



Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel

Quarterly Public Hearing

Witness: The Minister for Infrastructure

Wednesday, 22nd November 2023

Panel:

Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade (Vice-Chair)

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

Connétable D. Johnson of St. Mary

Witnesses:

Deputy T. Binet of St. Saviour, the Minister for Infrastructure

Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North, Assistant Minister for Infrastructure

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

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

Mr. T. Daniels, Director, Jersey Property Holdings

Mr. T. Dodd, Head, Transport, Highway and Infrastructure

[11:02]

Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade (Vice-Chair):

Good morning, everybody, and welcome to the Environment, Housing, and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel and the Quarterly Public Hearing with the Minister for Infrastructure. I will go around the table initially just to introduce ourselves for the point of view of the transcription. My name is Mike Jackson, Deputy Chair of the Panel.

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

Deputy Mary Le Hegarat, district North St. Helier.

Connétable D. Johnson of St. Mary:

David Johnson, Constable of St. Mary, Panel Member.

Head, Transport, Highway and Infrastructure:

Tristen Dodd, Head of Highways, Transport, and Infrastructure.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Ellen Littlechild, Director of Operations and Transport.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Andy Scate, Chief Officer for Infrastructure and Environment.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Tom Binet, the Minister for Infrastructure.

Assistant Minister for Infrastructure:

Deputy Steve Ahier, Assistant Minister for Infrastructure.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Tim Daniels, Director of Jersey Property Holdings.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you. So, Minister, I think the best thing to start off with is the storm recently, which we have all had to endure, and your department has found itself having to deal with. So we are having a lot of hampering in the clearing up period with further wind and rain but from an infrastructure and roads perspective, can you give us an update on the clear-up and how the department is tackling it and in the light of the continued challenging weather how are you managing to get through the work?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

First and foremost I want to say a thank you to the team because you will all agree that they have done a sterling job in a very short space of time. We are not there yet. We just had a catchup this morning and we have probably got about another 3 to 4 weeks of work to finish the job because there are still works to do on parks and other areas where there are overhanging branches on the Railway Walk and so on. But a great deal of progress has been made since the storm and, as I say, there is still some tidying up to do.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

There has been some suggestions that perhaps some of the fallen trees could be left or put in such a position that they might be part of the Railway Walk or in other parts of the Island, be of use as part of the environment, as play areas possibly. Has any consideration been given to that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There has been discussion of that sort. We have had an application from a couple of people that want to take huge tree trunks and put them in parks. But the way to do that is to bring everything centrally and then take it from there and then we can do it in an organised and proper way. Because there are safety concerns, you cannot just take a big half a tree at random and just plonk it somewhere. They cannot be left by the roadside. Therefore the object of the exercise is to get everything cleared up and then we can look at that when we have more time.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Which public buildings remain closed or require significant repair works?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

For the detail of that I will hand off to Tim.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

No public buildings are closed. We have, at the moment, two schools, Samarès and Hautlieu, that require ongoing work, but we are working with C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills) to ensure that they continue to function. Maybe you are alluding to the abattoir and work is going ahead on that as quickly as possible to get it back into function. But in terms of the public estates, the schools, operational buildings, everything is open.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I heard on the radio this morning comments about the abattoir and it was principally a roof issue, having been damaged in the storm. Is this the case?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is. I think 25 per cent of the roof is going to have to be recovered. Unfortunately, there is asbestos in the roof sheeting and in the course of the roof being damaged some of that asbestos got into the building and there has been water ingress that has got into the electrics. So it is quite complicated. So there is a series of things that have to happen. The roof has to be done first, then it has to be made clear of asbestos, there has to be a deep clean on the inside, and then the electricians can go in and put the wiring straight. So it is a sequence of events and that is why it is going to take a period of time. But once again we had a pre-meeting here this morning and we are putting as much

pressure on the contractors to move as quickly as they can. Unfortunately it is a sequence. They cannot all work at the same time. So that is why there is a delay.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Given the profound effect on the farming community of the lack of abattoir, how do you think that can be best dealt with? I did note that you are trying to negotiate with Guernsey but there is a law change issue there, which I am sure is not going to happen in 5 minutes.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Lots of alternatives have been investigated, a temporary abattoir being imported and constructed, that is extremely expensive and time consuming and probably would take longer to do that than it will to repair the abattoir and the discussion with Guernsey. But I will hand over to Ellen who can give you a little bit more detail.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

We did look at the Guernsey option but they have a law there that is 150 years old and to try to get the law changed before December when we are hoping to get the abattoir up and running would obviously take longer. As the Minister has mentioned, we have looked at also these temporary facilities and there are 2 in the U.K. (United Kingdom) but again they are not available now and not in the timescales to get them in ready. So all our efforts within the organisation is to try to get this abattoir up and running as soon as we can. As we are saying, there are a number of different contractors that we are engaging with and again we are going to see if we can push any sooner for it to be opened before mid-December and that is what we are all working to. I am sure that the farmers and people who use the abattoir can speak maybe with our Economy colleagues for again if there is additional support that could be required during that time. Because we know it is the busiest time and it could not have happened at a worse period for us.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Is it right that it was closed since 17th October? Certainly we have heard that it was closed prior to the storm and, if that was the case, why?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

With the abattoir we also have an animal carcass incinerator, so we have been doing a major overhaul on the animal carcass incinerator. So we have closed the abattoir a day, for one, just again to deal with all the byproduct effectively of that abattoir. So that was closed for one day. Ideally we were going to be open then, and then the storm came, so we could not be open on that week of the storm. So it was just a whole series of bad events at the same time.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

So can I just clarify, it was only closed for one day?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

As I understand, it was only closed for one day.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Right, okay, I think there was maybe a misconception that it has been closed since 17th October and then the storm hit. So that is obviously 3 weeks roughly.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Whatever the closure date it was for routine purposes and it is just unfortunate that, at the point in time when it would normally have reopened, that the storm came.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Generally the abattoir has been running and we have been involved with it for over 15 years, we try to do all the maintenance, we shut it down for two weeks at the beginning of January, which is also the quietest time, and we try to get all the maintenance done. It is just really unfortunate and I cannot stress enough that we are trying to make every effort to make it operational.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I will say that we are extremely mindful of the commercial impact on people, not just in the short term, I appreciate people have contracts and when you interrupt those contracts at a key time it is carnage. So, as we leave here, we are going to make another series of phone calls. I am going to be leaning on a couple of people myself who I happen to know, and see if we can get their timetable tightened up as much as we can.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The incinerator I take it is still up at Acorn as a separate building as such so that is not effected by the storm I take it?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

No, it was not. So we were fortunate there. Again, we were just finishing off the works, because we were doing a big upgrade to that incinerator, so that is just about to be complete. We have been exporting some of our byproducts to Guernsey as well just to try to manage it during this difficult period.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do I understand that it is not practical to ship live animals to the U.K. to go through abattoirs over there?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I am sure that could be looked at but it is welfare issues for the animals and how long they would be travelling for before they would get there and again the additional cost. So there are a number of issues with doing that, but I am sure it could be done.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The trouble is, if it was June and it was nice and calm, that is one thing. But to be putting animals on a cross-channel trip at November/December is not really the kindest.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I would imagine the issues would apply to shipping to France in terms of other legislation. Has that been explored?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am not sure what the legislative position is

