



Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Digital Skills

TUESDAY, 26th NOVEMBER 2013

Panel:

Connétable S.W. Pallett of St. Brelade (Chairman)
Connétable J. Gallichan of St. Mary
Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour

Witnesses:

The Minister for Economic Development
Chief Officer, Economic Development
Strategic Policy Manager, Economic Development
Strategy Manager, Economic Development

[16:15]

Connétable S.W. Pallett of St. Brelade (Chairman):

We will now tell each other who we are. Constable Steve Pallett, Chairman of the Digital Skills Review Panel.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Well, good afternoon. Thank you for coming so late in the afternoon. It is much appreciated. It has been a very different day for us. We have had 3 different groups in with all sorts of different angles so I am sure this afternoon's will be a slightly different angle again. I just want to start off with just a general point going back to 12 January when the E.D.D. (Economic Development Department) *Plan for Growth: Digital Economy* discussion paper first came out and I was just looking through it again before we came in. Obviously, we are way advanced with it now, we have

got Digital Jersey up and running, but there was no mention in this with regards to T.A.G. (technical action group) groups or any of that type of development which the Chairman and the Chief Executive have brought forward. I presume you are supportive of the route that they have taken in terms of their T.A.G. groups but would you like to comment on that development and how you feel that has been a positive in terms of the education development through I.T. (Information Technology) strategy?

The Minister for Economic Development:

Yes. Specifically focused on the T.A.G.s or the Digital Jersey ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, on the T.A.G.s. I would just be interested to see what your views are on the way that has developed within Digital Jersey itself.

The Minister for Economic Development:

I think it has been a good initiative and a good way to engage with industry in particular but also government. Clearly, from our perspective, it is important that there is a full and proper understanding. I think Digital Jersey's approach by establishing these targeted T.A.G.s into specific areas, the education one is a good example, is bearing fruit in terms of the relationship building between government with education and the various parties. As you will appreciate, you have obviously met a number of different parties that are involved and critical for the delivery of a digitally enabled economy, skills being a central part of it. So the T.A.G.s, as a focus point for information gathering and relationship building is critical, I think, and it is a good initiative developed by the Digital Jersey Board so I fully endorse and welcome it.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Obviously, Digital Jersey have played quite a close role in terms of developing the I.T. strategy that was put forward by the Education Department. Has Economic Development played any role within that development of that strategy as well directly?

The Minister for Economic Development:

Their new think differently strategy?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Their thinking differently strategy, yes.

The Minister for Economic Development:

From a peripheral perspective, clearly, we have established Digital Jersey and they have had a leading role in engaging in that and having input into that particular strategy which, by the way, I think is a good strategy. I am impressed with what I have seen. If the strategy is good, of course, implementation is always the key and acid test so we look forward to the good start with what is contained within the strategy being played out and delivered on individual terms in the implementation phase.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think timing is obviously going to be very important with the main panel looking at the enterprise strategy and some of the targets that are within that. From speaking to Education this morning, which obviously you have not had the benefit of but we did this morning, from a timeline point of view, how important is it that Education start to push through the skills that are needed within the hopefully emerging digital economy because we have had some views this morning about how they see this being rolled out over the next 2-year period. What are your views about timelines and how important it is to find those skills sooner than later?

The Minister for Economic Development:

Well, it is important clearly, certainly within the medium to longer term. We recognise that in the short term, and it is the same not just for Jersey for any jurisdiction seeking to develop a digital economy, that specialist skills are required. You cannot just hand it on overnight so there is going to be a lag period as you ensure that schools at every level are properly structured with the right curriculum to ensure that the skills required for the future are going to be provided. So that is in the sort of medium to longer term. In the short term, clearly to ensure that the sector can be developed appropriately and properly and opportunities are not missed in a highly competitive area. We should never forget incidentally that Jersey is not alone and not the ones that thought up this idea of a digitally enabled economy. There are many others doing it and they are doing it rapidly so we cannot stand still and there will be a requirement to bring in specialist skills to pump prime the industry. But what Education are doing and the speed at which they move and the strategy they put in place is critical to ensure that the amount of inward migration in the future in these areas will be reduced, grow our own, in other words, more of our own.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It is a subject that we went over this morning, I think, in some detail as to when do you feel that there will be a need for inward migration to support any emerging industry within the digital sector? It seems to us that that may well be upfront rather than further down the line. Is that a view that you also take?

The Minister for Economic Development:

It is and it is happening right now and it is part of our strategy. It is contained within the economic growth and diversification strategy. It is inherent within the enterprise strategy that you will have seen or will be seeing and what we are noting is that the type of businesses that are finding Jersey attractive at the moment if we continue to promote inward investment ... inward investment, by the way is, as I have said many times, absolutely key to diversification of the economy. You have got to attract and bring in both the businesses and also the talent to support those businesses more so in the short term and it is not large numbers, I hasten to add, but there are still requirements to bring in specialist skills. So, yes, upfront it will be a requirement and that is being shown right now. We are already seeing businesses requiring specialist skills. What we want to do by rolling out and working in a co-ordinated way across government, and education is clearly key in this, Digital Jersey an enabler, a motor, to ensure that in the medium to longer term that we have set up the right structures through the schools and the curriculum and so on to grow more of our own talent.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Can you just explain whether those are existing business or new businesses for the Island?

The Minister for Economic Development:

Both.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

And can you give us some sort of ratio?

The Minister for Economic Development:

In terms of numbers of individuals? Off the top of my head, I could not, I do not ...

