



# Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny

## Panel

### Quarterly Hearing

### Witness: The Minister for the Environment

Wednesday, 7th December 2022

**Panel:**

Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin (Chair)

Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central (Vice Chair)

Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier North

**Witnesses:**

Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade, The Minister for the Environment

Deputy H. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity, Associate Minister for the Environment

Ms. K. Whitehead, Group Director - Regulation, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department

Mr. K. Pilley, Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department

[11:00]

**Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin (Chair):**

Good morning, Minister and team and Assistant Minister. Welcome to our quarterly hearing where we get an opportunity to question you on all sorts of various subjects within your remit. We would like to start off, if we could, straight away by talking about the Carbon Neutral Roadmap. We note, Minister, that one of your priorities is to tackle the climate emergency by delivering the first phase of the Carbon Neutral Roadmap, including a focus on decarbonisation of heating of buildings and road

transport. So, could you just outline precisely, if possible, what policies will be launched in the next year in respect of heating buildings and road transport?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I am going to give most of this to Hilary because she is leading on this, so she is doing the day-to-day work.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Oh, I apologise. I should have gone around and introduced everybody. I will give Hilary an opportunity to think about the question before we get there. **[Laughter]** Yes, so we will just go around the table quickly if we may.

**Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central:**

Should you have checked as well the statement for the scrutiny? But I am sure you are aware of it.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

The what, sorry?

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

There is usually a statement, is there not?

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

There is a standard statement.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Yes, I think you are pretty much aware of it.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Yes. We will just go around the table. I apologise. I am Chair of the panel, Deputy Steve Luce. On my right ...

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Deputy Rob Ward, Vice Chair of the panel, I believe.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier North:**

Deputy Mary Le Hegarat, member of the panel.

**Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade:**

Connétable Mike Jackson, panel member.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Jonathan Renouf, Minister for the Environment.

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

Hilary Jeune, Assistant Minister for the Environment with responsibilities for energy and climate change.

**Group Director - Regulation, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

Kelly Whitehead, Group Director for regulation.

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department:**

Kevin Pilley, Head of Place and Spatial Planning.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

My apologies, it has already been a long morning. We will get down to the questions. Assistant Minister, any detail you can give us for next year in regard to housing and transport?

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

Yes. First of all that is coming first is the e-bike scheme, which is going to be coming out of the E.V. (electric vehicle) funding line within the C.E.F., the Climate Emergency Fund. We will be launching that early in the new year and it will be done in phases, so we will continue to launch. So it is not just one but we will then over the next 2 years have moments where we will be launching e-bike subsidy schemes. This will also include not only e-bikes but also cargo bikes and adapted bikes as well. So we are hoping to encourage a wide range of e-bikes, electronic bikes, on the road. So, that is the one scheme, and the other scheme, the heating scheme, will be launched probably at the end of quarter 1, beginning of quarter 2. The details are being worked on at the moment so I am unable to give you intricate details, but it is something that we are working with a number of retailers. We are working with also those who would be installing the services. So we are working with a number of stakeholders at the moment seeing what is the best scheme that we can be doing with that, and also, for example, with Jersey Electricity, seeing how we can partner with them as well. So there are a number of discussions going on to ensure that that scheme is best and the most efficient and effective.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Okay, I have a couple of questions coming out of what you have just said there. Electric scooters, would they come under your e-bike scheme?

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

No, at the moment that will not because it is not in the law, so we would have to change the law and I believe that is not something for us.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

That is Infrastructure, yes.

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

It is Infrastructure and I think Home Affairs as well to look at. It is something that I know that is on the list to look at because we are hearing, of course, a number of calls around e-scooters, but no, that will not be in the scheme. The scheme will currently be on electric bikes and then cargo bikes and adapted bikes.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

What about 4-wheel bikes, quadro scooters? There are a small number of vehicles on the market at the moment that are not officially cars, they are 4-wheeled bikes. Would they fall under the scheme?

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

No, because at the moment they are not in the law. We are unable to do that as quickly, but I know that Infrastructure is looking at this to look at expanding the law on what could go on the road. I know in relation to EVie, for example, with their new Ami cars that they have just launched on the road, they had to make a change for that. I think it is being looked at but that is, as we said, in Infrastructure.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Okay, so we are specifically talking about 2-wheeled bicycles ...

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

Bicycles, yes.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

... and nothing else for that. That is good. Going back to heating and housing, we know, Minister, that we have a ban on the replacement of oil-fired boilers coming up in the near future, and I am sure that the Assistant Minister obviously is only too aware of that. Tomorrow in Planning Committee we are going to have in front of us the first application to put large-scale P.V. (photovoltaic) in an agricultural field and one of the comments we are having is from historicists because of the views and

views from other places and the concern over that. How do you see historic versus climate change into the future? Let me be a little bit more specific. I live in an old granite farmhouse that is heated by oil at the moment and I know that an electric alternative will not do the same job. I know that if I applied to change my windows I will be told: "You can replace them with wood with single-pane glass." At what point are we going to decide that we have to favour climate change over historic when it comes to things like that? We are going to continually as a Planning Committee or planners or whoever in the Planning Department be faced in future years with this climate change necessity to move to help the climate and on the other hand a Historic Department that is going to say that they would like things very much kept as they are. There is going to be a continuing and increasing conflict. How do you see that evolving?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I will take that one because I think it relates more to the planning side of things. I think that is a very valid point and something that I have put a note to pick up with officers because my personal view - this is a personal view - is that there is potential for more flexibility in the interpretation of some of those protections for historic buildings. There is the potential now with considerable advances in heritage - shall we call it - infrastructure, I suppose, heritage things like windows and so on that are more able to meet the visual criteria that people might want for heritage assets without having to revert back to the single-pane sliding sash kind of thing. I think it is worth us looking at those things and probably doing a piece of work that tries to assess where there might be some room for flexibility there. I know it is a source of frustration to people that they cannot modernise an historic building.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

It is a source of frustration to individuals but I found myself the other day thinking about State-owned buildings, and the immediate one to think about is the one that we are sitting in today, where we know we use an enormous amount of oil to heat it. We also know if we tried to do something to insulate this building with windows and doors and what have you, we would almost certainly come up against the historic issue with trying to protect the listed building.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Secondary glazing is always an option ... or not always an option, it does depend on the window casements and so on, but it is sometimes an option in terms of efficiency. I do not know, Kevin, if you have any observations on the current situation?

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department:**

Yes, I would just make the point, Chair, that the Bridging Island Plan acknowledged the tensions between protecting historic fabric and adapting buildings to be more energy efficient. The policies in the plan do allow that greater degree of flexibility. So you raised the issue of windows. The policy

is now more flexible to allow double glazing in historic buildings where windows are able to accommodate double glazing. But I think it also raises the other interesting element that clearly existing buildings, whether they are listed or not, have a lot of embodied energy within them. So I think the plan highlights the need to examine and explore the embodied energy in an existing building relative to any proposal that there might be to demolish that and replace it with another building. There is always that balance between what sort of energy gains you might get by a more thermally efficient new building versus the embodied energy within an existing building. I think there is an evolving need to understand how we measure and assess those different types of proposal and I think that is something that both the colleagues working on the planning side of things but also the development industry are getting to grips with. I think there is a tension and it is not just related to listed buildings, it is related to the performance of all our buildings on the Island.

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

Just as a thing specifically on, for example, government buildings, we have as part of the Carbon Neutral Roadmap recognised decarbonising government buildings, so we do have a unit that was set up this year in the government that is looking at the government-owned buildings to do the measurements first and then seeing how we can reduce the carbon emissions around the government-owned buildings. So there is a specific programme and unit who is working on that, both for the buildings but also, for example, for the fleets as well, so from a vehicle ... so taking the Carbon Neutral Roadmap and understanding the carbon emissions of the Island. They are taking that into the government as well and seeing how we can make sure ... and it is going to be hard, as you said. There is a tension in how that works but we are starting to collect that data to be able to then say: "Okay, how do we do this going forward?", making sure obviously that affordability as well is key. So that is, again, that tension.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Before I come to Deputy Le Hegarat, I am sure you appreciate but I am going to point it out: we do not have much time. This building let us take, for example. We know in just a few years' time we will not be able to replace the boilers in this building with oil-fired boilers. Government does not usually work very fast when it comes to things like this and we certainly need to be thinking about it now because if something breaks down in the middle of 2026 and this building cannot be heated, we have an immediate problem that we need to ... anyway, Deputy Le Hegarat.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

Yes, it reflects on what happened yesterday with the Planning Committee when we were visiting the site in relation to solar panels. A lot of the committee were saying the same thing. What about legislation or changes to legislation to ensure that all new builds have to have solar panels? What is your view in relation to that?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

This is something that ... I mean, I personally have solar panels and I am a huge believer in solar panels. We have to accept that there are some tensions around that policy if you were to have that sort of policy. First of all, not all roofs will be suitable for it. They may be in shaded locations. There may be a roof that faces in the wrong direction, flat roof or whatever, so a very prescriptive policy might have some perverse outcomes in terms of putting things in that would not work. The other issue that we have to face up to is that from a Jersey Electricity point of view they would sell this electricity if there were lots of solar panels and they would, therefore, have to spread the fixed costs of their network over a smaller unit sale. So the fixed costs would rise proportionately and they would rise proportionately more for people on lower incomes who were not able to afford the solar panels and get their free electricity through them than it would for people who were affording them. So that is something we discuss with Jersey Electricity regularly to see where the pain threshold lies, if you like: at what point does that become there is so much solar there that it causes this problem for them?

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

But, Minister, surely the climate has to come first and certainly come before the profits of a private company.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I do not think it is about profits, it is about the price they have to charge consumers to make a return.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Okay, let us put it another way. If Government policy dictates that we went down the road of solar panels and it affected the price for lower income families for their electricity, would that not mean that Government should step in there and help those that are less able to pay?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

It would, yes, and that is something we might ... that is a route we might want to go down.