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I am not sure on that. We have not been looking at that as an option.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Given that it is closer. Moving back to trees, we understand the number of trees felled as a result of the storm is estimated in the tens of thousands. Do you have a count of how many the department have been involved with?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are trying to work out, on the basis of 20,000, there are about 1,500 - 1,600 per parish, and I think we are pretty much in agreement that there has to be somewhere on or around the 20,000 mark. That is not an unreasonable estimate.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Given it is probably a figure we do not want to hear. Has any thought been given to replanting? I do not know how much involvement your department will have in that in terms of replacement and how that might be planned.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It has been discussed.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

I can answer that if it helps. We are setting up some thinking around this through our Natural Environment Directorate within the other part of the department. So we want to start liaising with all of our partners including the third sector, the National Trust, Trees for Life, et cetera. There is quite a lot of interest in this area, as you would expect. So what we want to do is firstly assess what the damage is. We are still in the process of quite a substantial amount of clear-up. Then have a discussion about what trees we want to plant, what type, what species, and also where. It gives us the ability to do something different in places. It is not always the case that we want to replace trees exactly where they have fallen. Some of the trees have been in quite problematic locations and so we want to embark on a replanting, restoration type conversation utilising some of the funds we already have and maybe tying in with funds other people have as well, so a coordinated effort.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Where will your stock come from? Do you have access to the varieties, the species you particularly want?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Ideally from a biosecurity perspective, growing stock on Island is the best thing to do. So we are working with some partners already such as Trees for Life who are looking to grow more stock on Island. Howard Davis Farm, for instance, as an example. Invariably, depending on the scale of the replanting, stock takes a while to grow and it is going to be a balance really, some on-Island stock and some of it is going to need to be imported. But we need to get the right species and it needs to be complying with all of our usual things on disease and pests and things like that. So it is part of the thinking.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think we would certainly have to look to import because the stock on Island would not have been prepared for this level of damage.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Would it be your intention to be planting standards rather than just whips, so there are some more-established trees at an early stage?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The replanting position is probably in its infancy because we are going to get through the next four weeks and we can still plant right up to the end of March. There is some thinking around this but let us get the first part done then we can put our energies into doing the second part.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Then we get problems with nesting seasons and things like that, so we have a number of tree experts who sit on the infrastructure side, we have natural environment experts on the other side of the department, so we do want to have a proper, considered view on this, working with parishes and others.

[11:15]

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There is obviously replacing on Government property and there are private individuals who are very, very keen to start planting again. So I think we will probably try to bring some threads together that we might look to importing bulk. I do not know if there is a possibility of having a scheme for people to encourage people to plant, but that is the sort of thinking that we are putting in place at the moment.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I know, Minister, you are a keen tree-planter and so it will be good to see what the Island looks like in 20 or 30 years as a result of this. I am sure it will be a different place.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

A lot is going to depend on what we do this year and in the coming seasons, so it is important and we are taking it very seriously.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Will that initiative be directed by the Parks and Gardens Department or which area of your remit, your portfolio, will it come under?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Infrastructure, I think it will be within our Parks and Gardens team, so obviously Nick Armstrong, our arboriculturist will be leading on that from our side certainly, but working closely with William Peggie's team as well.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I did hear one thing, which piqued my interest, yesterday. Initially I had spoken to one of your team about ivy on trees and the suggestion was that ivy was good for trees and it should be left. Yet yesterday I heard from I think the Minister for the Environment that a lot of trees had come down because they had not been maintained and ivy had not been cut. Do you know what the directive from the public point of view is with regard to ivy, because there is a lot of ivy on trees, which obviously creates a lot of windage. I do not know what your view is, Minister?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

With all of these things, you can only fine tune to a certain extent and we have had this argument about maintaining trees, but a lot of trees are planted, they grow, they last 100 years, and they fall over and they die. You cannot go around pollarding and managing every single tree, there just is not the money available and we just have to accept that every now and again you get these natural events, you lose trees, you replant them. We went through the 1987 storm, we went through Dutch Elm disease before that. Then we had the 1987 storm and I do not see any shortage of trees. People who love trees get out and plant trees come what may. So I think we are well served in that regard and I do not think we are going to have a problem replacing the tree stock if I am honest.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you support leaving ivy on trees?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

On hedgerows, in some areas we trim it, some areas we do not. I do not think we need to tell the people who run the countryside how to do their job.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you. Just finally on that one, is there a system, you will formulate a system for logging and keeping track of the number of tree casualties as and when they are cleared?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

I think the problem at the moment is just the sheer scale. So we have obviously had a lot of tree loss on private land. We do not necessarily know what the scale of that is. We have a bit of an idea obviously what we have had to clear ourselves on Government land or Government roads, using ourselves or our contractors. We would also then need to talk to each of the parishes as well in terms of all the clearance that has gone on there. So it is going to be quite hard to come up with an accurate figure of what has been lost where. But, apart from that, just a broad assumption.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I wonder what the advantage of that number is. It is purely to ensure that we do replace with a similar number I suppose.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

It will add a bit of weight to the scale, if we are serious about a restoration and replanting effort, it gives a bit of scale to it as to what we are talking about and how long that may last. It may well be a number of years for that to take root, forgive the pun.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Finally on that one, do you have a timeline for the clearance of the Railway Walk, which I think was the last red line on the map, do we have any idea when that might reopen?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I think that we are going to be clear from up to Corbiere, but that is the half that we have been looking at, at the moment, by tomorrow. Although there are still some overhanging branches, so we will still have some of our forestry team just checking that for the safety side. Then we are going to be starting from St. Aubin up to Pont Marquet. We think that is probably going to take another 2 to 3 weeks as we are working our way through it. Again you are going to see the forestry teams out and we will just work our way up. Just chatting to the team, we lost about 200 to 300 trees on the Railway Walk alone.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Good job there were no trains. Moving on, Minister, to gas and the gas supply outage, in light of the outage, which occurred last month, how are you working with Island Energy to ensure that future incidents are mitigated?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

To be honest with you, the gas outage falls under Home Affairs as the competent authority. I do know that I have to be very cautious about what I say in relation to gas while there are cases going on. As I say, I am reluctant to make too much comment about gas at all given the complexity of recent events.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I suppose what I am leading to is the effect, not only of the infrastructure on roads, and whether the gas infrastructure under the roads is satisfactory. I am not talking particularly to the Pier Road incident, but generally in the Island, the standard of the gas infrastructure under the roads will be of concern to you I am sure, because it is under your roads.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It certainly is. I am led to believe from a series of meetings that we have been to that it is safe and there have been health and safety checks to that extent. Andy, I know that you are probably better versed in knowing what it is.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

