that because a lot of those things take up land, but I do think that we are adopting a more imaginative approach to public realm strategy and public open space strategy in town, that we would expect to see developments deliver more greenery in public realm improvements as a result of them.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Following up, recently, like 2 weeks ago, I think we had a presentation from Andium and it was open to the public. We have been presented also of town development. Again, I think 6 sides mentioned, yes, we did have a bit more greenery space and we did have a bit more pedestrians, which is really welcome, which is very good. We have not seen any covered public spaces. Again, Chairman, I know that I mentioned it during the Island Plan debate that I would like to have implication that we

have 7 square metres per resident within the area, to have some sort of calculation to understand where we are standing compared to the international standards.

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

I agree. Certainly, I am aware the planning policy team have done public open space surveys of St. Helier. We know where the areas are lacking in public open space. I think all we would need to do is look at the aerial photograph of St. Helier and it is very clear where there is more greenery and less greenery. I can only just agree with everything you have said. I think it is vitally important that we look at where else in the public realm we can increase greenery of spaces, whether that be reducing road space, we could increase planting, we can increase pavements widths or increase even just small pocket parks in places. I think all of these things help to contribute. Any significant scheme though, anything of a size, we would also expect that scheme to provide its own open space as well. There are imaginative ways of doing it and also things like roof terraces and things such as those can also provide people with access to some private greenery.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

That links on to air quality ... any plans to measure air quality and how might this help inform the bridging plan and would it have an impact on development?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

If I let Andy answer that because he has a foot in both camps, as it were.

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Yes, thank you, Minister. Thank you, Chairman. I am hoping the Minister for the Environment is also updated in terms of the project that is ongoing relating to sort of real-time monitoring of air quality within the Island. That has started working in partnership with Digital Jersey. We have 23 school sites that are currently having a real-time air quality monitor in them, so there are 42 in total. Some are working, some are not yet working and some are being fitted, so we have a rollout on school premises. Then we are looking at potentially whether this forms the basis of rolling these sensors out more widely across the Island into different locations. This is a bit of a ground-breaking project that has been working in partnership with Digital Jersey and a third-party provider of air quality monitoring kit. But that certainly has the real potential to give the Island some very good data on air quality on a real-time basis rather than the fairly traditional way that we currently monitor it in certain places, which is through diffusion tubes and things like that, so it is always a past look back. We only have a few of these in certain places, so I think with the way that technology is developing with the sort of internet of things, if I can describe it as that, we have the ability to put a network of air quality sensors around the Island that measure not just air quality but a range of climatic indicators which we can then use for sort of data gathering and then policy planning.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you. Much of the Island Plan in-committee debate held in July focused on St. Helier. How and to what extent do you consider that plans for St. Helier should feature in the 3-year plan? Any thoughts on that, Minister? You do not live too far from St. Helier and it would have an impact on you.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am miles away. I am in God's own Parish of St. Saviour. Yes, do you want to take that, Andy, as it is more structural?

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Yes. I think it is really important for us to focus on St. Helier. It is obviously the largest grouping of development, but also where the majority - in greater St. Helier - of the Island's population does live, so it is right that we look at the quality of St. Helier, urban quality, public realm quality. Indeed, that is where all the transport links end up as well, so there is a lot of reasons for focusing on St. Helier from a housing perspective, but also commercial premises and business premises. I think either way, in any Island Plan St. Helier is always going to have a focus because it is a large area where a lot of people live and there is a lot of potential still for St. Helier to deliver for the Island.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I always think of St. Helier as being the spokes of a wheel, if you like, because obviously the Island slopes from north to south and all the valleys come down, so the central point is St. Helier of the Island, but as I say, we are lucky to live on the outskirts, shall we say, in St. Saviour. It is a bit like London at the moment, you can walk from Old London straight through to the suburbs without seeing a green field. We are suffering from that now with the infilling, that you can walk from the bus station, if you like, you can walk to St. Clement without seeing an open field, which is quite sad. But that is where we are and we have to live with that, but we need to take care of our urban environment, which is why we are very keen on planting trees and greenery where we can.

[15:15]

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Andy mentioned St. Helier being the hub of transport. Much discussion has been had with regard to servicing the schools in your parish. I think it was rather felt that a hopper bus would not work, but what ... existing bus routes to run up to the St. Saviour school site and Highlands. Has that been considered further in any detail to alleviate the pressure on the roads surrounding the St. Saviour schools?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes. We have got a very good school bus service going at the moment. There are choices to be had. As I mentioned in the States, LibertyBus, of their own volition, put on a Highlands bus which took students up Wellington Hill and took them into the Highlands campus. Unfortunately, it was not successful. There was lots of publicity done by LibertyBus. They had it on their big screens at the station, they handed out leaflets to students, they went into Highlands College, LibertyBus, and had meetings with all the staff there at Highlands and they agreed the routes and everything. They handed out leaflets, asked questionnaires of all the students, but sadly the uptake was not that great, that the students preferred to use the existing bus system, which is a separate bus service.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Has there been any thought as ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Some use a combination of the regular service and the school bus.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Indeed. We maybe need to look for further input on that to alleviate the pressures on the road system there.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Absolutely. If you go up to J.C.G. (Jersey College for Girls) during the turning out time from school, you will see all the school buses lined up there, maybe 30 school buses there, and they are very, very well used, but we are talking huge numbers that we are trying to move.