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

You need to clarify the question.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

The Minister talked about bringing in skills for this particular new sector and what I wanted was a demonstration of the demand between existing businesses or potential new businesses.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

I think it is important to understand and to some extent I think the work that was done by the Skills Board, which was effectively an audit of the digital sector in Jersey, laid this out fairly clearly. The existing industry sector in Jersey is effectively a service sector, servicing financial services and other industries with largely Microsoft products. That is not the digital sector. Neither is it a full

realisation of the digital economy. Neither is it what we are aiming for and that is a digitally enabled society and it would be wrong to think that you can generate any of those 3 things organically. It will not happen. The model, and I think it is laid out and very clear, for instance, in the Digital Jersey strategy document, is that in the short to medium term, this is about inward investment, imported intellectual capital, intellectual property, minded control of businesses that in the main do not exist at the moment. The majority of those, I would suggest, will come from outside. Some of them will come through the work of Jersey Business working with Digital Jersey because there are bright entrepreneurs here. We need to make sure that we have got the right environment to allow them to flourish. But the audit is very clear in suggesting that the scale of the digital sector at the moment is very small. It is largely about servicing. It is largely about using other products. It is not really about the type of thing I think we are aiming for or probably most people imagine a digital sector will be. It is about developing applications, developing software, and when we are talking about changing the curriculum or through extracurricular activities. There was a great piece on the radio this morning with Gwyn Garfield-Bennett. What we are talking about there is building up coding skills within the people who are currently at school to allow them to be the people who write the applications that are at the heart of the development of a digital economy rather than just use ones that have been written by Bill Gates and his merry men.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Thank you, we are aware of that but let us go back to my initial question. The Minister mentioned that there is an expression of interest to bring people into the Island and I want to know the ratio of whether they are new businesses or existing businesses.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

The enterprise action plan I think, which will be published shortly, I think, Constable Pallett's main panel is looking at that, sets a target for high value jobs over the next 3 years of the overall target is 1,000. The ratio in there, I think, is for every one licensed role, sort of (j) cats in the old world, there will be 3 locally qualified or entitled posts. So the ratio is roughly one to 3 in terms of job creation, one to 4.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Is that from existing businesses or is that from new businesses?

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

I think, as I have said, I would suggest it is largely from new businesses that are either coming from inward investment or from new business start-ups within the Island, yes.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Thank you.

The Minister for Economic Development:

Sorry to interrupt, I was just going to finish up on that particular point. We can supply you with some figures if you would like. There are existing businesses that are making requests for specific specialist skills to come into the Island to support their expanding endeavours. That is the smaller number and then new inward investment businesses and we can give some indication on numbers for that. We can come back to you with specific numbers.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

We would be glad to have that information, thank you.

The Minister for Economic Development:

If you all want to get down to numbers that is fine, but the numbers are relatively small at this stage, as you probably appreciate.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

You must mentioned you were talking about coding skills and I agree it is the right route to go and obviously it is very early days with that and it is going to be probably a few years before we start producing our own young entrepreneurs with those types of skills looking to build their own businesses or come up with their own ideas. Do you see us having to ... and it is something that Ivan Nicou(?) brought up, I think, in the briefing that he did. Do you see us having to import some of these entrepreneurial skills early on not just ... I mean, we are probably going to have to get people to invest as well from overseas as well but, in terms of the skills, there are some bright people here, no doubt about it, but do you see us having to look probably around the world for people with those bright ideas that we can invest in?

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

Well, I mean it, particularly the digital world, and it is a very broad church indeed; it is genuinely global. I think we need to make sure we do 2 things: one is where there are bright entrepreneurial people ... and I would not necessarily agree with you, Mr. Chairman, that there are not children at school at the moment who have not got that, potentially; I think there are a lot of them. We just need to be able to realise it by having the ability to turn some of the ideas that they have into business through coding. That is one of the chiefs ... and I will touch on what I have seen in both Israel and the U.S. (United States) over the course of the last 6 months or so. But should Jersey be a location where entrepreneurs can come in from the U.K. (United Kingdom) and elsewhere,

establish their business and employ local people in a digital economy driven by entrepreneurs?
Yes, it should.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

If the environment is right, they will come here.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

Yes, absolutely, because the model for the development of digital business, and we have seen this in Israel, we see it in the West Coast, we have seen it in other areas as well, good digital businesses see a problem. The entrepreneurs work out how to solve that problem with digital space. They get it adopted and then they work out the money side of it, how to generate revenue from it. What is at the heart of that is a combination of digital skills in the strictest sense and the ability to develop that into a business, and it is how you use those digital skills and you put them alongside business skills to make it work and when you see the great digital companies, the Microsofts and the Apples of this world, that is the combination that they have achieved. They have got the strong technology and the ability to turn it into a business which in their case employs tens of thousands of people and there is no reason why we cannot do that here.

[16:30]

The Connétable of St. Mary:

We have talked in other spheres about this being a very risk-averse Island. A lot of those companies that have really had major successes have first of all grown and then failed miserably and then been reborn.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

Absolutely.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Do you think we are missing ... our lack of sort of ... we have got a fear of flying, almost.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

So what you see, and I heard this when I was in Israel recently at the major digital conference (part of it is coming here in April of next year) that you learn from failure. In this space, you learn as much from failure as you do from success and if you look at all ... I mean, you are right. All of the major successful companies have all failed. I mean, Apple, at one point, almost went to the wall and is now ...

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Look at Amstrad.

The Minister for Economic Development:

Well, exactly. I would go a step further and say you say we are a risk-averse Island; we are an Island of entrepreneurs and we have created new businesses and new ideas and taken great risks over centuries, if you look at the evolution of the economy. I think what is happening at this particular moment is we are more risk-averse from a political leadership perspective and as a government generally and perhaps ...

The Connétable of St. Mary:

So we are not encouraging the entrepreneurs to take the step they want to take, possibly?

The Minister for Economic Development:

Because we tend to take a more risk-averse and conservative viewpoint and that is the point I have made about the Innovation Fund. We have created a fund. It inherently has risk associated with it but we have a culture that very quickly looks to knock something down if it does not succeed and there will be grants that will be made or loans that will be made through the Innovation Fund which will fail and if you look at those types of funds elsewhere, and we have discussed it obviously with the panel, they do fail and unfortunately you will have that and that is part of the process. We cannot be frightened of failure. What we seek to do and hope to achieve is an overall success package so you get more winners than losers and therefore that creates job opportunities and growth and revenues.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just in terms of those job opportunities for the local market, for youngsters coming through with the sort of skills that obviously this strategy is looking to provide. The first figure that Digital Jersey have for 2016 is 400 new jobs in the digital sector. Do you see the majority of them going to local people or do you think that the large majority of them may well be from people outside because it is the first target date, 2016. Do you see a lot of them being people that we have to bring in?

The Minister for Economic Development:

The aim of all the strategies, the enterprise strategy, is the same is that the majority, 75 per cent, are going to be local and we will have to, from an enabling point of view, bring in some specialist skills.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I am just thinking front end of that enterprise strategy, you may well see numbers that will not be 75/25 but maybe ...

The Minister for Economic Development:

No, I think ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you still think that is achievable?