In terms of the outage incident, we will be reviewing what happened and what learnings come from that, both from a Government side and also the gas company side. We have been delayed in some of that because we then had another incident to deal with in the storm coming fairly soon on the back of it. So, as with any sort of incident, it was not called a major incident, but any incident, we have to go through a learning process and what we can change and do differently. I would expect the gas company to be doing that themselves as well, understanding what occurred. They are very clear what occurred but what they did with it and can they improve any of their processes as a result. Certainly from a safety perspective, the responsibility does sit with them as a company, with the oversight of any other regulatory agencies, Health and Safety Inspectorate, et cetera, as you would expect. So the dialogue is a live one from a variety of perspectives in Government, whether it be gas supply resilience, whether it be infrastructure resilience, and processes and how do we respond to those sort of things in future. So it is a bit of a live incident, a live conversation that is ongoing, and we would expect certainly from that outage there would be some lessons learned so Islanders can be reassured in the future.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Picking up from that comment and in terms of infrastructure resilience and energy supply resilience, there has been a little bit of a push away from gas, and then we have seen electricity supplies to outer areas cut off as a result of the storm. Do you consider it is wise to have energy supplies only with one supplier such as electricity, should gas supplies as an alternative not be encouraged? I mean some will have bottled gas, some will have piped gas of course.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There is a sort of discussion that is coming to the fore because I do not think I am out of order in saying anything that is in the public domain. We do have a very carbon-neutral roadmap that sees the elimination of gas and it takes us on a journey to doing that. Are we questioning whether that is a wise thing to be doing in any event? That is where we are at the moment but I ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

That is the point I am digging a bit on.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

... but just a personal view but I wonder if it is not time we revised certain elements of the carbon-neutral roadmap in the light of what we have learned since it was first introduced. That can apply to all sorts of areas. But gas is one where you might say do you have to go to a point where you have a level where you try not to go beyond that. Because, when you get below a certain level, the gas supply will become unviable for anybody to operate. So we need to just stop and think very carefully before we decide that we do not want gas at all.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It came clear during the outage there were a lot of commercial establishments that like gas and I think most chefs seem to like it.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

If it helps the conversations in other policy areas around gas, and other fuel types as well, we have a number of other liquid fuels, which are high in hydrocarbons, but the whole debate really is around how those fuels can be less carbon-intense. So whether that be more biogas, whether that be more sustainable liquid fuels, we have seen that in the diesel market for instance with second-generation renewable diesel. Home heating oil is becoming more sustainable. So I think the wider conversation around fuel supplies could be around what the carbon factor of these fuels are rather than whether they exist in their entirety. But at the moment the market in some of those fuel types is more expensive than the carbon-based fuels so that is the transition debate the Island and customers have to have.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We could move the customers that need it as an essential to truck-delivered gas, into containers. But that is pretty restrictive. We have the issue with the crematorium, if nothing else, and that is a fairly major issue as well. Like I say, the problem with gas is that if you are going to run a gas infrastructure you certainly need a certain level of gas sales to cover the cost of maintaining that infrastructure. So I do not know what that breakpoint is but that is a discussion that I think is worth having.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Certainly needs to be had. I am going to drift away from gas to a different sort. Has any work been done with regard to hydrogen in the Island given that we are now seeing more vehicles in other countries being powered by hydrogen>

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is a complicated one. I cannot claim to know a lot about it other than the fact that, from what I have heard, it is not desperately viable at the moment.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

From the infrastructure side of the department the quick answer is no. But certainly from a gas and environment and more carbon-neutral perspective in Government, as part of that transition to other fuel types, there has been some discussions around what role hydrogen can play in the future. The jury is out in some respects whether you can have hydrogen in domestic properties or not, whether it is a more commercial application or not. So it is one of those areas we are all keeping an eye on. It needs to be scalable for hydrogen to work, certainly commercially. It needs to be stored in very specific conditions as well for it to be used. So some early conversations are going on as to what it is, but we are keeping an eye on the issue in other jurisdictions. I do not think at this point we are scalable for hydrogen solutions here. But we will see where the market goes on that over the forthcoming years.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Good. I am going to pass on to Constable Johnson for the next section.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Yes, thank you. Moving on to the Government Plan if I may, which identifies certain actions as a priority. Minister, how confident are you that there is sufficient funding either already in place or proposed in the Plan to meet all these?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

All of these? Can you be a little bit more specific?

The Connétable of St. Mary:

The ones you have prioritised.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I certainly hope so.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay, do you have any ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not think you can ever be completely comfortable that you have enough money for everything you want to do, can you?

The Connétable of St. Mary:

There are things coming up like the proposal the other day for more help to farmers. Do you see that impacting on your area at all?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is going to impact in some small way on every department because the plan is to remove a little bit of funding from everybody to make that possible. I have to say I think it is a worthwhile exercise.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

What, the support for farmers?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The support for farmer, yes. I think it is late in the day.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Yes, I am not questioning that. I just wonder what knock-on effect it might have in your area.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is going to mean a little bit of belt-tightening for everybody I think, yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Sorry, just to come in on that, The Liquid Waste Strategy of course has a massive funding need. Are you happy with the direction of that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am happy that we have some funding to see us through the next 18 months; that is great news. Beyond that, that is another story that I hope you are not going to touch on.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

I think from our perspective, what the Government Plan highlights clearly, we work as positively as we can with Treasury to show what pressures we have in the department. A lot of our pressures relate to infrastructure and property investment. We run a lot of infrastructure and a lot of property, so we try to get as much as we can reflected in the Government Plan to invest back in infrastructure. So liquid waste is a good example. We have had some additional funds added for next year and the year after. We need to have a conversation about how much further that goes beyond 2025. But the need for funding in our physical assets is not stopping, so we have over £2 billion worth of assets and they need maintaining and improving. So that pressure is going to continue.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

We have a question relating to liquid waste later on. But, okay, moving on, in response to a written question asked by Deputy Feltham, the Minister for Treasury and Resources provided a list of revenue growth bids that were considered for inclusion in the proposed plan but did not make the final cut. We note that, of the growth bids within your ministerial remit, the following did not have a business case commissioned, and I have a list of these here, perhaps you could just whistle through them: process chemicals, active membership income, renewable diesel funding uplift, technology roadmap for connect assets, environmental performance certificates, States and J.P.H. (Jersey Property Holdings) revenue. I will repeat them one by one if you want.

[11:30]

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Please, once is enough.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Do you have a general comment as to why there was no business plan in the first place or did you put them in hope rather than anything else?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Every department puts in for the funding that it wants to cover everything and we probably all know in reality that we are not going to get the full funding. We were quite heavily oversubscribed this time around and it strikes me as this is a performance that we seem to go through every year and each department then has to scabble around with the resources that it has to make the best that it can of the money that it has available. So the team might have a slightly sharper idea as to how they are going to tackle each one of those individual issues, but, as I say, in general we just have to take the money that we have and make the best of it. I do not know if you want to comment on any of those particular shortfalls as to individual ...