[11:15]

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

To separate the 2 then, the possibility of solar is there, there is plenty of roof space, the technology is there, so the blocker is economic?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Yes. It is worth putting it, of course, in the context that we already have a largely decarbonised electricity supply so we have to think where is the best place to do it. I have said myself to Jersey Electricity and to anyone who will listen that I think the huge value of solar panels is not just that people get to reduce their electricity consumption themselves but it changes behaviour. Most people who get solar panels end up getting an E.V. because it makes so much sense to power a car. So it actually does have a decarbonising impact because it takes another energy source in terms of vehicles off ... it potentially affects the use of carbon in those things. It takes ...

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Yes, before I come to that I will just throw in another question there. I understand, we all understand, completely that we are very fortunate to enjoy a low carbon electricity supply, but this is surely about security as much as sustainability. I will hand over.

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

I think the thing is not just economics for the consumer which means that that will increase, but it is because you will still when you have solar panels need to have the grid and be connected to the grid because ... so you still need to have that grid there and it still has to be maintained, so that is the case of why they are saying it is that balance, because you need to ensure still the grid that we have today and we need to increase it and it needs to expand because we are looking at more electrification.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

We are going to come back to electricity in literally one question's time. I just want to get this one in because I know that Constable Jackson has some questions on electricity. Getting back to the financing of carbon neutral, when are we likely to see or hear the long-term financing strategy? Because we know it is going to be hundreds and hundreds of millions of pounds.

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

We are starting to look at that now and we will be focusing on it next year, so we will start the bigger discussions and bring in stakeholders, bring in experts, to be able to discuss what that looks like. We know that from the last Government as the Carbon Neutral Roadmap was being developed there was some elements of exploration around that already so we are not starting from scratch. Our aim is to really focus on next year because, of course, as you have said, things take time and we want to make sure that everything is in place way before 2025 when we know that the Climate Emergency Fund will not have this £25 million that is predicted to be in there now.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**



Can I just ask about those costings? When those costings are made, will there be an inclusion of not ... of business as usual? So, for example, if you do not replace with renewables or with more climate-friendly, whatever you want to call it, systems, i.e. old technology, there is a cost there as well. So if you replace with an electric car, fine, that is going to be the cost of decarbonisation. If you do not do that you are going to buy a petrol-driven car anyway, so if you take that off the cost, so the hundreds of millions that we are talking about are not hundreds of millions because you would be spending that money anyway. Will that be included in the equation? Because I do not think it has been in the past and I think it has skewed the argument.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I think the carbon neutral Climate Emergency Fund is predicated on the idea that we would accelerate the transition, so people will replace cars naturally, which is, as you say, a cost that will be incurred anyway. But if we want to make this transition we need to accelerate that transfer ...

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I am just talking about the total cost because figures are bandied about which I think are totally unrealistic personally.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

It is a point well taken, yes.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I will just hand over to the Constable who has some more electrical questions.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

One of your priorities in your ministerial plan was to ensure the Island's transition from reliance on hydrocarbons and working with J.E.C. (Jersey Electricity Company) to ensure readiness of the grid for the accelerated electrification. Can you outline how exactly you will be working with J.E.C. to achieve that?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

We already are. So they will be ... we have asked them for detailed work on the grid on-Island. So there is 2 elements to that security, one is the supply of electricity to the Island from France and one is the ... well, and indeed energy supply on the Island, and then there is the grid in the Island, which we have talked about at previous meetings. So we are attempting to gain much greater visibility from Jersey Electricity about the state of that grid and their plans to improve it.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

It seems to me that at the moment the grid is reinforced when there is commercial pressure to do so. Is that your understanding as well? There does not seem to be an overall plan for the Island at the moment.

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

We believe that there is a plan and we are going to be meeting ... we have a specific meeting with Jersey Electricity to go through that plan soon so that they can tell us what they are talking about when they are saying there is £150 million of investment that they will put in the next 10 years to the grid. We want to know what that looks like so we are now asking them for that. But I think where we are seeing a difference, and I believe that they also will say this, is that in the last few months we have met them, we are developing a good relationship. We are meeting them regularly. They have come already now twice to the Council of Ministers and I believe that this is an accelerated relationship that has not necessarily happened in the past and in past Governments. So I think that already shows that we are committed to having that more in-depth relationship to understand because we see that energy is from ... also not just from the Carbon Neutral Roadmap scenario to ensure that we decarbonise our economy but also from that security aspect which you were talking about. Because of the current situation that we find ourselves in globally we know that it is really important. So we see that we need to enhance that relationship that may have not been so strong in past Governments.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

We talk about reinforcing the grid but, of course, there are consequences which are quite often overlooked or not even talked about; for instance, digging up Island roads significantly. This, of course, has an impact on people who really do not like it and I am sure all of us at election time have had comments about the state of the roads, which is a consequence of this. I just wondered if the road reinstatements are factored into this because they are not insignificant in terms of cost. I would just urge that in your discussions with J.E.C. that you do that. Just going on to timelines, what action will you take in 2023 to enable more homes to be energy efficient? I know you alluded to plans coming through in quarter 1. Is that going to be kicking off that particular area of making homes more efficient?

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

Yes. I think more is quarter 2, the beginning of quarter 2. Quarter 1 we have the e-bike scheme. Quarter 2 is that heating, but it is more focused on adapting the oil and gas boilers rather than making energy efficient houses, but at the same time we think that that is extremely important to also integrate energy efficiency into that. So we have the E.P.C., the energy performance certificates, that we are rolling out at the moment, both commercial and also for domestic. That is the plan to make that mandatory in the future so that will then ensure that people understand their

energy performance of their house. Then, from there, we will be able to ensure that there will be plans to make it more energy efficient. So these things will be combined together in the scheme to ensure efficiency and ...

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Sorry, just to be clear, your first emphasis will be on oil and gas rather than on insulation?

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

Yes, it will, yes, but also at the same time there will be the E.P.C., the energy performance certificates, so they then from there will be able to understand the energy efficiency.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

There is ... sorry.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Sorry, I just wanted to understand why you felt it more important to target oil and gas before insulation.

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

I think there has been quite a good scheme over the years to improve energy efficiency in a number of households. So there has been this scheme that has been ongoing, so this is just a reiteration of another ... like a step, so to speak. So there has been this scheme in the past.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

We have to do bang for your buck. We are talking about carbon reduction. Taking out the boiler is a far more effective way of reducing carbon emissions. We are very focused on home energy efficiency and insulation as a next stage thing running alongside that but we are in a staging process. We are going through a series of pieces of work and the funding for home insulation does not sit so directly within the Climate Emergency Fund because it is not necessarily reducing emissions. For example, you might end up improving the efficiency of a house that is electrically heated and, therefore, you are not actually reducing emissions. You are helping and it is a good thing to do. But the only other point I would make to add to Hilary's point about insulation is we, of course, have the consequential improvements rules in the planning system now, so that is if you are extending a house you have to spend a certain amount of money also improving the envelope of the main house. That is a good way of leveraging improvements in the older historic buildings and so on that are otherwise not going to be insulated very well.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Can I just go back to the practical side? I think at our last meeting you suggested that you were working with stakeholders in the trade, whether it be plumbing, heating, to advise clients or householders in the right direction. Is this still the case or do you rely on the J.E.C. to do that?

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

No, we are working with a number of stakeholders. We think that is really important to build the skills. So one of the areas in the Carbon Neutral Roadmap is about greening skills and greening the economy through building green jobs, basically, and that is something that we really are ensuring. Because both from that but also, for example, for the electric vehicles, anything that we are doing trying to encourage these different kinds of systems, whether it is vehicle or heating, will need to have the skills to support those insulations but also the upkeep. So it is really important that we do that, otherwise it will not be as efficient and effective.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

So will you produce a list of approved contractors, for want of a better word, so that Joe Public, when they want to do some work on their house, they can ring somebody up who will come and advise them and keep it simple?

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

Yes, this is the idea, and also a list of technologies as well. Because there is a number of different technologies which is also a different kind of costing as well and also depending on the house and the current system, so there are ... it is not just one technology that we are suggesting as well. There will be a number of elements so there will be choice there as well.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

That is up on your website or is it going in that direction?

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

It will be going, yes.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

You mentioned about bang for your buck. Just regarding the e-bike scheme, I am just looking and e-bikes are around £2,400, cargo bikes about £4,500. So what sort of percentage subsidy will there be or will it be a set figure?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I am slightly reluctant to be drawn on the figures until we announce it.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Okay. But will it be a set figure or will it be a percentage?

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

It will be set but there is a differentiation between, for example, the cargo bikes and the adapted bikes versus the electrical.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Is the plan then to get somebody to take their car off the road entirely?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

It will not be conditional, if that is what you mean.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

No, but is that the intention in terms of the driver, if you excuse the pun.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I would say the intention is to reduce carbon miles and so if a car is not being used much because an e-bike is being used, that is almost as good to me as a car coming off the road.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

It is just I always ask, you know, a bus pass is £495 a year. If you were to subsidise and make that £150 a year, it is a regular service. It will be used more in the winter and that would have the same effect. Has any consideration been given to that because that is quite a good bang for your buck, I think?

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

There is a whole section on active travel that is sitting mainly with the Minister for Infrastructure, but we work very closely and we have regular meetings with them, working on elements around that.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

So is that being considered then? Would that be another area to consider? Because it seems to me a very good use of money.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

We will take it back and discuss it further with our Infrastructure colleagues.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Okay. We want to come on to utility-scale renewables, but before we do that I cannot help but emphasise the point that Constable Jackson has made. We have 3 years now until we bring in this ban on oil-fired boilers and it is very easy to think, okay, we will make an easy and just ... the just transition is the word you have used in your plan, Minister. But some of this is big infrastructure work, putting in new electricity supplies to areas of the Island which really are going to need them in order to move from gas to electricity or from oil to electricity when it comes to boilers. This is all long-term planning work and it is going to need time; 3 years is not very long and it is going to disappear very fast. My fear is that we get to 2026 and people are having to come in and say: "Look, I cannot replace my oil-fired boiler but I do not have an alternative because even if I go to electric there is not enough power in the road."