The Minister for Economic Development:

I think from an inward investment point of view, yes, three-quarters/one-quarter and that would translate through. I do not see any reason why not.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

If you look at a digital company, they are not all people writing code. They need things supporting around them, they need marketing expertise, they need business development expertise. A lot of that is available ... and we have got a very good capability as of now to deliver that so it is what you wrap around it into those businesses but by ... 2016 is not that far away and what we are talking about is an education system which really needs quite significant change to align itself in terms of digital economy, computer science, which is carried on as I.C.T. (Information and Communication Technology). So the numbers do not really add up if you do not think about bringing elements in.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It does not, but an important point is that the time lag between Education getting their I.T. strategy in place and providing some of the skills that the industry is going to need and 2016, if it has taken 2015 to get this up and running to the sort of levels that we think it needs to be, how are we going to provide these skills to meet these targets for 2016?

Strategic Policy Manager, Economic Development:

Can I just come in here? I think what is important is yes, the division was launched in October but it is not as if things have not been happening within the schools. There are certainly a couple of entrepreneurs who are on the Island who are going in and helping kids with after school clubs and during lunchtime doing some coding. We were approached in the last month by a company who are looking at offering coding. One of the individuals left school at 16, set up his own company in the digital sector and sold it very recently and set up this new company with a colleague and what they are wanting to do is look at offering coding training, initially on a one-day sort of exercise with

people who have got an interest in that particular area. Particularly in the digital sort of marketing area, they see that as an awareness campaign and those who are interested in possibly going into the digital industry, they are looking at, sort of, a 12-week programme, both programmes which the 2 individuals who are running the company have been on and they see that as a good introduction to people wanting to go into that industry. At the end of the 12-week course, the concept is that those individuals will be almost showcasing what they can do to some of the local digital businesses to see if they will be able to take them on.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Certainly nobody this side of the table said they have done nothing, because that is certainly not the case, but in terms of numbers of children that have accessed coding clubs, for example, it is a very small number and to roll this out across the whole education system is going to take a great deal of time and effort and a great deal of cooperation from teachers as well to be fair.

Strategic Policy Manager, Economic Development:

I think the point is that it is not, all right, we are looking long-term, medium to long-term for schools but it is also about transferable skills, people who may be in one particular industry who are maybe wanting to go into and unsure about how to approach those in that industry and here are stepping stones to help those people to get into ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Well, again, that is maybe retraining which may come through the digital harbour. I mean what we were looking at really was the I.T. strategy that is on the table in terms of the schools. I agree digital does have the opportunity to do some retraining.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

When I look at it and this is ... well, I have got children who are 15, 13, 11, 9 and 4. Now, what I see is that the strategy that Education have put forward, which I think is very complementary to what the medium to long-term vision is here; I see it having an increasing impact on those children. You know, will the 15 year-old see much change as he goes through those G.C.S.E.s (General Certificate of Secondary Education) this year and A levels? Well, probably not, and if he goes on to university or if he does computer science, that is where he might catch it. But I would hope that the 13 year-old, particularly the 11 year-old, the 9 year-old and 4 year-old will come through a very different system that will have evolved to give them the skills if they wish to apply them. Coding is not like English language. It is not a mandatory subject and not everybody may wish to do it. Some of the other skills that we do develop in our schools already which can support the development of digital businesses, there will be marketing and all that other stuff, it is a combination of everything.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

But the other side of the coin ... I do not know if there is anything to support this, but there are already Jersey people who are specialising at university or whatever in computer science. They are not coming back necessarily straight away because the jobs to interest them are not here. If you are bringing in ... opening up entrepreneurs to come here to bring start-up businesses or whatever, that surely will encourage potentially our youngsters to come back.

The Minister for Economic Development:

More of them to do that and there are examples of some that are already capturing opportunities. I think more students are coming back now than ever before and that is typical of the cycle where there is a recession in place and jobs are more difficult to get than in the U.K. They are coming back and struggling to find jobs and they are taking jobs way below their qualification levels which obviously squeezes others out and that is a broader educational issue. So, yes, by bringing inward investment in, there is a greater chance to align on those that are coming back with the skills with the opportunities fully increased ...

The Connétable of St. Mary:

So not all of the skills will necessarily be alien skills. Some of them will be home-grown.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

No absolutely. There is a very good example, not in the digital perspective, but as the Chairman already knows, we have developed, over the course of the last 3 or 4 years, quite a significant mining and oil and gas headquarter sector here. There are, I think, now 4 Jersey geology and mining engineering graduates who now have jobs with those Jersey companies. Now, if you had said 3 years ago, if you had asked them at the beginning of their degree course would they have ever thought of having a job using their degree with a Jersey mining company, they would have said no because it did not exist at the time and that is the model. So if we have brought the talent in from elsewhere, we have created the economic substance for the businesses, it is something I think that people will then be attracted to come back to do because at the moment, they tend to come back after a period of time elsewhere but certainly the people with graduate skills would be incredibly valuable. If you have got a good computer science degree, you are amazingly valuable to people in that sector.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

There is no way that we are looking to undermine or not saying that E.D.D. are doing fantastically, because I think you do a fantastic job and it is the same with the Education Department. I think what we are trying to find out is purely the timeline, just seeing whether your expectations of what skills can be produced meet Education's and whether they are going to provide ... that is where

the crux of it is, whether it is going to meet the expectations that the industry require and like I say, I think there are some question marks over timing but we will move on from that.

The Minister for Economic Development:

Could I just say, Chairman, that is why Digital Jersey plays such a critical role in all of this and particularly the T.A.G.s which you started the meeting off inquiring about. They are there to engage, to understand, to provide constructive lobbying and, if necessary, to seek our assistance in terms of speeding up the agenda if indeed that is necessary. That sort of engagement is really important.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

They laid out, I think, where they see their role being played with in education is arm's length. I think one of the questions we asked this morning was were the T.A.G.s involved with developing the business plans and commenting at all, or advising on the business plans. I made it quite clear that was not their job, and quite rightly so. But they can assist at arm's length in advice and things like that, there is no issue. Individually they can as well.