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

I think the numbers will probably just align with my previous statement around our build and our infrastructure estate. We are responsible for a lot of things and to keep those things running and maintained we will constantly highlight pressures. So that is probably not going to be a novel list; there will be another list next year and the year after and the year after because we have a lot of things that we are responsible for and a lot of financial pressures come with that. So we have a duty in one respect to show what those pressures are and then we have a realistic debate about the available funding across Government to meet all of our pressures really, we have a number of things that will always appear. So some of that is income, loss of income, and the budget will expect a

certain amount of income in our facilities, for instance, in sport. We have to say we do not think that income is strong enough at the moment. Can we do anything about that? Some of that may be some property revenue, so that will be maintenance spending in our property buildings and our property estate. So, again, we would ideally like to spend more due to the state of our property. So, again, it is always I guess a push and pull. We always have a big list of pressures and there is only ever so much funding to be dished out.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

That is what I am getting at is, where you put forward proposals without a business case, are you half expecting them not to be accepted and that they are there really to keep the momentum going?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

I think so. The process really is to highlight pressures. Are some of those going to get supported to get into the more detailed business case, it is a bit of a triaging approach to get through the various stages. Certainly my message to the teams that we have, we must always be highlighting the pressures in our business; that is our duty to. If we think we have got risks and we have got pressures we have to highlight those and then the ones that get further into a business case just mean that they get more priority than others. It does not mean to say the other ones are less important, this goes back to the fact there is only ever so much funding and only so much can get funded at once. But I do not think we should stop saying what the issues are.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It does not necessarily mean that they do not get some attention because you can cross-reference some funding. What eventually happens is, if you planned on making 12 months' progress in a given area, you only make 10 months' progress, you have got, effectively, the funding from that to transfer to other areas where you have got pressure. It is basically just fine tuning all the way through.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Yes, Margaret.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

But can I just ask something? In relation to Property Holdings, would you say that the lack of investment in maintenance of property is a false economy?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, I would, I would. I think we have started to make those points known and I think people are starting to listen but it is going to take a while to break down. You cannot instantly go from where

you are to where you need to be. But I think we are really making a very good case for pointing those things out. I know Tim is bursting to pass something ...

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

The Property Department is working very closely with the Treasury in order to try and get a much longer-term view of our estate and to be able to manage it. This year we have just completed a condition survey so that, again, we will have a much more focused understanding of where the issues are. We can then go through a prioritisation process with the tenants or the organisations, Government organisations that work in those buildings, use those buildings, so that we can then start to come up with a list that is not 3 or 4 years long, as the current Government Plan. But we can work with Treasury to look to push a capital programme that looks maybe 20, 25 years hence, so that we know that, say, Quennevais School recently completed, the roof life on that is 30 years. In 25 years' time we can start to look at what we need to do and we can then work out does the roof need replacement, does it need work? As I say, we can get a much smoother profile, a less sort of spiky profile which it also means that when we go to the Treasury and say: "We need this amount of cash", it is not just a general we need it for maintenance. We can give the specifics that it is for this roof, this mechanical and electrical system. But that is the first time that that has been done and it is a detailed process that we are working through.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can I throw in the word Fort Regent and just ask what the status of that is at the moment?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Yes, you may ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Before you do that, Tim, I just want to commend the team because I think it is a very professional approach being taken to the whole business of property management. The condition survey, it is going to be a game-changer in terms of being able to go back to the Treasurer and say: "Here is a very comprehensive breakdown of what we are dealing with and here are the very real costs that are required to keep things in order." I think there is an acceptance of the fact that, as you rightly say, we have been practising false economy for far too long. We have not just got the business of the day to do, we have got some catch-up work as well. But I am very comfortable that the road that the property team are going down is a very professional approach that is going to make very compelling reading for everybody, for the Assembly as well and it is something we have got to face up. Sorry, Tim, you wanted to talk about ...

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

As to Fort Regent, there is 2 sort of approaches, the external area, which we are very keen to open up for sort of amenity use for the public. We are going through a process of understanding what the health and safety issues are and to be able to do that. The other angle is the internal space and that is being looked after by the Jersey Development Company at the moment. They have done an initial survey of the roof, which indicated that the lattice structure that supports the fabric is safe. The next step of investigation will determine what we do with the Fort and where we go with it is the assessment of the skin, which also has a structural element to it. It is a listed building. In order to assess the state of that material we need to drill holes in it and we are currently waiting for permission from the Planning Department because it is listed to be able to carry out that investigative work. As soon as we get it we will do the work and we will be in a much better position to understand what our options are. It may be that the material is fine, in which case we have got another maybe 10, 20 years or so. It may be that the material will need complete replacement; in which case that is going to be a huge bill, in which case we then need to think, would we take the roof away or would we replace it? At the moment we are waiting for the crossroads for decision-making.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think it is important to say that I think even the steel work, we have identified that it is very structurally sound but it still needs a treatment process, if I am not incorrect. I need to say this openly, there seems to be a lot of confusion about Fort Regent and it is almost as if we have closed it down and thrown sport out just to be awkward; nothing can be further from the truth. The building is some 50 years old and it needs a complete refurbishment. The electrics are worn out, the plumbing is worn out and so a lot of asbestos sitting in there ...

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Fire safety is worn out, there are risks in pretty much all ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Everything has reached the end of its useful life and it just needs a complete refurbishment. Unless and until we know exactly what is required, we cannot do anything. It is a long period of decanting because we have got to make sure that everybody has moved out to appropriate premises, then we have got to look at the condition survey when it is all complete and decide exactly what we are going to do, how much it is going to cost as well. There is no printing machine that is going to give us the money for that and it is going to be expensive.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay, okay. But, again, getting this next assessment, what sort of timeframe are we looking at before you might receive the assessment on which you can make some meaningful proposals?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

We are waiting for approval from the Planning Department to be able to drill holes so that we can come up with that assessment.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay, I will leave it at that.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is listed and you want to protect it and yet there is a reluctance to let you do what you need to do to find out what it requires but such is life.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay. Going back to the business case one, has the Assembly seen the business case? That is only in your time, I get the impression that they put in more in hope and to keep the projects alive than the expectation of being granted. If they are not going to be covered perhaps in a year, what hope or expectation do you have of them being prioritised in the next Government Plan?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

You are talking about the areas where we have not managed to get the funding and across the piece.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Yes, well this case ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

As I say, depending on how you manage other areas, you can put a certain amount of money towards those projects to bring them forward to the extent that you need to keep them live. As I say, with this annual funding it is quite a juggling act and one could argue that it would be easier to have a 4-year programme and I will just note if that is something that we might revisit in the fullness of time because it strikes me we spend an awful lot of time doing that.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

That is where you were at one stage as well, is it not?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

You have not finished embedding the last lot and you are starting on the next round and it does not really allow for a great deal of long-term planning, so just one of the things that is apparent to me. I

have been in the post now for some 18 months, so that is something we should look at to avoid exactly what you are talking about. This is sort of a pot luck ...