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

If I can add, Mr. Chairman, I think certainly we would support a review or reconsideration of bus services. I think we have got a good bus service, but there is a conversation to be had around what the future of educational buses is and how that links and ties in with the scheduled bus service. Certainly, we do want schoolchildren to continue using buses. Indeed, we want to increase the numbers, so I do think we do need to look at how that works currently and get feedback from our schoolchildren on how it could be improved in the future, whether that means a bigger scheduling service, scheduled service, that could be the answer. But yes, we would want to do some more work on that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you. Minister, what further provision should be made for infrastructure in this 3-year plan? What are the key elements that you consider should be included?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

As I say, the provision for cycling, in my own book, there is lots of calls for improving the roads, which is difficult in the sense that most of the work we do, we are retrofitting. Somebody did suggest that we extend the dual carriageway going west, which could be problematic. We just cannot do that without destroying people's front gardens and then you just go up to the roundabout at Beaumont, then you have the same problem again. Maybe there is something to be said for people ... more people will be working from home. They have got used to it now and we are all doing it at the moment because of obviously COVID, but I think it is going to get into the psyche, that everyone is used to working with FaceTime, Teams and Zoom and all the other applications. A lot of people think it is the way to go: "Why should I sit in traffic for half an hour?" but anything we can do to reduce traffic I am all in favour of, but I am not into banning things, which a lot of people want. I just want to facilitate people to get the mode of transport they are comfortable with. If they can use their feet, use their feet; if they can use a bike, that is terrific; use a bus, well done. The last point obviously is if you have to use a car, no one is going to stop you, but we like to facilitate people to take the greener way.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Taking us to the waste strategy, Minister ...

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence:

Sorry, Chair. I put in a request for ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Sorry, Deputy Morel. Carry on.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Thank you. Sorry, Minister, just picking up on the last question, it is not directly to do with the Island Plan, but you were saying anything to cut traffic. I just wondered if you were using roadworks at Millbrook and Gloucester Street in an attempt to discourage people to drive, because you have had 6 months to do those roadworks where schools and offices have not been in use and yet you have chosen weeks when schools are back. I was wondering why that was the case.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We only have a limited amount of work, but it is not infrastructure as such. We have our colleagues at Jersey Electricity, Jersey Water and obviously we have specialist teams that look at the roads and sometimes they have sort of ground-penetrating radar, so it is not just the surface, they can look under the roads and see where the roads are collapsing and take remedial action urgently. But

scheduling road repairs is quite an art and we have 2 or 3 guys that do nothing but this scheduling. As I say, we try and minimise any disruption we can, but in the old days we had 5 or 6 contractors who could lay tarmac for us. Now I think we just have one, plus we have one or 2 companies that can do patching. But this is a sad fact of life at the moment. We have to fit it in as and when. Could you expand on that, Andy?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

No, no need. Can I just confirm that there is no attempt to use roadworks as a way to discourage drivers?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Oh, I beg your pardon. No, absolutely not. No. I consider it part of my job to get people home after work as quickly and safely as possible. We do not want anyone held up.

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

I think the Deputy raises a good point though in terms of why we do roadworks and I think we are very effective at doing them. We know the reasons why, but I think as a department we could be a lot more positive and public about why the job is occurring in the first place and what benefits it could bring in the longer term. We have got a number of schemes around the Island currently where we sort of tell people they are going on, but we do not say why they are going on, so I think that is a good point.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes. We maybe need to be a bit more proactive with that, but as I say, the team in the offices, they do a lot of scheduling. We have changed the law in recent years because with the utility companies, they had a right to dig up the roads whenever they wished. That has been changed now, that they do everything by consent, unless it is an absolute emergency where a mains cable has gone on an apartment block or a burst water main. Everything is co-ordinated through our offices, so we let them know with advanced scheduling that in 18 months' time road X is going to be dug up: "If you are going to do any utilities, get in now, lay your electricity mains, lay your water mains because you will not be able to touch that road for at least another 4 or 5 years because we do not want the surface messed up again." They have all been very, very good and they are all taking it on board. But as I say, scheduling roadworks is a bit of a nightmare and obviously we liaise with our road safety team to make sure everyone is safe.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you, Minister. Waste strategy: is there a new liquid waste ... or solid waste strategy? Is there a timeline on this when it might be published or implemented? Where are we with that now? A solid waste strategy and a liquid waste strategy, have you got one?