The Minister for Economic Development:

Critically, they can bring to the attention, both to ourselves, but also Education and others involved in the delivery of the sector, where the shortages are, where the pressure points are and what is required if we are going to be successful in delivering a sector of that nature.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

I think it is one of the interesting things: if the schools, in preparing their individual business plans, I mean, if they sought to do so they could take advantage of the expertise of one of the board members, Stephen Heppell, who is a world class expert in terms of the use of digital technology in education. There is nothing at all stopping a head, or anybody within a school, approaching Stephen. I am sure he would be very happy to give his advice.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

One thing you just touched on, and it is something that we touched on a little bit this morning was intellectual property and I.P. and protection for any potential entrepreneur or investor. Do you feel there is a role for I.P. to play to ensure that people's work is protected? I am talking about even young entrepreneurs as well, to ensure that what they produce is not copied, or so on.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

Jersey now has probably one of the most advanced pieces of copyright law in the world. It has just been updated. I think today it was announced that we have signed up yesterday to the Berne

Convention which gives a lot of extra jurisdictional reach. So, yes, our ability to protect intellectual property created in the Island is now as good as anywhere, I would suggest.

The Minister for Economic Development:

The absence of it would have been a significant problem. So, you know, yes it is critically important.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So there is a role to play for E.D. in terms of advice to schools possibly in future as to when they are putting together teaching programmes that, for example, may produce ideas.

The Minister for Economic Development:

Yes. I would suggest the route though probably is from an organisation like Digital Jersey that will identify where there may be shortages or where there are gaps in the legislation that we would need to seek to address.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

But certainly somebody coming out of school with an idea for a business, either coming to us, coming to Jersey Business, one of the first things you would say if it was a digital product is: "Let us make sure you have got the intellectual property protected as soon as possible and as early as possible." That is the way that you preserve the value in the business going through, to stop it being copied.

Strategic Policy Manager, Economic Development:

I think it is quite important to look at models where things to do with intellectual property have worked in other jurisdictions. University of Manchester Business School have a good model to the extent where the individuals coming up with the ideas can focus on the actual ideas, because the intellectual property can be dealt through another organisation. I think that is something that will need to be developed over a period of time, where you have got expertise in a particular area, just let those experts get on with that and let the individual come up with new ideas all the time.

[16:45]

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Has that been an issue? I mean, you have looked at jurisdictions elsewhere, Malta is obviously one of the ones that you have mentioned in the past, have there been issues around I.P. or are they pretty well protected in that?

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

No, they are pretty well protected as well, as far as we understand it. Malta is a very, very good example of a jurisdiction that really has taken the development of I.C.T. (Information and Communication Technology) in the digital sector within education very seriously. They positively discriminate, for instance, in favour of people going to university to study computer science. So they give them larger grants by virtue of the subject they do, because that supports the development of their economy and that is another element of their education system that they are using very much to guarantee their future.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Can I just ask you this: you mentioned about possible changes that might be needed in our own legislation, one of the risks that seems to be coming up across areas we are looking at is the slow response of the change of legislation because of pressure on law drafting, et cetera. Is there anything the department can do to put pressure to increase that department?

The Minister for Economic Development:

Well, yes, in short. We have worked very closely with the Law Officers Department and have worked with them to put additional resources in specifically to an identified problem that existed in the financial services area. One of the other key problems with primary legislation was Privy Council and the pace that legislation was passing through the Privy Council. That was at one stage pushing towards 18 months to 2 years. It is now down to about 3 or 4 months. Yes. So a lot of work has been done in that area, but we have to be alert all the time to ...

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Sure. Because I know some other jurisdictions can turn legislation around remarkably quickly when they have not got the barriers that we have.

The Minister for Economic Development:

Some can. The likes of Guernsey for example have been able to do, historically, utilising regulations, but I think that is a thing of the past, that is not as easy for them. But others nevertheless can, and we have to be alert to it.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

Can I make the point, Minister, I think the legislation issue was interesting. It is a little bit of a red herring, there is nothing at the moment, as far as we are aware, that stops a business or an entrepreneur in the digital sector setting up a business, protecting their intellection property and trading, both in the Island and internationally. There is nothing in our legislative framework, in fact

it is set up to allow that to happen. There are issues in terms of the speed of response and red tape, of course, but from the underlying legislative prospective ...

The Connétable of St. Mary:

We are sound?

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

... we are pretty sound. That is not to say that if there was something that came along that requires an element of legislation we would not move on it, but setting up a business in that sector is no different, I think, to setting up a business in any other sector. It does not require a complete new raft of legislation to work.

The Minister for Economic Development:

It is an important point to make, but you are right, Connétable, that there have been issues in the past identified specifically with financial services, and they have been addressed. So where there is problem we need to move to sort them out.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Good. Thank you.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Shall we move on to e-government, because I think it is probably one of the areas that you have a great deal of interest in?

The Minister for Economic Development:

Not only myself, Chairman, I would say that the Chair of the e-Government ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Absolutely, and I am very appreciative he made an effort to get here today in person. In terms of modernisation and E.D.D. in particular, where are we in terms of total government reorganisation in terms of e-government? Do you want to give us a broad overview of where we are at the present stage?

The Minister for Economic Development:

Where we are at the present stage is extremely disappointing, by any measures, I think. That is, if you consider the amount of interaction that government can have with consumers, Islanders, we have only about 7.5 per cent of transactions undertaken online digitally, the majority are by traditional methods of telephone or post and so on. The target is 75 per cent, so that gives you a

quantum of opportunity to bring together and avoid the duplication that goes on at the moment and so on and so forth. Of course, from that would flow also potential opportunities, which we will touch on in a moment. But in terms of the quantum of the situation at the moment, or the problem if we can describe it as that, we are technology un-enabled as a government with only 7.5 per cent of transactions dealt with in that way.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Are all departments working together in terms of moving this forward, or are there some that are dragging their heels? It is a whole-government approach to try to ...

The Minister for Economic Development:

I think that is for you, because you are leading on that.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

Yes, as you may know, we are coming to the closing stages now of a 15 week contract with KPMG, which is effectively defining the whole overall model which has been for all departments, as far as e-government is concerned. Last week, we signed off on 2 of the most significant components of that; that work has been completed.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Who has been involved in that process?

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

Well, that has been every chief officer, every finance officer, all of their technology people across all the departments have all been engaged in that process. The important thing from my perspective was to make sure that this was something that departments felt were being done with them not to them. I think we have achieved that by the approach that KPMG have undertaken and by the approach that we have taken in continually to be engaging with them. So we have signed off and we have collected data now from every single department. It has been validated by their finance officer, by the chief officer and by the treasurer. That forms the base line of the cost of doing business in the States. We have also agreed an overall e-government model, so what e-government will look like right across all the departments. This is all with the objective of improving ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Are you talking internally or externally?