[11:30]

I just want to be sure that we are looking at all the angles to make sure that when we get to 1st January 2026 we are ready. I fear that J.E.C. are not going to be ready with enough power in enough places because it is just such a long-term plan to get it prepared.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I am very happy for us to explore that at our next meeting when we have had further conversations with Jersey Electricity. Of course, I suspect you could probably call them in and have a chat yourself with them.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

We have had an hour with Jersey Electricity and we were very grateful for that. It was a good meeting but obviously we need to go back to them again. Certainly, something that is coming over to me is there are areas of the Island where gas is used quite extensively in areas which I was quite surprised by. I just fear that if a whole estate of 30 or 40 houses suddenly realises that they cannot afford gas, they need electricity, that could be a major infrastructure project for a number of months or quarters even for the J.E.C. to do that. Meanwhile, other people that rely on oil or boilers get to a certain age and they all start to fail once an estate of people who have all moved into a house at the same time ... I am sure I am ... I do not want to teach you to suck eggs but ...

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

I think we absolutely recognise those concerns and that is why we have been in this role not very long and we have absolutely jumped in with both feet and said, right, we need to make sure that we have everything lined up. So I think that is why we are making sure that we are building good, strong relations with Jersey Electricity, understanding where they are in their grid infrastructure, and also working with them on a number of areas to ensure that we can move forward and then other

stakeholders also within the energy sector as well. We are definitely, I would say ... we understand the concern that you express but it is something that we have steps in place and we are working very hard, us and the team, to make sure that we can come to you with lots of announcements as soon as possible to be able to make sure ... but we have to make sure that those schemes do the right thing and are the most efficient and effective schemes, so that does mean a lot of pre-work to ensure before we announce. So, though it feels like it is taking time, it means that lots of groundwork is being done to ensure that when it is up and running it does the effect because, as you said, it is not long before the bigger things come in.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

If I can just come in on that, that is a really good point because truthfully without a forward plan ... and we have brought it up at the meeting we had with J.E.C. There does not seem to be one at the moment. For the individual who wants possibly to change to electricity and if they do not have the power coming up near their property, they want to know when it is going to be coming near their property. Is it in a year, 2, 3 years? They will plan accordingly and I think without that plan from the J.E.C. it makes it quite difficult for people to join in, if that is the correct term.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Seeking that visibility is one of the major pieces of work we are doing with J.E.C. now.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Okay. We will move on to renewables utility-scale because it is all part of the same subject.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Minister, we understand from your ministerial plan that you will begin developing the necessary consenting regimes and frameworks to enable utility-scale renewable energy generation in the future. Can you elaborate further on what exactly this project will entail?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Yes. The first stage of that is the marine spatial plan because what we effectively are talking about here is offshore wind, let us be clear about that. So we are talking about offshore wind, which obviously means it is related to our marine estate. The marine spatial plan is the piece of work that would develop a consenting regime. It would look at what criteria had to be met before we could designate an area of the seabed as suitable for this and put in place the kind of procedures that we would have to go through. Now, that, as you know, is scheduled to finish at the end of next year and it is - I was briefed a couple of weeks ago - on schedule at the moment, so I am pleased about that. That is because that work was brought forward to quite a tight timetable. But we are not just going to sit and wait until that report comes along because we do want to move fast. I think there is

a definite sense from talking to all the players in this industry that this is the moment. There is a huge demand for renewable energy in the European market and a lot of money is moving in that direction. This is a moment to capitalise on that. To all intents and purposes I think the demand for carbon-free energy in Europe is going to be inexhaustible for the next 5 or 10 years, but the money to move to invest in it is finite. If we do not move, then other people will get that money and we risk missing the boat. Other technologies will come along, by the way, which may supersede. We are perfectly placed for anchored wind turbines, shallow water, but the technology for floating wind turbines is moving up fast. It is not yet economic but it could become the next economic thing and then other places may become better placed to exploit the resource because they might be able to come closer into shore or whatever. Guernsey, for example, has deep water straight offshore. We have a moment and I think we need to move fast. I think the Council of Ministers is very focused on this moment and I would expect there to be quite a lot of movement on this. I would be honest in saying that this is a project that is not something that has been done before in Jersey, so we are still feeling our way through the best processes, what criteria would we use to decide how big this project would be. We are talking to lots of players and the great thing about this - I will shut up in a moment - is we are being approached by commercial operators who want to do this. This is not subsidy-driven. This is people saying: "We think we can make money as operators, it will be good for your consumers in terms of energy supply, and there are potential royalties and tax income, plus a base in the Island of people who are going to need to run this thing." So there is a significant economic development opportunity as well. So I am really ...

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

When you talk about players, what stakeholders or agencies are you talking about there? Are you talking about the French national grid?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I am not going to name any names but we are talking about people who are running significant investment-scale operations in, let us say, the U.K. (United Kingdom) territorial waters. We would certainly anticipate speaking to France, with E.D.F. (Électricité de France), because they are building a windfarm there, but we also know that the U.K. is a world leader in offshore wind. There are Norwegian companies that are interested. There is a lot of interest out there.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I would point out, Minister, and you have just alluded to it, that, of course, we are not starting from ground zero on this project because the Island has had quite a lot of input into the French windfarm in St. Brieuc. We worked certainly with the fishermen and at the time I spoke to a number of people in France about the project. I am interested that you say we need to get the plan in place by the



end of next year, the spatial plan for marine, but I am hoping that we are doing an awful lot of other work at the same time and not waiting for the plan to be complete before we start.

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

We definitely need to look at the regulatory framework as well. So there are a number of steps that we need to do, like you said, at the same time and that is something we are working on. We are working in the Council of Ministers. The necessary Ministers will be working together to ensure that we come at it from all the different portfolios that we have.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

One thing to bear in mind in the St. Brieuc case is the wind turbines there are I think 8 megawatts each. They are now 15 megawatts, which means ...

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Yes, they started off at one size and they have ended up at another but ... go on, sorry.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

The difference is with big ones, the bigger you go the fewer you need, the bigger the spacing, so there is less impact in terms of shipping, fishing, birds. They turn slightly slower so that the bird strike issue is slightly different. They also apparently now have technology where the radar sees birds approaching and slows the blades. So it is a very, very mature, sophisticated industry now. That big scale thing is ... St. Brieuc was 10 years ago when it was planned and things have moved on.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Can I just come in on 2 elements, really? One is please not let us lose sight of the fishing industry because I know the suggestion of windfarms raised the fear of God among fishermen. There needs to be communication as to how that might be affected.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Completely.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

The second is in terms of the infrastructure we suggest that we might be able to develop an economic benefit here from these installations, but anybody who has watched the comings and goings out of St. Malo to create the St. Brieuc set-up will realise that it is big ships and we do not have the space for those. So I would say that our economic input into the maintenance of the windfarm may be limited, so let us be realistic is what I am suggesting in how you view that.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I was just going to ask about the opportunity for this to be a good investment and what sort of share Government will hold. Will there be a time in order to raise capital we might consider selling off Jersey Electric, for example, because of the cost of these things or will it be entirely external investment that will build these?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I think that is entirely up for grabs. There are so many different models you could use for this. A Jersey Electricity-led project. You could have Jersey Electricity as simply the purchasers of electricity, as they are now.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

But what do you think the driver is within the Council of Ministers? Because they do tend to have an ideology - I cannot think of a better word - where it is private investment creating the environment from wherever, and it will be likely to be the French energy company again. Could we be missing an opportunity to have a share in something that is long term and will be really good?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I have not seen anything that suggests closed minds on the potential ...

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

So the possibility of Jersey itself investing and holding a stake in that is still there?

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

I think it would be very important for Jersey to have a stake in some form in any project but it could be in a number of ... this could be a number of iterations. It does not necessarily mean one way and I think we are at that stage now where we feel that we can then now explore what different ways look like. As the Chair said, we have to move forward. The next year is really going to be consolidating what that looks like, both from process but also what that structure looks like depending on the players that we will be supporting.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

The timeline, do you have any form of timeline? I know we have the marine spatial plan early next year, doing some work on it. Is it 5 years, 10 years, 15?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

People who do this sort of thing say typically you are looking at 8 to 10 years from the moment you say yes, you want to do it, which is close to where we are at, to actually doing it. The actual build, interestingly, is only a couple of years, so it is getting everything lined up ...

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

It is the red tape and paperwork.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

... the financing, the extraordinarily complex financial structures that usually get built around these things.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Ten years is nearly 3 government cycles, but let us not mention that.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Anyway, we are going to push on because we have taken a bit more time but it is a really important subject so I do not regret that at all and I am sure we will speak about it again. Deputy Le Hegarat has some questions on natural environment.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

Minister, in your ministerial plan one method to protect the Jersey natural environment and heritage listed is the designation of the Island's first conservation area to protect and improve its special architectural and historical character and appearance. Can you provide further details with regards to this conservation area?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I hate those questions that start: "In your ministerial plan."

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

It should be a strong point.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

I assume you had some input into it, Minister.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I know but it is like you cannot fail a question on that.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Quite right.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

So the point about conservation areas is that, as you will know, the Bridging Island Plan lists a load of potential ones and I think the ambition is to designate at least 4?