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Moving on to the second item for me: "The delivery of the fleet decarbonisation programme, including electric vehicle infrastructure and the replacement of petrol and diesel vehicles with alternatives wherever practical." That is your aim in the plan. How far down the line are we with that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There are various elements and I do not know if you want to speak a little bit about the standard fleet, then we can move, presumably, on to buses because that might be something we want to discuss as well.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Yes, I think we have got a good message too, as an Island vehicles and buildings are the biggest carbon producers that we have, so clearly as a Government department that does vehicles and buildings we are in the centre stage here. We have been doing quite a lot of work, really positive work in our fleet management arm around different fuel types. We have been introducing second generation renewable diesel into our commercial vehicles and other vehicles, so that has been very positive. We have also got a number of electric vehicles as well. But the biggest carbon gains have been through fuel-switching, through second gen renewable diesel. Some of those targets have been met already on that. I guess what the Government Plan is highlighting, that is currently a more expensive fuel type than traditional diesel, so hence there is a financial pressure to keep doing that.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

I think it was a reply on an earlier question that one of the matters put in the Government Plan without a business case was the renewable diesel funding uplift and if that has not been approved, how can you achieve your aims without necessary growth funding or are you getting growth funding from other sources?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

I think there is a conversation then about we have got to keep an eye on what the market is doing in that fuel. At the moment it is more expensive than traditional fuels. There is an expectation, as more of it gets used and produced, that price will come down. At the moment we are going to see a financial pressure there, so if we cannot meet that financial pressure we will probably have to revert more to a cheaper fuel again, which is the traditional fuel. But that is the current balance we have got, whether we can find funds from elsewhere within the department reprioritising or are there any other carbon-reduction funds available to carry that work on?

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay. Moving on and it is something which has surely been touched on, we feel and hope that the ministerial plan refers to: "We would change the approach of Jersey Property Holdings to adopt a more financially sustainable model that will enable it to act more commercially across the Government of Jersey estate, including retention of property sale proceeds and the purchase of strategically important property assets." Are you able to explain in more detail what that entails and where we are in the general scheme of things?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

In the first instance with the move into the new office, we are getting rid of all the rented buildings that we currently use. But there are 2, Maritime House and Jubilee Wharf that we currently own, at the moment the intention is to take those on commercially and rent them out, find a tenant and use the proceeds to then come back to the property team to invest in maintenance or whatever to use that we might come up with. That has been discussed with the Council of Ministers and approved and we are in the process, as we move to the new office, of making that happen. Then more broadly we are also looking at the consolidation of areas of the estate that are currently outside of the control of Property Holdings, bits and pieces of the estate that are controlled by Home Affairs and the Health Department. Again, using the property that we own, taking the income from those, the rental income or what have you and, again, keeping that within Property Holdings as a sort of a quid pro quo for that.

[11:45]

Because at the moment there are certain areas of the estate that perhaps are not receiving the maintenance attention and are not necessarily compliant with the various statutory regulatory requirements. We will make sure that they are compliant, again using the economies of scale, maybe synergies from the rest of the estate to ensure that that happens and turning the rent then back into the operation of the department. It is early stages and it is going in some way to mitigate the underfunding that we currently experience. It will never cover the whole requirement but at least we are starting to show that we can make progress and we are making progress.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay. Going back to my earlier about the matters which did not get approval in the Government Plan, one was J.P.H. revenue. Is it fair to say that the proposed retention of property sale proceeds is an alternative way of funding what you want to do?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

It is not an alternative but it will certainly contribute to that delta. I think one of other points that we are also trying to make to the Treasury and also into the capital project world is at the moment, certainly for property projects, there is a great deal of examination of the cost of delivery of the project. The business case seems never to look at the running, occupation and ownership costs. We are working to try and make sure that part of the capital bid acknowledges that if we have a new premises, a new office, a new facility, that the moment that it is delivered our obligations do not stop and that there should be a concomitant allegation or recognition of revenue to come to Property Holdings so that we can then maintain the structures.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay, no, thank you. Moving on slightly, we know that: “£2.5 million is requested in the Government Plan for major refurbishments and upgrades to key priorities and that these properties will be identified further from the outcome of the public estate condition survey.” What progress has been made on that survey as a whole and will it in fact identify the particular projects?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Absolutely. The survey is pretty much complete and we are in the process of co-ordinating the information and then taking that information to give us that prioritised list. That prioritisation is something that we are looking to start in the first quarter of next year. But until we get that sort of synthesised list we will not be able to identify where the areas are. I think we are already aware that we have got a lot of work to do for fire mitigation across the public estate, not just schools but across the estate. There are also issues like the provision of energy performance schedules that we are required to produce. I will say there will be a number of issues that we know we will have to attend to.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

I was just thinking about how does the Lido and Havre des Pas figure in that or is that going to be dealt with separately outside the ...

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

There is already a sum of money that has been allocated within the Government Plan to the superstructure, to the walls and to the functioning of the Lido as a swimming pool. Again, once we understand how much cash we have got, that will give us a better understanding of what we can do.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

I think it is going to be, I guess, as part of the answer, that the revenue we do have within Property Holdings for property maintenance gets solely focused on any urgent matters, health and safety or urgent repairs to keep a building running. There is none added for betterment of buildings. We will

be having very, I think, interesting conversations around the results of the condition survey and the available funds we have to invest in our properties. The vast majority of our estate is in use and will remain in use. We sell very little property because the vast majority of it is in public service use and will remain so. The pressure in that estate is not going to go away if we are to maintain and keep running public services. Yes, the ability to sell much to reinvest is quite limited.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

You have got to bear in mind that a lot of the property, like the Lido, is just, effectively, a money pit. The amount of maintenance for a building that sits in the middle of the sea, effectively, to keep it wind and watertight against the rent that it can generate and the toilets have to be opened and closed every evening and kept secure. The rent pretty much pays for the facilities management company to come and open the doors and close them again, so that is the sort of position that we are in; it is a very awkward one in reality. You touched on strategic property purchase and that is probably worth making mention that that is something that we are looking to try and do. That is why we are trying to withhold revenues from sale proceeds, so that when we are looking to the complex business of doing things like redoing the blue light services and giving them new premises, if we have not got the ability to buy property that is required to fulfil that in advance, then you cannot move off the starting blocks. It is really a case of taking us from where we are to another place where people recognise what it is that we do and how we have to go about it to make it function properly so that things can get done in a timely fashion. Does that make sense?

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Thank you. Yes, it does, yes. My final question in this area, it goes back to liquid waste, which we have touched on already. The plan requests funding for an initial investment of £15.6 million I think for 2024 and 2025 in liquid waste key infrastructure. Can you elaborate please on what precisely this initial funding will cover in terms of key priorities which have been identified?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There is a priority, I will hand that back to you, Ellen, because I know that you have got a better day-to-day knowledge of what you are doing than I have.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

It is a mix of projects, so the £15 million will be spent on doing some rising main replacement, particularly Le Dicq because we are looking at that. We are also going to be looking at storage works, so starting the design work and into construction. Initially it was St. Peter's and airport strategic storage and getting design work done for that, West Hill that we have spoken about, I think, in the last meeting and also the Maufant strategic storage area. A lot of work is going on design, looking at suitable sites, how that could possibly work with further construction in future years.

Another drainage project that is within there is also the West Park Service Water Outfall and, again, looking at how we split the found surface for that area, so it is another project.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

How about Maufant, is that ...