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

No, as I was just going say, sorry, the sole aim of that is improving customer service. So using e-government to enable better customer service, and more efficient and more effective and lower cost government service as well. So we have signed off some of the provision, most importantly we have signed off last week on the underlying data architecture, which is about how data can be shared between departments to allow e-government to work, because that is key. As you know, we operate in a relatively fragmented way and data on you as an individual tends to be held very closely by the department. The interesting thing is the person who owns that data is you, not the department. For government to be able to deliver a good service for you we have to be able to share that data. Now at the moment - I will just finish; I will get off my soapbox - the system does not really know whether the Stephen Pallett in social security is the same Stephen Pallett in the health service, is essentially ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It is not. [Laughter]

The Connétable of St. Mary:

I told you your bar code was wrong. [Laughter]

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

But quite simply we have adopted going forward now, and everybody signed up to this, we have adopted 13 principles to move forward on, one of which is that we will use, and it probably will be the social security number as the common identifier. So with that data architecture you as a customer, a citizen will be able to interrogate all of the information that exists on you within government and we as government, where it is permissible - and there is all sorts of permissions and hierarchies and things - will be able to make sure that we could look across the organisation so we can deliver you the best service. This is a huge step that is being made, again, all departments, to buy into that common data architecture and has involved a lot of work. I have been extremely impressed by the way that KPMG have approached the task, because it is not easy. You burn a lot of shoe leather keeping people on side, I think, basically, and that is what we have done. So now what we have to do is build on that now over the course of the next few weeks and we have got to deliver one other thing and that is: what is the investment case, which is based on the base line cost at the moment, which as the Minister said, implies only 7.5 per cent of transactions are done digitally, take that to 75 per cent, what is the investment case. So what is the cost, what is the investment required, what is the return on it. That has been informed to a great extent by some good work that is going on in Social Security who are testing out on an exemplar project basis some of the elements of e-government that will fit together, like e-forms and different things like that. So that is where it is going. What I think will be needed from chief

officers, and indeed from Ministers as well, is wholehearted and consistent support for this as we move into implementation.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Has there been any specific legal or data protection issues that have come up as this has been developed?

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

No, interestingly, data protection is a very good one. Data protection, the way we describe within the e-government project is that people play the data protection card, you know: "We cannot do that because of data protection."

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Like health and safety.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

The people in the e-government team have spoken to the data protection people and they have basically said: "Well, look, in the main, providing you did A, B, C, D and E it is not a problem, so do not play the data protection card." We have some quite clear guidelines about that. That is just one of the things that you have to put up with. There is no doubt people are resistant to change, they are resistant to moving from an environment where data is partitioned to one where it is shared, but that is what is absolutely necessary to deliver what you and I, I think, would consider to be e-government. When you talk to customers they want to be able to do this, and particularly when you talk to businesses. Businesses, in terms of their interaction with the States, do not want to talk to a human being if they can possibly avoid it, they want to be able to do everything online, make all the submissions, everything, pay their taxes, they will do it. But that is the most effective ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

But most customers are just Joe Bloggs in the street who, you used the phrase "resistant to change" and we are pretty resistant to change. Getting back to what we are looking at, how do you see Digital Jersey's role in engaging with the public to play their part in this? Because if only 7.5 per cent of transactions are done online now, to grow that you are going to need people to be engaged in the Internet and dealing ...

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

But I think the interesting thing is that there is massive frustration that has been picked up, certainly by e-government, but from within the organisation, and remember people who work in the

States are also the people who use the services of the States as well, not by their own department but others. The issue is not that people are not going to be ready to do it, the issue is they cannot do it at the moment. I am in my mid-50s and I am not as computer literate as my 4-year-old, but I am getting there. All of my children will not be, and there are hardly any children out there who will want to pick up bits of paper and fill in forms, this is way they will work, in the e-equivalent. So the onus is on us to make that available, and I think what you will see is you will see it adopted by people very quickly, because if you look at majority of homes here that are hooked up with broadband and the majority of homes that have some form of computer, each one of those can make use of that. In our model all public buildings have free wi-fi and should have far more comprehensive access to terminals so people can come in and interact with e-government free of charge if they need to do that.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Can I just ask on that previous point, the issue of the I.T. budgets, are they all going to be centralised now? I know that is one of the contentious issues about where the I.T. budgets are kept.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

That is a bridge that we have yet to completely cross, I think is probably the best way of putting it. There is a very significant central I.T. budget and what that is used for is to provide basically the backbone that lets everything work. Is that discrete from, for instance, the health budget, well, yes it is. Is it now though in terms of how that activity is co-ordinated? I will give you a very good example, last week, I think it was, we went to see all of the Health, the Chief Officer and all of her team to talk about the overall e-government vision and we got to the end of it and the whole conversation is about what they could do within the context of that vision. The point that was made at the end was that there was nothing in that vision that they would not support, or indeed would not adopt as quickly as they could. So the issue of where the budget sits is probably not quite as important as the fact that they are willing to use that budget in a way that is consistent with the delivery of the e-government vision. If we said to people: "We are going to take the budget" then you are into a whole different turf war that it may not be right to fight, because we can achieve a far better outcome by going down the route that we are going down.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just going back to the point I made about there are some that currently cannot access certain government forms, whatever you want to call them, and some that will not, but there is a lot of people that will be unable to. How will you both be working with your colleagues to make sure that those community digital skills can be developed?

[17:00]

The Minister for Economic Development:

Before I answer that question, just to clarify a point, experiences elsewhere in other jurisdictions demonstrate that up to three-quarters would, if they could, and that is why the target is 75 per cent. The problem we have here is that we as government do not get the opportunity, as we have touched on before. As time passes the numbers that are enabled and have the capability and technology to access services if they were available online, is increasing all the time. I think we have got a huge amount of progress that we can make simply by, from our side of the fence, allowing bookings online, and, you know, tax returns online and all the other bits and pieces. There is a big gap there.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, I think from our point of view, we want to see an inclusive society, not an exclusive one. We want to include as many people as we can. So getting back to the point, what role are you going to be playing in terms of making sure as many people as possible are engaged, are skilled up to be able to take part? It will not just be the older generation; there are younger people as well that do not want to engage.

The Minister for Economic Development:

Well, that is absolutely right. But the reason that the target is 75 per cent, it is recognising the fact that there are some, the grey-haired mob, sorry, no disrespect to the much older fraternity ...