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department:**

Over the plan period, that is right.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Over the plan period. So I do not think I am at the position where I can say where I want to start with those. I think that is work that will be developed next year with announcements during the course of next year on where the first one would be. I would say that I am committed to making sure that we think beyond just what you might consider the most obvious sites, so not just the villages, St. Aubin, Gorey, that sort of thing. I think St. Helier is very much a part of my thinking in terms of conservation areas as well.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Would you consider Pitt Street, Dumaresq Street, that area of town, a conservation area?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I do not want to start drawing boundaries in a scrutiny meeting.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

That is a naughty question knowing that there is a planning application coming in Dumaresq Street but, yes ...

**The Minister for the Environment:**

For those reasons you will understand that I am not going to say anymore.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Yes, it would seem to me that there is some clear easy wins on conservation areas. You mentioned Gorey but, of course, Gorey Pier, for example, is easily designated but it is the more complicated and more built-up ones that are ...

**The Minister for the Environment:**

What I am signalling is that I am not going to go just for the easy options.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I can offer you some real suggestions from central St. Helier so I would be very happy to talk to you outside this meeting.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Why do we not sit down sometime with a map?

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Let us do that. [Laughter]

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

Minister, can you talk us through the proposed marine spatial plan mentioned in your ministerial plan and how this will ensure sustainable management of the marine environment?

[11:45]

**The Minister for the Environment:**

So this is work that is being led by the Marine Resources Department and I do want to give them a shout-out. That team is absolutely outstanding in their commitment to issues from fisheries through to conservation and leisure exploitation of our resource and so on. The aim is to develop a marine spatial plan that is a version of the Island Plan but for the marine environment. Now, I do not want to extend that metaphor too far in terms of I am not sure we will constitute a planning committee for the marine environment. I do not know. We may end up in that sort of a place. But the aim is to identify all the potential resource, for want of a better word, in the marine estate. That includes fisheries. It includes blue carbon. It includes leisure use. It includes potential windfarms, all the things that potentially the marine environment could support, and then to understand which ones we want to give greatest priority, as we would do on land. We would identify farming areas and countryside and urban and so on and we would give separate policy regimes for them. So, I would say that ... what am I hoping to achieve from that? Well, obviously there is a bit of stuff around the offshore wind, but in terms of the natural environment my ambition is that we would identify with a very strong evidence base what the most important habitats are that we need to protect as a prelude to protecting them. But what we need is the evidence base. What we cannot do for lots of different reasons, certainly some of them connected to fishing and the T.C.A. (Trade and Co-operation Agreement) and so on, is just say: "We will put a circle around this area because we think that is important." We have to say: "This area is important because it is a breeding ground for bream" or it has oyster beds or is a rich nutrient source for fish or it has seaweed in it that we want to protect or exploit. So we need to understand all those resources as a prelude to greater protection.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

Okay. In your plan one of the priorities is better protecting biodiversity through new legislation and planning policies. Can you elaborate further on the details of that proposed new legislation and planning policies and when in 2023 do you expect these to be brought to the Assembly and, of course, to us first?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Sorry, to you first?

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

Of course, to us first.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Yes. That is a good question. I would say that the work I have focused on so far is the law that came in last year, the wildlife law, and making sure that we have that adequately resourced and the processes in place to go around that. So, for example, we have new rules around impact assessments you have to do when you are doing developments. You have to get specialists in to assess the impact on wildlife. It goes beyond bats now. Those things are things that I wanted to see bedded in. So I would say that I still need to do more work to develop those priorities in the next year.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

Have you had an issue with trying to resource it?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

No, because what we did succeed ... I think you were not at the last meeting, but when we discussed the Government Plan we were able to gain additional funding on the basis of that law to say that because of that law there was now a need to have additional resource just to implement it, basically. It was a little bit of a battle. It went out to the Island, the Government Plan, and then came back in.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

It is more about ... not the money for the resource but actually getting the resource and the people qualified to do that. Has that been any issue?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Okay. So there are still some vacancies in that area which we are addressing. I would have to get back to you, if that is okay, on the latest work on that, but the Government Plan funding was on the basis of partly to sustain funding that came from the Climate Emergency Fund in the past but which

we wanted to make properly funded so it did not rely on climate emergency funding. Those people were already in place so in a sense that was just a reallocation of money but it did involve some new posts, some of which have been filled, some of which have not, and I would have to get back to you to give you the details.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Are you controlling the purse strings on the Climate Emergency Fund, Minister or Assistant Minister? Well, to put it more specifically, do you review every application to the fund?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

It is not really done by application, is it? It is done by policy decision.

**Assistant Minister for the Environment:**

I think by lines as well because there are some elements of the Carbon Neutral Roadmap that also sits within the Minister for Infrastructure, for example. So I think now that we have this roadmap it is easier to look at it in the different chunks of allocation of funds and then, therefore, that then is the responsibility and the responsible Minister is then designated through those specific lines.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I only ask the question is that ... quite often where there is a pot of money available you take your eye off it for 2 minutes and you come back and find that ...

**The Minister for the Environment:**

It has not been raided.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

It has not been raided. That is what I want to hear.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

Somebody has stolen the money.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Okay, changing the subject, I think we have asked you this before, Minister, but can we just have an update on development briefs for the housing sites that were approved during the Bridging Island Plan debate?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

So they will start work in the new year. Kevin, I will hand over to you to give the details, if that is okay.

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department:**

Yes, that is fine, Minister. Yes, we have been working on those, Chair, and, as the Minister said, we will be looking to bring those out to consultation at the beginning of next year. We had hoped to get them out before the end of this year but we have struggled to do that. But they will be coming out at the beginning of next year, in addition to which there will be some new guidance on space standards for residential development and for parking, which are clearly part of the mix in terms of what goes on affordable housing sites. So we have been working across those 3 areas of guidance.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Can I just come in there? What is the latest policy with regard to parking on these sites? Or is it site dependent?

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department:**

Well, the Island Plan provides policy framework but supplementary planning guidance sets the standards. As you are probably aware, Chair, we have some quite outdated planning standards. That is probably an understatement ...

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

An understatement of this hearing.

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department:**

... in relation to parking standards, which is why they need review. Clearly, when an architect sits down and looks to design a scheme one of the things they want to know is how much parking do I need to provide on this site, what is the likely density and yield from the site and how big are homes and how much amenity space. So we have already published the guidance on density. We are proposing to issue the revised parking standards and the residential space standards. So, essentially, they are the key ingredients that an architect will need to look at putting together a scheme.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

We are not expecting much controversy there.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**



If I can just interject, Chair, my point on that is the social effect of not having parking on the rest of the residents round and about, and it is not insignificant. It is always a problem at the parish level we have and are trying to deal with.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Yes, I completely understand that and the ability to access some kind of motorised transport is indeed important. What I would say is that there are many different ways of achieving that. Deputy Ward has mentioned one but we are also, as has previously been mentioned to you by the Minister for Infrastructure, talking to E.V. about their options. I think it is very interesting to think how we might use planning conditions to encourage the take-up of shared mobility. There are levers we have to encourage the better use of a smaller number of vehicles that would square the circle between still allowing people access to vehicles when they needed them but without necessarily having to have as many vehicles in total. That is where we are focused, I think.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Where are you with - and I know this is a bit off piste - autonomous vehicles, Minister?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Well, in a way I do not have to be, do I, because I do not design them. My personal view is that we are a long, long way away from truly autonomous vehicles, i.e. a vehicle where nobody sits in it when ... or nobody drives it, you just sit in the back. For the same reason as we have planes that can fly from A to B without needing a pilot in them at the moment, pretty well, but we do not and I do not think many people want to take off in a plane without somebody up front. I suspect we are a long way from being happy to see a car go down Victoria Avenue without somebody sitting behind the wheel.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Yes, agreed, but then we do have vehicles where we push a button going down Victoria Avenue and take our hands off the wheel and the vehicle drives itself, but I am not going to go there today. That may be for another time. Before we move away from that work that you are doing, I just want to talk about density standards and the consultation you are in at the moment. There has been some questions to us about whether you are consulting for a long enough period of time. Are you happy that this is an interim policy or should it have had a full 8-week consultation?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

It is an extension of the policy that is already part of the Island Plan. It is extending policies like H9 and so on which were already in the Island Plan, so I am pretty sure we are comfortable with that. Well, I am comfortable with that. However, we have said to people who have contacted us

separately, who had problems meeting that deadline, we have given them an extra couple of weeks for anybody who has contacted us and specifically raised that.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

That is good news. Have you had a good response to the consultation on density?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Yes, we have. You can fill us in on the exact numbers, I think, Kevin.

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department:**

Yes, sure. So we invited comment by means of an online survey and I think we have in the region of about 15 or 16 online survey completions in relation to both H9 and H2, the density and the housing outside the built-up area, in addition to which I think we have had in double figures written submissions from organisations as well, which for a consultation on supplementary planning guidance is a healthy response.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Okay. Well, we will look forward to the outcomes of that and see whether there are any changes made to the presentation that you gave States Members recently. Moving on to another initiative, Minister, recently lodged by yourself, rented dwellings, are there any major changes that you are putting forward this time which would differentiate you from previous attempts to get this over the line unsuccessfully, I might add? Although at the last iteration only very closely.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Very closely. I have worked very hard, I have talked at length to the Jersey Landlord Association to try and understand their objections to the previous scheme. What I have tried to do is design a scheme that essentially has only one point of difference between us. Because the scheme ... we have nailed the cost issue. I have said very clearly what the costs will be. We are aiming at about £30 a year for a 2-year licence. We still can discuss that, but I have also made clear what the basis of that is. So it is not like a random figure and, therefore, for it to increase the basis of that calculation would have to change. It is based on the number of people who are employed to do this work. So we cannot increase it without saying we have more people and that is a Government Plan bid. So it is not something that you can change. So the cost thing, that is about 0.02 per cent of an average, say, 2-bedroom flat rent. That is the fee. So I do not think the fee any longer is an issue. The landlords have told us that they are happy with a registration scheme. In fact, they support a registration scheme. So in terms of the bureaucratic load, which is one of the other issues that was raised, the bureaucratic load from a registration scheme and a licensing scheme is identical. It will use the same computer software, the same data fields. The business of filling in a registration

scheme and a licensing scheme is the same. So there is no difference between us in terms of bureaucratic load. What it comes down to in the end is that I believe we need the ability to withhold a licence in order to improve standards, and I believe that because at the moment the only tool we have is criminal prosecution. Criminal prosecution imposes an exceptionally high standard, evidential standard, in order to get there. It takes months and months of work. It also needs a complainant who is willing to go to court and a tenant in this kind of situation is very unlikely to be the person who is going to give the time and expose themselves publicly in a small Island community to that kind of situation. So I think criminal prosecution is a very, very blunt tool to tackle this issue. What licences give us is flexibility.