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Yes, Maufant strategic storage is one of the areas that we are looking at, design is certainly doing that work within 2024 with the construction moving forward, subject to us getting funding in 2026 and onwards.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

It is subject to funding in the future then, yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Okay. Have the sites for the strategic storage been identified?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

A number of different sites are being looked at, at the moment, so we are just looking at the feasibility of those to coming up with a preferred site and we will be continuing that work next year.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

In terms of the timeline for implementation and what I am thinking is certainly with the St. Peter's work, at what point could spades go in the ground for the building of the additional homes, as approved in the Island Plan?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

St. Peter's and airport strategic storage, we would hope to be starting construction in quarter 2 2025, so doing the design of the planning appraisal and things that we need to do prior to that. Ideally that and then, hopefully, complete by the end of 2026.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Right. Would the other areas you mentioned, such as Maufant, West Hill, would they have been the same ...

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Maufant would be sooner, so we would be hoping to start at the end of 2024 with Maufant and that will be one of the ones that we bring forward sooner than later on that side. West Hill, start again

some of the construction in 2025, move them on again into 2026, subject to us getting the funding. Our challenge is as much as we have got funding for 2024, 2025 is we cannot sign off on the contracts until you know that you have got the money longer term. Again, we will soon be having further conversations about how we are going to get that money, I think, in future years.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, it needs a longer-term plan, as you suggested earlier. Just in terms of the detail, work has started at Beaumont, is that connected with the St. Peter's project?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

That is more to do with our infrastructure rolling-vote money. At the moment, as you know, we have got test holes at Beaumont just to look at opportunities of how we can do more separation around that area but it is very challenging, as you know. Again, once we have done the test holes and done some more work, again, we will be looking at schemes to see how we can take the pressure off Beaumont within our surface water that is going out.

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

Yes, it is surface water separation from the foul.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Okay. Can I just pick up on a couple of points before we move on in terms of property really? The first question was your department recently finished, I presume, Piquet House across the road here. What is the status of that now, is it let?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I have to say I do not know, so ...

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

It is currently in use by Victim Support, an element of the Home Affairs Department. They are using it in anticipation of the new Sexual Assault Referral Centre that is being constructed. It is in use and is in use by a Government department who transfer funds to us for the occupation.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

You get a return from that department.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The last question I have in that area is what we call the Energy from Waste plant now, the incinerator, is now 13 years old, at what point do you anticipate planning for its replacement?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think it is safe to say that those discussions have already started and we have recognised that we have to have a long-term plan. As I say, very much in its infancy our discussions but we have recognised that that needs to be replaced.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Good. Thank you. Deputy Le Hegarat, over to you.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Yes. We are now on to Shoreline Management Plan feasibility for Havre des Pas. Minister, we note that feasibility during funding of £542,000 will be sought in the next 2025 Government Plan for Havre des Pas Shoreline Management Scheme; the first of the shoreline plans identified protecting that area of St. Helier from flooding. What was the rationale for not seeking approval for this feasibility study to be done sooner, as in 2024?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not know whether that is work pressure partly and partly due to the fact that you know that you are only going to get so much money and you have got to prioritise your requests. I do not know if you want to elaborate a little bit more on that, Tristan, but ...

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

I cannot answer the exact part of your question about seeking approval but we have put together a strategic outline case which was submitted to Treasury, which sets out the funding profile we need. That is going to be funded from 2025, although we are looking to support that with some internal funding, so we are continuing work in 2024. This is a large and strategic project which will protect the most vulnerable part of the Island in terms of households from flooding, particularly from the one-in-200-year storm, which could cause significant property damage and also disruption to the Island's hotels, businesses, et cetera and having to accommodate people, et cetera, who will be displaced by a flooding event like that.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Okay, so there is money going in 2024.

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

Yes, we are spending some of the department's money to ensure that the work that we have undertaken already keeps moving and we do not lose momentum.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Okay. Has Storm Ciaran in any way highlighted whether feasibility should perhaps be prioritised and brought forward or do you think that has changed?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is another thing that we discussed recently is that a one-in-200-year event we think you are sort of off the hook for it but it could happen at any time. In an ideal world we would be doing more of that work now but, like I say, unfortunately, limited income, you have to prioritise and that is where the Havre des Pas one area is the area of the greatest priority, so that is the first on the list. That is why the feasibility work is quite complicated, it is quite a big project and it will take time to plan. The planning is underway and we recognise that we have got to move on that as quickly as we can.

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

We have got a team who are working on it and assured the public and we have communications next year sometime in 2024, first half to middle of 2024. We are also of course looking at what we can do to mitigate the risk in the meanwhile and what you saw during Storm Ciaran with the one-tonne bags is one way of doing that. Where the Havre des Pas area was not tested for leaks, the wind changed direction. They were definitely proven useful at West Park and they held back quite a head of water. When we got all the flow past, we know where to place them. It is just a question of having sufficient warning, you need 2 days' warning to be able to get ourselves prepared.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think it is safe to say that the high risk will be with the very high tide with storms and you have usually got some warning of that. I will say that from what the evidence that was shown to me that the one-tonne bag situation could be a game-changer in terms of helping to look after Havre des Pas while the planning is going through its stages.

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

We have gone through the Met history and we are working with the Met office in coming-up scenarios. We will be better prepared in terms of flagging up when these areas will be at risk and that is a bit of work that is going on at the moment.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think it is fair to say, if I can just come in there, the deployment of the one-tonne bags was really effective. I think the team that did that should be recognised because it, I think, had a marked difference.

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

I think on that as well it was not reactive.

[12:00]

Because we had undertaken the Shoreline Management Plan we knew the flow paths of the water and so we knew where the interventions were needed. That is certainly part of the Shoreline Management Plan, is to look at where we can get in floodgates, at the top of slipways and other areas that are vulnerable to increasing the risk of coastal and inundation.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

You mentioned ironically just West Park, we understand that West Park is another area that is identified for concern. When is it likely that the feasibility funding for this project will be sought?

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

It is all within the strategic outlined case.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have got a complete case, for how long is it? What period does it cover?

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

It is 120 pages.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, and what period does it cover? It covers about 50 years, does it not? You have got those, yes, there is ...

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

Yes, it covers the next depôt which is the 50 years going forward because we are talking about a one-in-200-year storm at the moment, next year is slightly less; every year that probability increases.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Given the last one was 1987 to 2023, that is slightly less, is it not? So, 36 years.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Okay. We spoke at our last quarterly hearing about the issues with funding such large and expensive projects such as coastal adaption works, as well as competing priorities with other important projects to the capital programme. Are you any further forward with talks as to how to manage funding of these projects outside of sort of multiple other competing priorities?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am not quite sure how to answer that one. Other than the fact that I think you can probably gather from all the work that is being done and the fact that we are getting a steady increase, firstly, in our budget and, secondly, in the flexibility in the way in which we can work, it is a steady progress and we are ramping it up. You cannot go from A to Z overnight. I think we are making a good case for what we do and we are continually putting pressure on and try and find innovative ways of doing some self-funding in terms of property sales and so on and sort of tweaking the Treasury to recognise that systematically they have got to keep providing a little bit more money.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

We note in the Shoreline Management Plan that: "For coastal defence projects where adaptive management would advance the line measures that are required that defence schemes will be constructed by 2040." How achievable is this timescale?

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

Shall I speak?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

You answer that one, it is tricky.