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

And it probably goes for special needs.

The Minister for Economic Development:

And those with special needs in all services. So there is a section which you could describe as falling into the 25 per cent that we recognise will still want to be able to pick up the telephone or fill in a form or do whatever. At the other end of the scale, as you go into the nursery when I drop my 4-year-old off, they are already there with computers at the age of 4; in fact, Mike referred to his 4-year-old, I have a 4-year-old too who can work on the iPad and all the rest of it. So kids coming through schools, we are not talking about coding here, we are talking about basic use of technology, computers and what have you. So I think the numbers probably fairly reflect where we believe we are. But in terms of enabling, I mean, the education system is largely doing the basic work that will enable the community to be able to take advantage of the extra opportunity.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

I hesitate to say this with 2 Connétables in the room, but I think this is one area where the relationship, in terms of the use of technology between the States and the parishes is critically important. I think the parish halls are a tremendous potential information resource for people, not just on parish business but on States business through technology platforms that I think, as part of the e-government vision, would be provided free of charge, as far as the parish was concerned. Indeed, one of the things we have talked about in the vision is being able to work with the parishes so that when somebody walked in and there was an information resource there, it was both parish and States and they could chose where they wished to go. Again, being able to access that either through infrastructure which is put into the parish halls, or as a result of free wi-fi that was there so people can come and use it. There are potentially places there where people could come to learn. There is a lot of capacity in the Island to teach people who are not literate as far as the Internet is concerned, how to use it. Once you get on to it and adopt it, it becomes second-nature quite quickly.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

That was something we touched on this morning with Education about: rolling out not exactly a digital learning hub of the type that Digital Jersey are doing, but certainly learning hubs within specific areas of the Island; they could be based on the parishes.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

Yes, absolutely.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

I have a beautiful vision of the mobile library becoming a mobile data hub.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

Exactly, that is a very possible.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

It is very, very popular with the parishes.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

I think the other thing is within families, and the Minister has mentioned this, particularly if I or my wife need to look how to do something with this, I will go and ask one of the kids, because they will certainly know. So there is almost a built-in learning environment in the home as well.

The Minister for Economic Development:

Education are doing this anyway, the basic stuff is being taught. What we were talking about earlier was taking it a step further, in terms of developing a curriculum or what have you, the basic stuff to be able to interact and make submissions online and all the rest of it, that is happening in schools.

Strategic Policy Manager, Economic Development:

I think the difficulty is we do not know what percentage of people are not I.T. literate. That is the issue.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Can I just ask though, on this particular review ... well, can I just ask, is there going to be a review of the forms that people have to deal with? Because it is all good and well telling people: "Right, go and fill in a form on the Internet" but what user testing is there going to be with the interface part of it? Because it is no good having a system if you do not understand the fields. Can I just ask, is that being factored into e-government?

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

Well, it is, because as the Minister is saying, there are very few local authorities, but there are some who have just said: "Right, that is it. It is all online. Nothing else." That is not our model. Our model is that you still make available, and this is probably going to be the case for some considerable time, the traditional way of submitting the information. You give people the opportunity to learn and to be trained with how to do it online, but if they want to revert to doing it in the traditional way then they still will be able to. That, I think, is something that is carried through all of the e-government work, because you cannot force people to go online, because as the Minister says, you do not know about people's special needs or whether they have had the appropriate training to be able to do it, so you have to make that provision at the same time, giving them the opportunity to learn how to do it if that is what they wish to do. If customer service is all about customer choice then you cannot force people to go online.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

It is not necessarily forcing people, it is about making the system accessible.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

At the moment the systems that we have that are running where you can do things online, are accessible, they are compliant and there are very well-defined areas of compliance, in terms of visibility for people who are visually impaired. So they will have all of that built into them. The idea is not to make things more complex by putting it online, the idea is to make it simpler. So for

instance when you fill in your social security number, which is the first thing you should be asked to do, a lot of the form - name, address, whatever - will be populated, just as it is at home if you do autofill on a normal program. I think that is where people will start to see the benefit of e-government. All you have to do is type in that one thing and an awful lot of the form is filled in for you, and only the bit that is really relevant that you really want to fill in for that particular form is the bit that you need to fill in, whatever that might be. I would hope there will not be an issue with accessibility, because the way that you take a paper form and put it online now is very well tried and tested, and the idea is that you make it simpler and it is accessible. If you want it in text that big, you press one button on the top of the thing and you get in text that is that big, so it is easier to read for those who have some form of visual impairment.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

That works fine if the initial form you are working with is up to scratch.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

Yes, absolutely. Well, we will not put things online, hopefully, that are not up to scratch and have not been tested. You do not put an online form online unless the whole thing has been tested and we can make sure that in a live environment it works. Can I sit here today and say with 100 per cent certainty there will not be the odd thing? No, I cannot, but the intention is to put things on there, the reason to do e-government from a government perspective is to simplify things and to make things happen faster, for us as much as it is for the customer. So it is in our interest to make things accessible and easy to deal with.

The Minister for Economic Development:

There are many examples where it is not. I recall at half term trying to get one of my sons on to a sports course. I went online, form was there, fantastic, then I realised I had to print it out to fill it in. So I filled it in, printed it out, and when I looked to pay you cannot pay online, so I took it along. When I arrived I produced the form and the cheque and the chap said: "Well, I cannot take cheques that has to go to central office." "Where is that?" "Somewhere else." So you can see how progress can be made very simply by putting all that stuff online.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

I think the other side of e-government which is important is there is e-government where you have to provide something for government, and that is where the forms come in. You are absolutely right, Deputy, about the simplicity. But there is the other side of it where government provides or elements of government provide you with information. I have got all these children, as you know, and I have them at different schools. So the end of every term I get 4 different envelopes from 4 different schools that come into me with their results or whatever they report. Would it not be nice

if I could just go on and sign in as a parent and all 4 of those were available? That means the school would not have to post them, I would get them at one time in one place. I would know I would get them, and that is the other side of e-government. That again is about the data architecture and how you set it up. That makes it easier for you as a consumer, hopefully, or a customer, to be able to see stuff.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

I was extremely impressed with Planning's website how now everything is available, all the maps are there and you could make your submissions online, everything is very good. My parent/teacher interviews at Hautlieu last week were all done by logging in with my daughter's class name and all the appointments came up and I chose my appointments that suited me and then I sent my husband, it was great. **[Laughter]**

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

In terms of business and business' involvement within schools and education itself, what are your feelings around them being involved on a day-to-day basis? I mean, we have had different feelings back about how close business should be to the education system, what is your view of that?