[12:00]

They give us the chance to talk to people, to go to a property where there is a problem and say: "This needs remediation but we understand that that will take time. It may take a while to get the worker you need to sort it out, so let us agree a plan, 2 months, sort this out. We will come back. In the meantime you can keep operating but if this has not been dealt with then, then we may have to consider further action." It is a flexible, proportionate system, I think, and I think it is what is necessary.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

You have mentioned the word "resource" a couple of times in that couple of minutes. What is the additional requirement, or is there going to be an additional requirement manpower-wise to do the inspections? The cost will be what it is and it will be recovered but will there be an issue recruiting enough staff to make the scheme work?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

No, because we have already got the staff. This is the other key point. Those staff are already in place. They are currently trying to do the job that is mandated to us, to me, through the 2018 law to improve the standard of private rented dwellings but they are handicapped. They are handicapped most obviously because they do not even know where the rented properties are because we have no list of private rental properties, but they are also handicapped because, even when they find a substandard property, they cannot take effective action. They have to try and persuade because the only thing they have got in their back pocket is a criminal prosecution and, for most cases, landlords know full well that is unlikely to be deployed. So those people are already employed, that is how we can be sure about the cost of a scheme, and also ensure that it is not going to increase. It is about using that resource effectively.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Can I just come in? It worries me slightly that you are shying off the criminal side of things because if properties are really in bad condition, well, it is a criminal offence, really, and it ought to be considered as such. I just wonder how this is going to be enacted. Is it going to rely purely on the judgment of the inspecting officer or will there be some guidelines? Maybe it comes under Kelly's umbrella, I do not know, as a regulatory side.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Well, it does, indeed. The criminal prosecution still sits behind this and I would say a criminal prosecution will be more likely to be successful if there is a history of persistent non-compliance with attempts to impose conditions through licences. That is a stronger position to mount a prosecution but I do not think most landlords are going to respond to that kind of situation by saying: "I dare you to take me to court." That is the point, the power is proportionate and it is a civil exercise of power, not a criminal one in the first instance, although the criminal law sits behind it.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

So you will apply the same sort of principles that we were talking about in the food law where some premises will not need to be inspected ...

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Exactly.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

... very often because we know they are good and they are top standard, whereas others may need more oversight.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Well, we have got ... Kelly, is it 6? I always forget this, 6 officers employed to do this work, that is the resource, so it will be a risk-based approach. Obviously, if an apartment block has just been built, it is not at high risk of failing safety standards so we can target that resource, but that is the resource, so we cannot be over-officious in a way because we know we have got 6 inspectors to cover this and it has to be targeted where it is most needed.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Sorry, can I just ask, the rental dwellings law, there are some omissions in small rentals: a couple of rooms, for example, I think it has to be over 3, and that is where some of the conditions can be at their worst. Will you also be covering non-qualified accommodation? Because we do not talk enough about that I think, but it is, I would say, the wild west of accommodation out there with non-

qualified accommodation in terms of standards and safety. That is where the biggest fears are as well, questioning the landlord.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I would question your point about the renting rooms thing because in my view people renting rooms in their own homes, that is a relatively lower-risk situation. In general that situation is it is a room in your own home, it is not going to be squalid in the way that a place that has been let for 20 years in a ...

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Yes, we can discuss that. So in terms of the non-qualified accommodation, will that be one of the ... the wrong word is “targeted” but the word is areas of greatest “risk”, do you think? I am just trying to gauge where you think we are.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Well, can I just ask another question before you answer, Minister? What is your view on qualified and non-qualified?

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I was going to ask exactly that.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Some people feel it is time we just did away with it so that everybody gets treated the same.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Okay, I have 2 big questions there. Lodging houses are already covered, so lodging house accommodation is already under a licensing scheme, effectively a licensing scheme. So the definition of private rented dwellings is fairly broad and one of the things we have got to look at is the extent to which it captures people letting to other people in their family and those sorts of things, so we have to address that sort of thing. But I think it is pretty widely drawn but I would not be tempted to extend it to rent-a-room kind of situations. In terms of your question, I think that is a piece of work that government is going to do. I can absolutely see the dangers that we have in the current system but I would want to understand all the effects of changing that to make sure that we did not have unintended consequences that we were not unhappy with.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Just one more question on the subject. When you say “government” is going to do, Minister, which Minister do you specifically think will take that? Will it be the Minister for Housing and Communities?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I think eventually that will be a Council of Ministers kind of level of thing because I think it ties into work around a bit of population and recruitment. It is a big part of the matrix of issues that we need to solve.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Does it need to be done quickly then in order to guide other bits of policy work or is it another one in the long, long list of policies that need to be developed?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Well, I would say it is something that is being actively discussed among Ministers. I am not the lead Minister in that area, so I would say it is at the moment sitting with the Minister for Housing and Communities.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Deputy Ward, have you got another question on that before we move away?

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

No, no, it is fine.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Did you want to focus on single-room occupancy?

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Yes, it is difficult. I think ...

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Leave it for another day?

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Yes, leave that for another day, there is a large debate I think coming on it.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I have just got a couple of questions on the Bridging Island Plan before we move on to water quality, Minister. Key areas identified by you in the Bridging Island Plan include, for example, improvement plan for St. Brelade's Bay, and that is obviously close to home for you. Do you anticipate getting on with that work any time soon, given the pressures you have got in other departments?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Yes. You could pick that one; somebody else could have picked the Five Oaks masterplan, somebody else could pick the West of the Island urban centre.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

How do you prioritise, given the amount of strategy work and policy work you need to do? You just mentioned a few areas there. You have spoken about planning guidance for housing sites, so how do you begin to start to work through a list of priorities?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Well, you have to make some judgments, do you not? I think we are aware that the supply of new housing is really critical and so getting those has probably been the first thing that we have approached knowing that there is still a long way to go, even once we have produced that guidance. So we want to see action during our term of office, frankly, on those. But I think the next stage is those strategic pieces around different areas, is it not? Kevin, do you want to just fill in on ...

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department:**

Yes, I think the Minister is right. Clearly the focus has been on the affordable housing and getting the housing standards guidance and parking standards up to date because that enables the affordable housing sites then to move forward and help deal with the housing challenges that the Island has got. In terms of prioritisation, you will recall, Chair, that some of the decisions that the Assembly took around approving the plan set timelines for certain pieces of work. So things like the St. Brelade's Bay Improvement Plan is subject to a timeline that came about as an amendment from one of the St. Brelade's representatives, so clearly the Minister will need to respond to those timelines set by the Assembly. Other elements of work are important to deliver things over the period of the Bridging Island Plan; so we have talked about the conservation areas. Other pieces of work are necessary to inform the next Island Plan review, so I think it is about looking at the work programme that the Island Plan generated and then categorising those different pieces of work and looking at how over the term those pieces of work might be progressed.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I am going to give Kevin another heart attack because I am going to come back to this question which I have asked previously. I know your views, Minister - I know my view is different to yours on this one - but we are in a Bridging Island Plan designated for 4 years. If you intend to extend that period of time, when will you come to the Assembly to seek their approval on that?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I have not decided.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I hope you would feel it is an important question to get decided inasmuch as if we are going to have a debate in 2026, Kevin has got some other things to do in between now and then.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I think the best way to approach that is something I have not decided yet. I would be quite welcome to have a conversation with you offline about that and see what the best way to approach that is but I would accept that that decision has to be made probably within the next year to give everybody visibility.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Let us ask a question on that. Do you think it is a good idea to have a debate on a Bridging Island Plan just before an election?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

A Bridging Island Plan or a new Island Plan?

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

On an Island Plan. On a new Island Plan, sorry, yes.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

A new Island Plan. No.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

No? Good. I totally agree.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Well, I think we could all agree on that because I do not want ...

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

It generates the wrong things.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

No, I have said what I have said in the past which is that I think this Bridging Island Plan is a substantial piece of work. I think it has lots of subsidiary pieces of work that are mandated in it. I think the reason for having a Bridging Island Plan was strongly related to COVID and the feeling that



circumstances may have changed dramatically over the period of the plan, and I do not see that. So I do not see the burning need for a new Island Plan within that 4-year period. I also recognise the sense of exhaustion in the process of producing an Island Plan and the idea that the next Assembly might be the best place, from my point of view, to start that piece of work, otherwise we spend the next 3 years doing it, and I just do not see the appetite for it or the need.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Will you be bringing a law change to allow you flexibility in doing this because are we not constrained by the law?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

This is why I say I have to get back to you on this. My understanding is I do not have to do that but my fear is it would be sensible even if it is not mandated. Kevin, can you clarify that?