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Certainly, solid waste, at the moment we are adopting a process that the majority of solid waste that is arising in the Island is dealt with within the Island, so the wider strategy piece is that the main focus in terms of waste arisings is around recycling. Certainly in terms of solid waste and inert waste especially, there is a lot of focus now on recycling construction waste and doing more with what we generate within the Island. There are some potential developments around that area that we would like to express in an updated strategy, so we are still working to the old ones of this. The liquid waste area is rather, I guess, more straightforward, that we have liquid waste arisings which we have to deal with to a certain standard and the new plant does deliver that. The other big area around solid waste is around recyclates and recycling behaviour and how the Island deals with that. So again, I guess we are caught in the throes of world recycling markets in terms of what that costs us and what that does not cost us, but where we can deliver more recycling, that would be beneficial to the environment and to other strategies. I think the challenge we have within the department is then how do we get the right deals in terms of those products to market. The strategies effectively, Mr. Chairman, are pretty much as they were. A time will come, I think, over the next couple of years especially around how we fund these sort of activities and whether it is right for the Island to charge for these activities.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There are some unintended consequences too. For instance, most of our food comes from the U.K. (United Kingdom), it is not grown locally, and obviously all the trucks or trailers are going back empty. Obviously, we have all the plastics that are compressed and old T.V.s (televisions) are put on pallets, fridges and so on, and are exported to the U.K. and are recycled. It is a bit of a bonus with the vehicles going back and trailers going back empty that we can do that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It seems to me that if you are talking about the next couple of years, there will be an implication on the bridging Island Plan. Do you see that?

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Certainly at the moment in terms of the built facilities and the land use that we need to operate both solid waste and liquid waste, we feel they are adequately covered in this next bridging plan period. We would certainly want to see our operational sites still reflected for waste management uses because operationally that is good for the Island to make sure that these are catered for. The

facilities effectively that we have within the energy recovery facility at La Collette and also the investment at Bellozanne now for the sewage works effectively does give us updated infrastructure on all fronts moving forward, the last investments being a clinical waste incinerator, which is due to be finally commissioned going into next year and the investments we have made in sort of metal recycling and green waste recycling. There is a lot of investment gone into La Collette. Obviously, we can see investment in Bellozanne with the sewage treatment works, so that does put the Island in a more resilient place in terms of its waste infrastructure. Effectively the strategy is to keep using that. I think the main change in waste is really around solid waste, around recycling levels, whether that be more construction recyclates or indeed domestic household recycling.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We had to get in Alan Langlois to shift a lot of hillside, if you like, in Bellozanne to accommodate the new sewage treatment works. That was I think mostly medium quality granite, which was then piled up - you probably noticed - down at La Collette and it has all been recycled and reused as roading and other products. As Andy said, most of the stuff we do now is recycled and reused on-Island whenever possible. I was talking informally to Deputy Morel the other day regarding some of the things we do and more than happy to set up a few visits for the Scrutiny Panel, if you wish, to the new sewage treatment works and so on. You have obviously seen the old one, but the new one is coming along nicely, and also a visit to the recycling centre down at La Collette may be of interest to you.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you, Minister, that would be appreciated. Just one final question on a subject I know is close to your heart and which your staff have to deal with. What are your views on stronger regulation and enforcement of dog excrement left in public places?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Again, like anything else, laws are in place. It is just one of enforcement and proving it is another thing. Several people have contacted me and said: "Why do you not D.N.A. (deoxyribonucleic acid) test dogs?" and I thought: "No, we cannot go down that road." It is one of enforcement, that if a patrolling officer, States or Honorary, catches a person allowing their dog to foul, then that person should be prosecuted and maybe not necessarily named, but something go in the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* just so people can see: "Look, you allow your dog to do this and this is what happens."

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you consider there should be more bins provided?

[15:30]

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think there are adequate bins. Because the refuse goes into the energy recovery facility, it is quite in order to put the black bag into the normal bins you find in the road, which are on most corners. It is quite in order to put your black bag in there because it is incinerated.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

Can I just butt in here? St. Saviour has 23 bins around the parish, which the parish have provided themselves and they are very, very well used. My depot manager says that 3 or 4 in particular areas are used very heavily. So my parish, St. Saviour, has provided these 23-plus bins.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Excellent, good news, good news. My dog at my feet here has had his lunchtime walk, so he is quite happy. But basically there is no excuse, even if there is not a bin around. You do not have to touch it. People think: "Oh, I am not touching that." You put the bag over your hand, you pick up the offending item, invert the bag, put a knot in it, job done. If there is no bin around, you take it home with you and dispose of it properly. There is no excuse.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Minister and your team, I thank you for your attendance today and we look forward to visiting the various elements of your plant in the fullness of time. Thank you very much. I close the meeting.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Excellent. Many thanks, Chairman.

[15:32]