The Minister for Economic Development:

Well, I think it is important, and again I revert back to Digital Jersey who will play a key role in this, but understanding the requirements the business has, and particularly in this area of the digital economy, which is moving rapidly and continues to move rapidly. We have talked about coding, coding may not be what is relevant in the future, there may be something else, because it moves very, very fast. So staying close to business I think is critically important so that we ensure that the educational system is delivering what businesses want in terms of the right skills.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

And can feel change when it is needed.

The Minister for Economic Development:

Absolutely. It needs to be done with the ability to react quickly, and not necessarily just be stuck in a particular route which is becoming outdated.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What would also be your view, I know it happens in the U.K. in terms of business investment within schools as well, is that something that you would encourage?

The Minister for Economic Development:

Could you explain that a bit more?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Well, I can think of one particular London college for example, that an entrepreneur virtually single-handedly invests in. You do not think there is an issue of being compromised by a particular business investing in a school, for example?

The Minister for Economic Development:

I think there are some other challenges within our structure and system at the moment that would make that probably quite difficult in the future. I think it opens up into a much broader debate about the educational system that we have and perhaps would like in the future, and the flexibility. I think you are probably talking about flexibility and I think ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Also independence as well. whether ...

The Minister for Economic Development:

Yes, absolutely. I think there is a debate to be had in that area. I am keen on greater flexibility and adaptability, because the business world is moving very fast, it is competitive and think those types of opportunities should be considered. But it is part of a far broader debate about the structure and delivery of the educational system in the Island.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Just on that point about the curriculum going forward, in the Thinking Differently documents, one of the key outcomes is supposed to be developing pupils' business acumen. Do you think, Minister, that a trick is being missed here? Because not only the development of I.T. skills, business study skills should be incorporated as well, if that is what the vision is to develop, and has that not been missed?

The Minister for Economic Development:

Well, I have just used the words "flexibility and adaptability", you have got a strategy there, most strategies in my mind are living documents: they need to evolve and develop as they move forward. There is some work being done, as I understand it, to develop business skills within the educational system. I think it needs to develop further, I think it can develop further and I would go so far as to talk about entrepreneurship as well. The full suit is relevant.

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

It is worth adding, I mean, my daughter is at Beaulieu and I got her report back yesterday from the last term, and she is 13 and studying business studies. As I said earlier, the way that these things work successfully is you have an idea and you work how you can make a business out of it. I think if you combine somebody who has the digital skills with somebody who is currently being provided with what education is currently providing, in terms of business studies, you have probably got 2 of the elements of the recipe for a successful digital business. I think there is quite a lot of business study, business education that is going on in the system at the moment.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Although part of the problem, because I remember looking at the statistics a while ago, the ones who struggle most to find employment after gaining a degree are those who have business-related degrees; those who should really be able to know how to progress these things.

The Minister for Economic Development:

Just going back to your point about business acumen and what have you, Chris just reminded me about the Global Entrepreneurship Week of which we provide part-funding, obviously for the schools. I mean, that is a good programme.

[17:15]

But we can do more I think probably working with education in schools, and I think the Chairman's comment about businesses being closer, it is not just about understanding what businesses require in the future in terms of skills, but it is also tapping into, and there is great deal of willingness in the business community for business leaders to go into schools and talk to them about opportunities and about entrepreneurship and about running businesses, and what have you, and try and engender some, obviously information and what have you, but also some excitement about the opportunity for getting involved in different business careers.

Strategic Policy Manager, Economic Development:

I think as a department we work closely with schools and colleges on inward investment aspects; when businesses are going to come to the Island they are obviously looking for graduates or other individuals, we point them in the right direction. A number of our inward investment business people who have come to the Island and set up have been more than happy to go and talk to the schools about the work that they are doing. One that does spring to mind is Emscan(?) where they are talking about the various chemistry and biology aspects of the business, which is very interesting. But we, as the Minister has just said, fund the Global Entrepreneurship Week where we engage with just under 1,000 children in one week. We get people from the business

community to go and act as mentors for a day-long activity. It is a real buzz when you take part, and I would urge you as individuals to take part in it next year, because it is really interesting because kids have got new ideas. But we have had links with the Solent education business partnership and a couple of years ago I went over to see some of the work they are involved with. One of the things, because it related to the digital, is what Vodafone do in Newbury in Berkshire, they engage with secondary schools over there and they see it, I suppose, as an employment opportunity or potential for recruitment of staff. But they send a lot of their staff into the schools in a number of different ways, as daylong activities, go in once a term and kids get involved in the various projects, which is absolutely fantastic. The kids do not see them as teachers, they do not seem them as parents, they see them more as buddies. At the same time Vodafone are seeing new ideas that young people are coming up with. So there is lots of good opportunity. As the Minister also alluded to, the fact is there are a lot of senior business people in the Island who are more than happy to give up their time or their staff's time to go and work on various initiatives within the various schools, they just need to be assisted or for us to, I suppose, in effect, come up with concepts, or schools come up with concepts where they can use their expertise to deliver these types of things. We are about to commission a piece of work to look at what works well in the U.K. and see if we can use some of that in Jersey with all the secondary schools. It was quite a few years ago now, probably about 5 years ago, we started looking at working with some of the primary schools. La Moye was a good example where we are getting kids to make things for the Christmas bazaar, and that started to get kids thinking in a certain way as well. We are quite keen on expanding the great relationships between schools and the business community. Rather than breaking that relationship where sometimes the parent from one business is on the board of governors, is to try and look at good practice; what works well in one school may work well in another school. So I think it is something we want to look at, rather than just very simple, sort of, try it in a 2 or 3 week placement, or Global Entrepreneurship Week which may be the platform to start launching things for the academic year, I think it is a good way of developing relationships, and also making children aware of what employability skills employers are looking for.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What have been Education's stance on ... well, obviously, you are not The Minister for Education, Sport and Culture, but do you have an understanding of what the Education Department's standing is on that type of close working relationship with any particular business? I think Vodafone has got a very big global reputation; getting a single entrepreneur into assist with a business plan and then getting a company like Vodafone are chalk and cheese.

The Minister for Economic Development:

I mean, there have been business leaders going into the schools and talking to students ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

We were made aware of that this morning.