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department:**

Yes, I think that clearly the Bridging Island Plan was brought in under a piece of legislation that was brought in under the COVID Regulations. So, the next Island Plan would need to be considered under the normal legislative process but I think there were some potential advantages of the process that were adopted for the Bridging Island Plan that might be reflected in the normal plan-making cycle. So I think a refresh of the framework that is used to take forward the Island Plan would be something that might be certainly worth exploring with Members as to whether or not an improved process of plan-making can be brought forward and indeed whether it requires a change to the outcome as well, the flexibility of the plan itself, whether that is something that Members want to look at. So I think there are a number of questions that are raised by that and certainly we would look to advise the Minister that we explore those areas and would be happy to talk to the panel about that I think given your experience.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Yes, I think it is a big discussion point. It is like government has decided to extend their remit for 8 years after they were elected for 4 years and in fact that is not allowed. I personally feel that we went through a planning process on the basis that we were going to have a 4-year plan and to change it after we made that decision is not right but I accept that there are good reasons backwards and forwards. So I am going to call a halt to Island Plan timescale debates now and hand over to Constable Jackson who would like to ask some questions about P.F.A.S. (perfluoroalkyl substance).

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Indeed. Clearly, you will be aware of recent public concern in relation to P.F.A.S. and blood tests from local residents showing high levels of P.F.A.S. We understand government is setting up an

advisory scientific panel to investigate the effects on human health and the Natural Environment team are carrying out studies of surface and ground water in St. Ouen's Bay and the Pont Marque plume area of St. Brelade. Can you give us an update on where we are with all that?

[12:15]

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Yes. So, to be clear where my ministerial responsibility lies on this, the way I see this is that water is my responsibility until it is ingested into your body and at that point it becomes a public health question. So, while the water is in the environment it is part of my ministerial responsibility and part of Natural Environment, so I do not want to talk about the health stuff basically, although I completely acknowledge the public concern. But in terms of the water quality issue, I would say that we have got a pretty comprehensive programme under way and I would go so far as to say a pretty ... world-leading might be going a bit far but certainly we are at the cutting edge on this. We are investing a considerable resource into analysing the water and specifically we are doing a one-year programme of sampling of existing bore holes and 3 new bore holes which will hopefully be consented to be drilled to test the water 4 times a year and at the same time. That is important because it will give us some idea of movement of water, and that is really important in understanding how much the P.F.A.S. is contained already or whether the extent to which it is still moving through the system at a considerable pace or stopping in some areas and not moving to others. That is one piece of work, so that is a one-year programme. We are also expanding the sampling of bore holes around the Island, so we are testing more bore holes, not because we particularly fear something there but we just want to know, we want to understand more about where P.F.A.S. is in the Island. That will enable us to model a little bit better how it got there; we know about the airport and we know the source of that broadly speaking but we are finding P.F.A.S. in other places in the Island. So understanding why that is, if somebody has thrown a fire extinguisher down a bore hole or well. We just do not know why there would be P.F.A.S. in some of these places, but we do know that these chemicals were heavily used in a very wide range of products, so it is possible that there are other sources of contamination. Other historic fires, there may have been a fire that was put out by the fire brigade outside of the airport environment, and so on. So we are analysing water across the Island to try and understand more about the picture.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Picking up your mention of the airport, when the ports became incorporated the airport took on responsibility for P.F.A.S. and the accompanying costs. Is that still the case?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

It is in this narrow sense that they took on the cost of paying the water bills of people who were moved from contaminated water sources on to mains water on the principle that nobody should be disadvantaged because of actions that were not their responsibility. In other words, they had free water before they had to go on to the mains for reasons which were beyond their control, and therefore they had the water bills paid. That is a diminishing bill because once the property is sold or moved on, changes ownership, the scheme no longer applies. In other words, you are now buying a property knowing that it is on mains water and so you would have an expectation as a new owner that you would pay for that, so the costs of that are gradually coming down.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

What work is being done, if any, to set up in legislation a safe limit for P.F.A.S. in Jersey waters?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

So that sits around a new water law which is work that is going to be ongoing in the next, I think it is next year is that we begin it ... well, that is not true, we have already begun it in the sense that we have already begun conversations around it but the detailed work around it will start next year. So in terms of the law, that is what will happen, but in terms of the standards that we apply, we are already applying the standards that you would expect from international regulatory limits. So, for example, the World Health Organisation has concentration limits for safe drinking water and we measure our water supply against that standard and it is well below it. Well below it. Of course, those regulatory standards change and so we will need to take a view as those regulatory standards change which ones we want to measure ourselves against, but at the moment we are well within the World Health Organisation guidelines in terms of the water from Jersey Water.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Good. The 2021/2024 Government Plan approved funding of £150,000 for a hydrological survey. Have we got the results from that yet or when do you anticipate ...?

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Is that the survey you are talking about with your bore holes?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Yes.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

So do we anticipate carrying out any remediation work or clean-up measures from that as a result?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Well, that does depend on what it finds but there is a separate piece of work which is analysing the potential for containment of the sites at the airport. There has already been money spent on that, considerable amounts historically spent to try and tank the areas that were contaminated. But what we have found since then particularly, for example, with relation to the extensions of the Pont Marquet catchment, that there were other areas of contamination at the airport that were not originally identified. So work is ongoing to try and understand where those are and how they can be contained.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Have we specifically analysed the whole Island for P.F.A.S., Minister, or are we just concentrating in areas where we think we might find it?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Well, no, because that bore hole survey around the Island which is the second part of that sampling is I think random. I think they have just chosen ones that are just sort of beginning to sample bore holes to find out what the situation is elsewhere in the Island. The other thing that has happened that we have changed recently is that we are now able to test for a much wider range of P.F.O.S. (perfluorooctane sulfonate) chemicals. So originally I think we were only testing for 3; I think we are now up to about 47. The good news is that that extension of testing has not uncovered any new chemicals. So there are a small number, about 7 or 8 I think, that we have in our water supply, and extending the testing regime, although it means we could in theory detect those, we do not detect those extra chemicals that we are able to test for.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

So linked to that, are there any plans to review the Pesticides (Jersey) Law 1991 because we understand there has been commitment from previous governments to review this back in 2018 but it does not seem to have happened.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I have not been party to any discussions about that but I will look into it and get back to you on it, if that is okay.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Can I just ask a quick question? There are other sources of these chemicals, certain packaging, greaseproof papers, Teflon, I believe, and they are still there even though they are not manufactured anymore, I do not believe, but they are still there. Are we certain that there might not be other sources coming into the Island rather than in just the water supply and has that been looked at at all?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Again, I will have to get back to you on that. I do not have the answer to that immediately at my fingertips.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Previous Government Plans spoke for a water catchment officer. Could you talk us through the role and responsibilities that this officer might have and what feedback, if any, has come back to the department from industry stakeholders on how the role is operating in practice?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

So that role is quite important but it is not just ... in fact, it is only marginally, I would say, a P.F.O.S. question. That is much more to do with nitrates and other chemicals, slurry, runoff, things like slurry containment to make sure tanks do not overflow. Those sorts of issues are what the water catchment officers are doing. They are working really closely with Jersey Water, they are in Natural Environment and other stakeholders, farmers in particular, to have plans for sensitive catchment areas. Val de la Mare is clearly the most sensitive, biggest reservoir, the recipient of desalination water. If in the high summer we lost Val de la Mare, we would be in trouble, so we absolutely have to work on that. My understanding is that that has been exceptionally positive work in the sense that farmers and the water catchment officers and landowners more generally are working on that. There has been significant work to reduce nitrate use in the sensitive areas and to manage slurry facilities to try and ensure that they do not become a risk.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Can I just ask you a further question on that, Minister, because I am aware that we have had a very dry summer? The closed season for slurry application has started and the weather changed completely. We have had a hugely wet November, pressure on slurry stores, and I am aware that dairy farmers are already saying they will be unlikely to get to the end of the closed period without needing some changes, derogations, but I will not go there today. There is the ability for dairy farmers to use slurry for an aerobic digestion to create energy. They would need help, they would need a central facility, but there is a product which could potentially be a contaminant in these catchment areas that we know about. Is that an initiative you would support?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Well, I would be interested in looking into it but there are other issues as well. It is a good source of, potentially, fertilisers, so we do need to think where do we think the best use of that is, particularly in an environment where fertilisers that are normally used are now so expensive. It might be that the best use for it is on the fields not ...

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

So in that case you would favour more storage capacity for slurry ...

**The Minister for the Environment:**

What I understand is that there are plenty of storage facilities available because of farmers who no longer farm or no longer farm as intensively as they used to, but what it requires is farmers to identify where those unused storage facilities are and move slurry around. So, I think there is the potential to store more but we need to work with the industry to make sure that that resource is fully used.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

We are still on water, strangely enough. In the ministerial plan you mention the development of a long-term Island-wide water strategy. Can you talk us through what this will entail and the proposed timescales for delivering this wide-ranging strategy?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Yes, so that is very much a key part I think of the next couple of years. I do not think it is something that we are going to be bringing forward in the next few months. It is a big piece of work and it needs a lot of work with stakeholders. In my mind, one of the key things we need to focus on here ... well, obviously the key thing we need to focus on is security of water supply. Jersey Water have raised issues around that and particularly with the P.F.A.S. taking out quite a few of the bore holes that they used in the bay that has put a further restriction on our water resource. I think that we have the potential to solve those problems but it needs to be done in a very, very holistic way. That is what the water strategy will address is how do we deal with water treatment, how do we deal with catchment areas, how do we deal with water supply.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Do you accept that that work needs to be done in your tenure, Minister?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Yes, very much so.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Good.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Yes, I would say within 2 years.