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

Yes. No, we believe it is achievable and what we have done is we have looked to profile the work so we can create a sustained industry. What we have looked with the schemes is so that obviously it is an engineering part of the Island, construction industry is going to have to build up its resources that will be maybe a project following a project. Hopefully the work we managed on Island by on-Island contractors and they will have a continual stream of work because it is not the same skills as required in housing construction. You have got to build those, develop them and then keep them in there and keep them working basically.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There will be plenty to keep everybody busy I think, some sizeable programme.

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

Yes, we have definitely looked at sort of resourcing within the programme.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Okay. New Government headquarters, we note from your 2024 ministerial plan that it is your intention to deliver the new Government headquarters by mid-2024. Can you update us on the progress you are making?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

My understanding is a little bit of damage in the recent storm but I think we had a few weeks, we are a few weeks ahead of programme. I think what we have done is we have eaten those weeks up in relation to the damage that has been caused and we are back on track. I know Andy is sort of closer to the project, he can give you a bit more detail.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Yes, from a headline perspective and Tim is involved in more detail, the project is on track to deliver what we need for that date next summer, ready for our occupation in a series of moves, sort of from September onwards for Government. The project at a headline level is still on track.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

But I think it is worth making the point that the building will be ready but there is also a huge amount of work going on behind the scenes to make sure that we will be able to occupy it and use it effectively. The intention is to reduce paperwork, is to increase efficiency of interworking. There is lots of meeting rooms, lots of bike space, lots of dry rooms and showers. But all of this is, if you like, a bit of a departure from the way that we currently operate. There is a very thorough readiness programme that is going through with each department, assessing ways of working, new ways of working and how we can optimise. The building, we are increasingly confident, will be ready. We are also increasingly confident that we will be able to occupy it and to optimise its use.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Okay, thank you. Obviously you have just talked about the storm, has there been any inflationary costs or shortage of construction workers in relation to this project?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Scaffolding, if you had a scaffolding firm then you are doing very well.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Okay.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

It is also important, so the cost of the building is being borne by the developer. They are contracted to build it for us; that is what the contract requires. We have an election price to purchase or continue renting, so that deal has already been done. What is happening in the market is for the contractor to manage.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Okay.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Just touching on the storms, just probably worth mentioning the cost to this department and just the sort of tree clearance and so on, it is probably going to come in at somewhere approaching £500,000.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

On a revenue side and probably £500,000 at least ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes. I think it might be worth flagging that up publicly.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

I am surprised it is as little as that, I thought it was going to probably be a lot more.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is without the property damage and Tim can fill you in on that too but that is insured; that is the difference.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Yes. I think there is 2 areas, the majority of the property damage, we are confident with working with the Government insurers and we will be able to make a claim. But stuff like the tree clearance and the operational work I understand is not so ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is not insured, that is going to hit our budget quite severely.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Will you be selling the firewood, Minister?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not think we will get £500,000 for it.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Though the question is and I do know the answer to this but the trees belonged to somebody and you have cleared them because it is main roads, would that charge be to the landowner or the owner of the trees and then they, therefore, can claim off the insurance or does that not work?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not think you can insure trees falling into the road. I have certainly never even looked at it because I do not think it is possible. The practical business of trying to get people to reclaim their timber, a disaster of that sort it is really not going to happen, is it? We are where we are and we have got to accept that.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Because our responsibility was clearing the roads, what we generally do it is where possible leave the trees for the landowner because it is their trees, so it is ...

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

Just to add to what Ellen said, if I recall correctly what the law says is you have got to give the landowner an opportunity to clear the road. We obviously were not in a position to do that, so I think they have got a ...

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Because it is their ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, but I do not think anybody has particularly moaned and so it would probably cost them a lot more to have it done and chopped up and dealt with than the timber would be worth.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Sorry, Chair, before we leave the question of Government H.Q. (headquarters), remind us where we are with how it dovetails in with the present premises occupied? Will that be automatically immediately vacated and are we, therefore, saving money on that side of things straightaway?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

There is the strategic business case, effectively, is just shy of £6 million a year revenue-saving from the move; that is per annum. That is basically made up of us generally getting out of buildings that we are currently renting and the property and the utility costs associated with those moves going into a new, modern, purpose-built more energy efficient building saves us a lot of money. Yes, when the leases are available to be broken, in Tim's team they have got a whole host of leases. They will be exited when we can and when we go into that new building.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

A total of £2,361,000 in funding is requested for this project in 2024 in the proposed Government Plan, can you break down for us what this will cover in relation to remaining works?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I can do, we have got the costs here. I can read them out but I think it is easier if Andy talks through this ...

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Just the final, the project team costs this at just over £400,000. There is some money left for the moves because we have got to move. Effectively, we are moving the workplace of 2,100 staff into that building, so there is just over £500,000 for that; all of those moves. Then we have got about £1.4 million around the technology solution needed inside the building from a client perspective. The contractor, the developer is building the building, that is their requirement and then we have obviously got to plug a lot of things in to the building as the client internally, so the big number there is probably the I.T. (information technology) implications.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Can I just ask the question, I do not know if you know the answer to this, how many people were moved out of Cyril Le Marquand House in its original form?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

That is a good question, there is probably in the 100s, I would say is probably about 400. I do not know if we have got ...

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

I think it was 550-odd.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

We only had 500 people in the old Cyril Le Marquand House and we are now going to have just over 2,000.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Yes, although the old footprint was a lot smaller, so the new site is, effectively, utilising all of the proper ratio is better than what Cyril Le Marquand's efficiency was.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Through the years as the Government evolved we had rented various buildings and it now makes sense, I think as Andy said, we will terminate all those leases and focus on a single building to maintain and operate, which will be cheaper and easier.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Okay, thank you.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What about the consequences on that part of town with an additional significant number of people suddenly working in one building in terms of road infrastructure, parking, you mentioned bicycles but I mean if they are not walking be on bicycles?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

I guess as a whole, if we look at town as a whole, most of those staff, 90-odd per cent of those staff are already based in town. They are already travelling to town and they are already coming into St. Helier. It is a redistribution of them, so there is going to be more people at that end of town. What we will then see is some of these other buildings used for other purposes or other uses or other tenants and I think we will just see a bit of a push and a pull. But the total number of trips from Government into town will generally be the same as it is now. The building does not have an operational car park, it has cycle storage and will be relying on staff to travel to St. Helier as they are currently doing already, effectively, so ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There will be a significant intensification of footfall; that is for sure.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