The Minister for Economic Development:

Yes. I do not know to what extent. So clearly they are open to it, I think it is something that has great potential to develop further.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Needs to be developed.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Is the issue though not educating students about the practical mechanisms that you need to go through if you want to set up a business, and kind of to break down those barriers to reduce the risk averseness? Because it is much easier to engage in something if you understand what it is you have got to do. Would you not say that, Minister, that is perhaps missing in our current education system?

The Minister for Economic Development:

I do not think it is appropriate for me to comment in detail as to what is and is not missing. I think there is an opportunity to develop further the interaction between business, and going back to the original question of the Chairman, I think businesses should be brought in closely to be engaged to a far greater extent than perhaps they are at the moment.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Is that something that you would encourage for example with Locate Jersey, when people are coming to the Island? Obviously it will give an opportunity to engage with the community, engage with, certainly, the local schools, for example. Is that something that is discussed at present?

The Minister for Economic Development:

We have certainly noted that inward investors are very keen to get involved in the community in all sorts of different ways, as I am sure you are aware, they tend to give very generously to charities and what have you, but they are very keen to get involved in sporting clubs, associations and education.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Well, I have just had one join our youth club 2 days ago that moved to the Island 3 years ago, so they are very keen.

The Minister for Economic Development:

They are, and we try and provide guidance as part of the on-boarding process as to where their particular skill set ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So there are opportunities there.

The Minister for Economic Development:

... would be best placed. There are opportunities there and you are pushing at an open door. You tend to find that when inward investors come, they want to become part of the community and they will go that extra mile, or more, in order to achieve that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It is something that I mentioned a little bit before, the digital learning hub. I presume this is something, obviously, that you support?

The Minister for Economic Development:

Yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Very much so. In terms of funding from the Digital Jersey point of view, has it got sufficient funding for the foreseeable future, and also in terms of ... because we have heard mentioned that it may be being relocated, are you supportive of their moves to relocate to another headquarters?

The Minister for Economic Development:

Yes, subject to understanding exactly where that might be and how it will look. Clearly, they are becoming squeezed, and with the development of the digital learning hub as an idea, they are going to need more space. It makes sense. It made sense initially from a cost perspective to put them in with Jersey Business, but yes, I do support the fact that they need to move and, from a budgetary point of view, we believe they are well-funded and we have flexibility within our medium-term financial plan to provide them with additional resources as appropriate and consistent with the business plan that they have presented.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you see that learning hub, the centre for Digital Jersey, also as an opportunity to put an incubator in as well, in terms of small business? Do you see that as being part of that?

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

As part of the model. I think there are 3 components of the digital learning hub: there is the Digital Jersey headquarters, there is the learning environment for school children or those who have just left school, and then there is the co-working space where businesses can come and establish themselves.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

You see that in one centre rather than ...

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

Yes, in one centre. I think that can be made to work very effectively together, because everybody there is all trying to do the same thing, they may just be at different stages, but they are all trying to do the same thing.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you think that would be an attraction to young entrepreneurs from outside of the Island that may see that as an opportunity?

Chief Officer, Economic Development:

That is my personal view, and I have seen that working first hand in Israel where, interestingly, coming back to one of your earlier questions, Chairman, it is delivered by Microsoft. They have a thing called "the Microsoft accelerator" just outside Tel Aviv and they are completely agnostic about what technology is used in there. They do not care if it is Microsoft, Apple, whatever. What they want is to create the environment where ideas can start and flourish. They are all digital businesses, and they have the educational element of it as well for young people and kids.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you see Digital Jersey moving into more of a private environment where they are left to their own devices to get their own funding? Obviously you fund them at the moment, presumably if that could be funded from private investment would that be something that you would see or do you still feel that Digital Jersey needs to be under the banner of E.D.D. or could you see them moving away?

The Minister for Economic Development:

I am not sure I would describe it necessarily as under the banner. We created it, there is a partnership agreement that exists between E.D.D. which defines the relationship, which is quite appropriate. If you look at Jersey Finance that interestingly started almost the other way around, where there was an equal footing of contribution from industry. But do not forget it was an industry

at the time that was far more mature, what we are looking at here is a new industry; to seek to put the same model in place for Digital Jersey would not have been appropriate, would not have got off the ground. In the future, I think, if the sector begins to grow, as we anticipate it will, there is an opportunity. Perhaps, if there is an identified need for greater funding, the industry themselves could provide some of that. That is a conversation for a later date.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

That may well happen, I mean, if they are going to build their own tech fund for example, that is something that will be done with private money not public money.

The Minister for Economic Development:

Yes, exactly.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just something I know you have been involved with, but in terms of the Skills Executive Board or Skills Board, do E.D. have any initiatives currently that are in development or will be developed through that board, in regards to skills?

The Minister for Economic Development:

Well, the Skills Board commissioned the audit, I think, which Mike referred to earlier on, looking at the position of skills in the digital sector within the Island, as of a year ago, when it was done. So, yes, from a strategy policy point of view and through the Skills Board, yes, there is an involvement. But clearly the big leaders again, reverting back to Digital Jersey, that is where the attraction is going to primarily be.

Strategic Policy Manager, Economic Development:

We do have one initiative which we launched this year, which has got the backing of the Skills Board, which is the skills accelerator ...

The Minister for Economic Development:

Accelerator, yes.

Strategic Policy Manager, Economic Development:

where we offer up to £5,000 to individuals to train, to employees of an organisation. We are going to be launching a graduate internship programme next year as well as, later on in the year, an inward investment fund. So businesses that may want to come to the Island will be required to have locally-trained people, there will be funds available to train up local people in that particular area. So it is not just the digital industry, it will be open to all industries.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I am just weary of the time because one of us has got to be elsewhere. Have you got anything else?

The Connétable of St. Mary:

I have not, I do not think, thank you.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

No. No more questions from me.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Anything you want to add?

The Minister for Economic Development:

I do not think so, I think we have had a very broad discussion on the subject.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I did think it was going to be a fairly broad discussion today in terms of ...

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Do not be lulled into a false sense of security, I think we will be honing our questions for the next meeting.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Okay. Well, can I thank you all for coming, I am sure we will want to speak again towards the end of the review when we have spoken to everybody else, but we much appreciate you coming in.

The Minister for Economic Development:

No, not at all.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Thank you very much.

Male Speaker:

Thank you.

[17:27]