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department:**

The only thing I was going to add is I think that was an issue that was raised during the Bridging Island Plan. You talked about the prioritisation of work. That is a piece of work that is needed to inform the subsequent Island Plan should there be any land use implications arising from that. So, as the Minister said, that is a very important piece of work.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

We have spoken about resource already. Would you have the resource in-house to undertake that, Minister, or is that something needed to be done by an external body?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I do not know yet. I would raise, though, and put on the table that one of the policy options for consideration is the potential to re-use water from Bellozanne from the water treatment works to supply reservoirs. That, to my mind, is a hidden reservoir; something like 7 million litres a day come out of that plant. In other areas of the world that is used, Singapore, other places, and I think we should at least examine the potential for doing that in Jersey as a very significant way of tackling water shortages.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I think I would speak for the panel to say that we agree that it needs to be researched. I think it is important to realise the reason it needs to be researched now is if the decision was taken not to go in that direction, Jersey Water certainly are very conscious that a lead-in time for a new reservoir or an extension to an existing reservoir is probably 20 years. By that time we would be in a potential problem situation where we would not have enough water, so it is very important to make the decision now so that we ...

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I agree entirely. I agree entirely. It is worth saying that - Jersey Water, you may want to talk to about this - they already have mitigations in place and the desalination plant was built on the basis of intermittent operation and that is how it was engineered. It was never expected to run full time.

[12:30]

They are re-engineering it as a series of improvements that will enable it to work more kind of comprehensively if it needs to, so there is already a lot of thought going on into resilience on a day-to-day basis.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Yes, we have spoken with Jersey Water. We had a very, very good meeting with Helier, and we are hoping to go and see the reverse osmosis plant at La Rosière because we are conscious that recycling water would be a very similar process. We are also conscious of the fact that reverse osmosis works better if you keep it running. It is not an easy process to fire up overnight or an impossible process to fire up overnight, so we are cognisant of all those.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

A very nice day out, it is in my neighbourhood. Sorry, Kelly?

**Group Director - Regulation, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

I do have the information on the resources for the strategy to say that in 2023 it is proposed to gather the evidence. It is a needs prioritisation with in-house resources but essentially in quarter 4 in 2023 we would look to procure a strategic partner to prepare and write the strategy. So in terms of resources we do need to use external as well as internal.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Thank you, that had slipped my mind.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

Thank you. I think we have answered the next couple of questions but the final question in relation to this is: as Minister for the Environment you hold political responsibility for environment-related policy but also for the Regulation Directorate. Do you consider this to be a conflict of interest where you are responsible for directing environmental policy but also then regulating various environmental services and operations?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

It is a very good question; I have given that quite a lot of thought. I guess my model for this is that I have sought - and Kelly will be able to back this up - to make regulation as independent from political ... I would not say interference, but political involvement, really. My very strong view is that I should not be involved in matters of day-to-day regulation as in it is not my job to tell Regulation how to go and inspect something or whatever. I think the direction of travel is to give as much independence as possible to the Regulation Department so that in a way you can almost think of it as a shadow separate organisation rather than a bit of government. But we do have a system where we want a level of political oversight setting policy, setting the strategic objectives, monitoring performance. So I do come in with, when there are complaints, for example ... so if I receive a complaint, my first response to that is ... there is a problem with regulation, okay? I point it out that this has been raised with me and I ask Regulation to deal with it. I do not go in and say: "This is what you should do", I ask them to deal with it. If there is still a problem, in other words, the complainant comes back to



me at the end of that and says: "I am still not happy", then I will sit down and try and work out whether there has been a failure in regulation. But my starting assumption is it is the job for regulators to get on and do their jobs and not for me to get involved in that. So what I am saying really is that I am trying to keep quite strong walls between the political side and the regulation side. I do not know, Kelly, if you want to say anything on that.

**Group Director - Regulation, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

Absolutely I concur with what you have just said, Minister. In Regulation, as a competent authority, we deal with conflicts of interest on a day-to-day basis, and we have codes of conduct that are part of our qualification and of our chartered membership to various institutions. So as decision-makers we take all the material considerations into play and obviously use our judgment to make those decisions. Part of those material considerations will be a local ministerial direction in terms of policy and we take that into account in making the decisions themselves but we do need to support the officers in making those decisions. There is scrutiny on those decisions and the right of appeal in the rights of complaints, and we do look at that and use that feedback but essentially in terms of the process of decision-making, that does need to hold as that competent authority and for the officers to be able to do that work.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

I think it is back to Deputy Ward.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I am going to ask Deputy Ward to deal with Gas Place before we talk about climate change resilience.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Yes, Minister, the intention for Gas Place to be the location of a new town school as published in the *Town Primary School Review* which was published by the Minister for Children and Education on 20th October 2022, we are aware that the cost of removing contaminated soil from the adjacent Millennium Town Park site was in the sum of £1.18 million with some extra on there. What consideration has been given by the Council of Ministers, if any, to ensuring that logistics and the cost of removing any contaminated soil from the Gas Place site is factored into the value and acquisition of the land by the Government of Jersey?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

So, my understanding of that is that in the normal course of events, remediation would fall upon the developer of that site, and so you would expect the developer to bring forward a plan to remediate the site and that would be the same whether it was Gas Place or anywhere else in the Island. If you

have got a contamination problem, that is how you would deal with it. At the moment I do not see any reason why that would not be the case in this case as well. Is that fair enough?

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

But if the developer was the Education Department, that would be a government cost?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Well, it is a cost, is it not? So, the Education Department is a department of government so government would end up paying it in that sense, yes.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Do you know if the plans - there are plans; there are pictures of a school - whether those plans included the price of any possible contamination or are they just simply ... are we getting it at 2 different stages here? So the Education Department comes forward with a plan for a school and this is what it will look like but underlying that is the basic groundworks and so on?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

There is not a plan yet. There has been no plan submitted, there are just concepts and ideas.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

The concepts, okay.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

So, I do not think they have advanced that far yet, would be my guess.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

So it is just concepts, there are no actual plans but ...

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Kelly might be able to because we talked about this earlier in the week.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Yes, sorry, go on.

**Group Director - Regulation, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

Yes. I think again it is difficult to split a remit in ministerial responsibility, so the acquisition and the costs on behalf of government would sit with the Minister for Infrastructure for the Property Directorate. Obviously, for the Minister for the Environment, the responsibility is around the planning

application process and also ensuring that the contamination is duly remediated and the conditions are placed to ensure that that land, the contamination is remediated and safe for use. So, I would say that in terms of the costs, it is a government consideration but that would sit with the Minister with responsibility for infrastructure. I think we would need to ensure that we have appropriate environmental impact assessments that the analysis on the level of sole contamination is accurate. We would scrutinise that and we would ensure that there was a sufficient remediation plan. We would enforce that remediation plan to ensure that the site was then taken to a level for safety.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Who signs off the final concept?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

The Planning Committee if it goes to committee.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

But is that the responsibility of ... so there is a concept - I like that phrase - of a building but the actual go-ahead to start that, it comes from which Minister? The Minister for Infrastructure because of the land?

**Group Director - Regulation, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

In terms of usual government development processes, the Property Directorate is the one that would propose the applicant in this situation and propose a planning application which would then go to the Regulation Directorate of the Minister for the Environment's responsibility to take it through the planning application process and be the decision-maker, whether it is the committee ...

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

The Property Directorate is the ...

**Group Director - Regulation, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

Is the Minister for Infrastructure.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Infrastructure, okay. Can I ask just one quick one from that because I think it is quite important when you are factoring in values, it could become an obstacle, what is the role of the Minister for Education and Children in this in terms of the go-ahead and the ...

**The Minister for the Environment:**

She will specify what kind of a school she wants, what facilities it needs to have in it and presumably work with the Property Directorate to realise that through an architect and all the different people. That is how I imagine it working. But my responsibility is not to do any of that, it is just to see it through the planning process.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Can I just sort of take it to a much more broader sense, Minister? Kevin, I apologise for the question I am going to ask. It is going to test your memory, I think; it is testing mine. We have a North of Town masterplan written by Willie Miller and it identified a number of big blocks, if you like, that needed to be developed: Bath Street is coming online now, Millennium Park, Gas Place, the Play.com site, if you like, Ann Street, Ann Court, all coming to fruition which is fantastic. But can I ask ... I cannot remember, what did Willie Miller have to say about schools and infrastructure, community facilities and other things that we would need to support all this housing development? Is there ...

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I am relying on your corporate memory here.

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department:**

Yes. I do not think a need for a town primary school was identified when the work doing the ...

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

No, I did not think it was either.

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department:**

... North of Town masterplan was being done, so I think you are right, Chair. It did highlight some potential sites for different forms of development, some of which was open space, some of which was residential, some of which was parking. But I think the value of the masterplan was less about the prescribing exactly what each site would be used for as opposed to developing the review of the potential value of that land and what uses they might be put forward to in the future. As you have said, all of the sites, or pretty much all of the sites identified in that master plan are now being repurposed in some shape or form. So I think that is the value of the master-planning process in looking at how things might knit together.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I am going to call a halt there because I am sure we will come back to a lot more questions about that in the future once Education have decided where they need to prioritise. So, climate resilience.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Minister, the Island has experienced record high temperatures, and you have been much reported and even on the Government website giving advice. Droughts and flooding this year as a consequence of climate change I think we can sit here and say. What adaptation planning to climate change does government currently have in place? If so, could you direct us to the relevant policy or strategy where that is documented? Thank you.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Yes, so the most solid piece of work I can point you to is coastline defence where there has been a significant piece of work done, a few years ago now I think, which outlined a programme of action which is under way. If like me you cycle along the front, you will have seen the sea wall is raised just near Beaumont as part of that. That is a small piece of work but bigger pieces of work which are upcoming and which are going to be subject to consultation next year are around the 2 priority areas: Havre des Pas and the area from town to First Tower, those 2 areas which need a plan. There are several options available and that is why we will need to go to consultation because it might involve, as they say, advancing the line, pushing the sea wall out. You can raise the height of the sea walls and there are various other kind of options that could be considered. So in terms of the actual solid work I can point you to is that, but obviously your question raises wider issues around, for example, the urban environment, heat, excessive heat in the urban environment, and the need for green spaces, the need to deal with floods in valleys, landslips that might occur. So there is a whole series of things like that where I would say the climate change informs all our thinking. We are thinking: how do we make town a more liveable place? It is probably the toughest environment in that sense; if you are out in the countryside you have got mitigation.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

So how do we? I think the commentary of it I totally agree with and this is the issue. Particularly in town, one of the big issues I think that will rise again is high temperatures in built-up areas like in the centre of town and the centre of St. Helier and for specific communities: the elderly, young children and so on and so forth. So what is in place, because it is happening rapidly now?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

So we have a Future Places Group which is assessing the ... it replaces what was in the previous government called I think the Regeneration Steering Group. So that is attempting to provide a sort of strategic overview for big-scale thinking around town. So the green spaces is part of that, a green transport network, so with lots of green ... I would not call it infrastructure, I am talking about trees. You know what I mean, green things that will make the environment more absorbent of heat and less ... no, not more absorbent, the opposite, buildings with less radiation of heat because there will be more vegetation around.