There will, yes, yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes. Moving on to the other interesting subject of the Healthcare Facilities Programme, will further information on the cost range of the completed new Healthcare Facilities Programme be provided to States Members to inform their decision-making on the funding that is being requested in the Government Plan to continue the delivery approach that has been chosen?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is a tricky one. I think we have already given out quite a lot of information because what we have said is what we intend to spend over the span of this Government period. We have broken it down by year, so one knows what is required in each year. We have stated that what is going to be delivered during the course of that time and that includes the completion of the acute hospital, save for £35 million which will be in the 2028, which is just the way the programme works is that a finalised piece that requires £35 million to finish it and what we have described as significant progress towards the development of the 2 other sites. What we had been trying to do all along is be open and honest about the amount of money that the public are going to be required to put into the scheme, without raising a big banner telling contractors how much money is available for each section. It has been a very delicate and slightly controversial balancing act because we, as a team, do not want to be hiding anything, why would we? We have got no incentive to do that. What we are trying to do is get best use for the taxpayers' money and that is a tricky one. If anybody can advise how we can go about that in a more constructive way I am all ears. As I say, why would we want to hide anything from anybody? I think it is quite obvious that there is a whole programme of works over 10 or 11 years and you can work out from the square meterage what you are going to get for your money to a point over the course of it. You can extrapolate that and make some suggestions about what the remainder of the programme is going to cost. I do not think we are hiding anything. I think it is sort of ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Going to the Government Plan's approval, what information do you feel might be helpful for States Members before they approve to commit further public funds to start the first phase of the programme?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Sadly, I will keep coming back to this. I get what you are saying, look, we have told you how much it is going to cost, we tell you that it is going to deliver a complete acute hospital and somewhere will have taken place to bring the other 2 projects forward. When you start being more specific than that the only way you can be more specific is say, well, this is how much we are putting into that and by virtue of that you will be able to work out exactly what the acute hospital costs and that we are putting

a flag up. I say that those sums of money, they include money for inflation and for contingency. The way the team is working and the fact that they are keeping the development of this very much in house, they have not brought in a second partner that is bringing in a lot of overhead at this point in time, we are going to come in under budget at every stage of this, unless something goes violently wrong. As I say, it is a very frugal approach to the whole project and I am hoping that we will come in below those numbers at every stage.

[12:15]

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Projecting forward and you made clear the process with the acute areas being developed, when it comes to the ambulatory side of Gloucester Street and possibly the St. Saviour side, is it fair to say that you do not really know what the costs are going to be at this point?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, we do not. What I will say is that an acute hospital is going to be considerably more expensive per square metre by virtue of the type of buildings that are required. You have got individual hospital bed rooms because there is going to be a lot of individual rooms rather than wards. You have got operating theatres, you have got a lot of very expensive M. & E. (monitoring and evaluation) equipment and temperature-control equipment. An ambulatory building, which is not open overnight and does not have anybody staying in overnight, is going to be a cheaper construction cost. The other thing to be clear about is that I think we will always need hospital beds and we will always need operating theatres. But what we are told by the health team is that the area that is likely to change over the course of time is the ambulatory side of things in terms of the facilities that are required. What is quite useful for us is that while we are focusing on the acute, we do not have to do quite so much work on the ambulatory. We can accommodate those changes more readily as we go forward, given that that is the second stage of the work. I hope that makes some sense.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Indeed. Can you just clarify whether it is your intention or the intention of the programme to replace all Jersey's healthcare facilities in time?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think the programme that we have got pretty much does that, yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Right, okay.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

We do not often have a short spell on hospitals ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Sorry?

The Connétable of St. Mary:

We do not often have a short discussion about hospitals ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, no, I was going to say, is that all we are going to get? That is fine by me.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

A very brief one, our Sustainable Transport Roadmap, I gather it is in the course of being prepared for publication, can you advise when it will be published?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have got a next steps document, which I think could probably come out before Christmas. I think it was virtually complete, so that will be out in the next few weeks, yes.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Related to that, the Government Plan has a price for feasibility funding at £285,000 for a cycling and walking infrastructure delivery programme. Can you elaborate on the scope of that feasibility study, please?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We will hand that on to Tristan because it is more detailed.

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

Out of that, the document we were talking about before through Active Travel and Mobility Plan, there is various routes that are identified where we could accommodate segregated cycling routes and improvement to cycling and walking. The feasibility will be around the actual delivery of that. These are sort of calculated using all-in rates that we have got from elsewhere and then we have inflated for Jersey inflation costs. But until you start getting into the detail you do not really know what your costs for individual pieces of work will be.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Will that study feed into the publication we are going to receive before Christmas?

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

No, within the publication that you will receive is the routes and the outlying costs of them. When you said there was money in for feasibility I was surprised because I did not think we had any funding in the Government Plan. I was just wondering which number you were referring ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is what had confused me; that is why I handed over to you because it did not tally with what the discussion we had earlier.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Sorry, what I have here is: "The Government Plan provides feasibility funding of £285,000 ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It might be what we asked for.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

... for the cycling and walking infrastructure delivery programme."

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

Yes, so that money would be exactly for what I described, is to take those concepts and to turn them into plans, effectively, or start to turn them into plans.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

That is distinct from the plan that ...

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

The carbon neutral funding.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Yes, okay, thank you.

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

Yes, yes.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Moving on, commercial vehicles, again a quick question, what is the status on the commercial vehicle operating licensing regime, given that some concerns have been expressed?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

You are talking about the overall, the M.O.T. (Ministry of Transport) programme, the wider thing.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Yes, primarily, yes, and on the commercial side, yes.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

On the commercial side vehicle operators' licences.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Yes, the vehicles operating, yes.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, that turned out to be a little bit more controversial than I had expected. I called a meeting of the industry and I was expecting to have half a dozen people turn up. It was at St. Clement's Parish Hall and when I arrived there was a stream of people, I think we had 80 angry people hollering and bellowing at me. What I did is I thought well we cannot go down that road with everybody as discontent as that. I suggested that we form an industry representative body because they do not appear to have one. What I suggested to them is 2 small operators, 2 medium, 2 large and we held an election. We have now got 6 people represented around the table. We have mapped out where our initial starting point was. We have had 2 meetings, the first one was a little bit exciting because I think it just was good to give people a chance to let off a bit of steam. Once that was done the second meeting became much more constructive and what I basically said is: "Look, here is what we are trying to do, you take it away, you look at it and you come back with a document that you think you can work with." I know that is just a slightly unorthodox way of going about things but I think if you are going to do something like this you cannot impose a situation on people that is unworkable and a lot of those are small businesses. We are now going through a process of trying to meet in the middle. What is it that we can accept and what is it that they can do without putting excess pressure on them? It is just basically a pragmatic way of trying to improve the safety of vehicles on the road without causing chaos. The document as we had it required a great frequency of checks and ...

The Connétable of St. Mary:

That was the point I was really getting at, the inflationary effect on the operating ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, because I am reasonably close to this area of things, as I know there is a very big shortfall of people that can work on some of these vehicles. There are some very practical problems. As I say, I think we have developed a constructive dialogue and a process that I think will deliver something that is workable for all parties; that is the hope.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

There are sort of timelines ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are just going as quickly as we can.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

With the co-operation of the operators ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, I think it is fair to say that they have been taken a little bit by surprise, basically saying you cannot do this, what can you do? I think that puts the onus on them to be reasonable and come back with something that makes sense. I genuinely think we will make good progress on it.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay, yes. I am finished on that, Chair.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Good. I am going to bring this meeting to a conclusion because I know we have got a presentation following fairly soon on. Minister and your team, thank you very much for coming and presented today. We will note what you have said and we will be talking to you further in due course. Thank you very much.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Great, thank you all.

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

Thank you.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Cheers, thank you very much.

[12:22]