[12:45]

Those things are very much in our thinking but if what you are saying is where is the formal policy on that, I do not think it exists yet, in all honesty.

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department:**

Yes, the Bridging Island Plan responded to some of those elements that the Minister has talked about, so clearly the work that was done on the shoreline management plan as reflected in the Island Plan. But the Island Plan also recognises that, but clearly this is dealing with new developments. There is a need to make homes more liveable in terms of ensuring that it is not only about heating but it is also about cooling and shading, so issues about design of property is there to manage the exposure to greater temperatures. The Minister has talked about green infrastructure, so seeking to ensure that new developments have greater levels of landscaping and tree planting to deal with that but also dealing with things, it is called sustainable drainage systems, so essentially attenuating the flood of water, yes.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Green walls. We have spoken about green walls but we have not got a sensible green wall in St. Helier yet even though we have tried hard.

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department:**

So I think there are a number of elements: so landscaping, managing flood risk, they are all issues that are symptomatic of the change in the climate and our buildings and our places need to adapt to become resilient.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

For example, I was at a meeting of the Northern Improvement Area, I think it is called. There are some roads around St. Helier where if you look at a map there is not a single tree, nothing. It is concrete, it is houses, it is incredibly hot, there is no shade. I see the Future Places Group, but the Future Places Group is not made up of many Deputies, it is not made of any from the area, for example, so it is something that has been done unto again and I just wonder how that is going to work to come in something when there is no policy. I understand in the bridging Island policies there are suggestions but some of those, the offsetting of green space to elsewhere, for example, does not help those areas. I would challenge that any of the new developments are meeting particular standards of cooling and heating.

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department:**

Well, I think, as I say, the plan is there to improve standards and ...

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

It will be too late because it is all built.

**Head of Place and Spatial Planning, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department:**

Well, yes, clearly the Island Plan is dealing with new developments, so there is a challenge, I accept, there is a challenge with existing buildings. But I think the issues that the Minister raised about green infrastructure clearly, managing things like the public realm, our roads and our streets and our spaces between buildings, is something that government, the parish can do. The Assistant Minister talked about the active travel network. There are opportunities that will potentially arise from that, not only about providing for active modes of travel but also providing for things like tree planting. If you change the allocation of road space, you give more road space to active travel modes. There may also be space for the addition of things like greenery, sustainable urban drainage ...

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I was going to mention Midvale Road, for example, which is one that we have spoken about for a very long time. Finally got it one way, widened the pavements, more ability for street furniture and planting and surely we need more of that, Minister?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

We do completely need more of that and that is absolutely recognised. I was at a talk last week from a woman who represents the Dutch Cycling Embassy and she talks about the fact that in a typical urban environment, 80 per cent of your open space is road. To your point, if you have got roads and walls, then you have not got much opportunity for trees. If you take at least some of that road space, make it one way, introduce contraflow active travel routes on the other lane, you also can put in more trees, you can have moveable trees, you can have street gardens. There are so many things we can do if we just tackle that obsession with through routes.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Well, I can give you a space where you can trial it and we can work with you.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Do you own it, Rob?

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

No, but there is space in there, we talked about it, and the parish is certainly on board with it. But there is a very small amount of money available and perhaps it can be an area to model to make some changes in St. Helier, but anyway.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Very happy to talk to you about that.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Brilliant. Thank you.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

We could go on for ever. The place that I would like to green up a bit is that massive junction on the end of Conway Street/Esplanade just near Liberation Square where we have got a fantastic opportunity to do some wonderful things on the corner of the I.F.C. (International Finance Centre).

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I will not ask any more because I am conscious of time; it may be up to the Minister.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Yes, are you okay there?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Yes, that would be ...

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Minister, we are very much down to our last 10 minutes. Can I just ask for a quick update on a couple of issues, please? The first one I am going to do on behalf of Deputy Le Hegarat just to save some time. Avian flu?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Yes. So, the situation with avian flu is that we currently have an outbreak of or a number of occurrences in the greylag geese mostly at St. Ouen. People are reporting it and we have a contractor that goes and deals with the birds at the moment. We do not think it needs restrictions in terms of domestic poultry because we are not worried about the proximity of a particular flock there but it is something we are keeping very much under review. There has been talk about whether we cull them. They are generally escaped birds from domestic situations anyway, the greylag geese. The fear is that they would in the process of culling be dispersed more widely around the Island. That tends to be what happens; some of them escape and run away basically, unsurprisingly.



**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

You cannot blame them.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

So, the feeling at the moment is that we will keep the situation very much under review. We tend to move at different speeds in different jurisdictions, so Wales is, I think, at the moment going into much tighter restrictions. We are in a place where we have got through the outbreak in domestic flocks.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I am cognisant we are talking about greylags, but what about the wild bird population, have we had any significant disease?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

We had significant numbers of dead gannets and seagulls over the summer and, well, the autumn. Yes, I saw them lying around on the coast. At least you do not know for sure that that is what has killed them but it was a pretty good bet.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Finally, just to move over to the subject of fishing, if we may, Minister. It might be easiest just to hand over to you for an update on where we are. Various issues I know, the landing times situation has improved dramatically recently; we are still to tackle the issue of nature and extent but more generally how was the ministerial visit to France? That was fruitful?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

I was not on that, that was External Relations and Economic Development; Kirsten has also been. So in terms of the action that is currently ongoing, we are obviously very pleased about the change to opening hours, that was quite a significant win, we feel. We are very grateful to the French authorities for that. The current negotiations on extent and nature are ongoing and we believe in a good place in the sense that the points of disagreement, if you can call it that, are highly technical in nature rather than about principles. One of the key things we have done to try and keep momentum ... 2 things we have done to keep momentum in those talks is that we are developing a new replacement vessels policy which will enable us to meet one of the major French demands which is to replace vessels with slightly larger vessels. This can only be done in a sequence because we do not want to authorise larger vessels until we have extent and nature. We care much less about slightly larger vessels if they have to fish to the extent and nature of the previous vessel. It kind of does not matter as much how big the boat is if it is restricted to the previous limits, so that is why the sequence of this is agree extent and nature and then have a replacement vessels policy.

But the point is in order to be able to move quickly, we are already putting that in train and we are hopeful that that will smooth the negotiations. The other thing we have done is we have extended 2 boats that were on temporary licences for a further period. So that is in terms of the French. If what you are meaning in terms of our own fleet is concerned, then the main work on that is being done by Economic Development in terms of looking at how the fleet which we accept is in a very serious situation from an economic point of view. There is no immediate remediation available to me as the Minister for the Environment to change the operating terms because these are things that are agreed under the T.C.A. or they are consequences of us becoming a third country when Britain left the E.U. (European Union). So those things are not immediately remediable but what we can do is talk about financial help for the fishing industry but you will have to talk to my colleague in Economic Development about that.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Can I just ask about the categorisation of our waters that has been going on for some time? Where are we with that now?

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Well, the categorisation of our waters depends on the crustacean we are talking about. So as far as scallops are concerned, we do have a classification which allows them to be landed direct into France. However, there is a second type of crustacean called praires, effectively a kind of cockle, I suppose, but they have a different system of classification for 2 reasons. First, they are deep-burrowing, so they spend a lot of time in the sediment which means they absorb more potential contaminants, and they are long-lived ... sorry, 3 things, they are long-lived and you eat the whole thing. So for that reason the E.U. has a different criteria for those and we would have to get our waters classified as safe in order to export those direct to France. This causes considerable angst among our fleet for the understandable reason that they could potentially fish in the same waters next to a French boat, the French boat would be allowed to land those same praires into the French ports and we would not. That is perverse but it is a reality. It is a trade law thing, it is not ... we can be as frustrated about it as we like, the E.U. has not indicated any interest at all in changing that rule. The rule was designed for a totally different situation: boats fishing off Senegal coming in. It was not designed on the basis that there would be a near neighbour who would fall foul of it but they are not interested in messing with it basically as far as we can see. In all truth and honesty, there is not much that we can do about that. There is one thing we can do. We could classify the waters and go through the classification process. It is a long and expensive process. I think from memory you need to do 10 samples, one sample per month over a year-long period, and it is continuous. You have to keep doing it, it does not get ... for ever. You would have to keep renewing the classification. I have not yet seen a business case that would suggest that it is worthwhile for us to go to that expense at the moment.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Right. Thank you.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I am going to resist the temptation to carry on with fishing, Minister, because we could be here for a long time but I know we will come back to it again. It is 12.58 p.m. and ...

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Are you going to let me off 2 minutes early?

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Only because the panel then start their next meeting for another 2 hours and we have barely got time for lunch.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

You quite fancy your lunch.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

So, can I thank you, Minister, Assistant Minister and your team for coming this morning? I think it has been a very fruitful meeting and we look forward to seeing you again very soon.

**The Minister for the Environment:**

Of course, if you have forgotten anything, there is questions without notice on Monday so you can ...

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I am sure we will think of something.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

I am sure we will. Thank you.

[12:58]