



Environment Housing and Infrastructure Panel

Quarterly Public Hearing

Witness: The Minister for Infrastructure

Wednesday, 8th May 2024

Panel:

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

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

Deputy A Curtis of St. Clement

Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South

Connétable D. Johnson of St. Mary

Witnesses:

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

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

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

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

Mr. R. Buchholz, Head of Corporate Property Strategy

[11:00]

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

Today is 8th May 2024 and it is our first hearing.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Thank you.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

First, I would like to draw everyone's attention to the following, so this hearing will be filmed and streamed live, and the recording and transcript will be published after this on the States Assembly website. All electronic devices, including mobile phones, should be switched off to silence please. I would ask that any members of the public who joined us in the room today to not interfere in the proceedings and as soon as the hearing is closed please leave quietly. For the purpose of the recording and transcript, I would be grateful if everyone could speak to ensure that you state your name and role when you are speaking and we have been advised to keep the microphones as close to you as possible because that is when you are speaking, and I know some are sharing microphones, so if you could just keep them as close to you as possible so they are picked up. So first we will do some introductions. The Panel will start. So my name is Deputy Hilary Jeune, and I'm Chair of the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure.

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

Deputy Tom Coles, Vice-Chair.

Deputy A Curtis of St. Clement:

Deputy Alex Curtis.

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

Deputy David Warr.

Connétable D. Johnson of St. Mary:

David Johnson, Constable of St. Mary.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Connétable Andy Jehan, the Minister for Infrastructure.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Andy Scate, the Chief Officer for Infrastructure and Environment.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Ellen Littlechild, the Group Director for Operations and Transport.

Head of Corporate Property Strategy:

Ralph Buchholz, Head of Property Strategy, Jersey Property Holdings.

Director, Transport, Highway and Infrastructure:

Tristan Dodd, Head of Highways, Transport and Infrastructure.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank very much. We have got a lot of questions for you today, Minister, so we will get cracking and hope we can finish by 12.30. So the first opening questions are about the Common Strategic Policy and which was published by the Council of Ministers earlier this month. Please could you describe to the panel how the Common Strategic Policy supports your own ministerial priorities.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, there is one area in my area of responsibility, which is around delivering a plan to revitalise town. That is the key, one of the 12 areas. We could have had a number. We could have had liquid waste. We could have had solid waste. We could have had seashore defences included in that list. But I think the 3 that I have just mentioned, we have to do, they are not nice to have, they are essential for us, whether that is to prevent flooding, whether that is to ensure we have got adequate drainage, or we can manage our solid waste. So those are not aspirational, those are must do. So the public realm in town is, we think we need to join things up. We think that we can improve the public realm in town. There is some good work going on in La Motte Street, for example, Halkett Street, which is a joint programme with the Parish of St. Helier. But we do believe we could do more and we hope that we can do that. The markets are also included in that vision and the Constable of St. Helier is, as the Assistant Minister is leading on that and we have got some exciting plans for a western bus gateway, which will enable buses heading to the west of the Island to avoid some of the traffic and join the westbound traffic at Gloucester Street rather than from the bus station. We are looking at New Cut and Broad Streets as 2 other areas that we hope to do in the near future.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister. You just were talking about you mentioned the markets and that is something that the Panel has had discussions on and we are wondering if have you had any plans for the current tenants, what is your plans for the current tenants regarding the market?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, we have got people currently on short-term leases. We are looking to get people on leases which are more appropriate. We are working with the market traders. We are also working very closely with Sustainable Economic Development. My personal view is that the markets sit more with that area than with Property Holdings, although Property Holdings do a good job in terms of managing leases, I think there is far more that can be done with the markets. So the fact that the Constable of St. Helier and I are both Assistant Ministers at Sustainable Economic Development helps us work more closely together. So, yes, we have got a lot happening there and I should have offered the Constable of St. Helier's apologies this morning because he would have been able to tell you what happened at their last meeting and we have got regular meetings with the market traders

and we think we can do some things in the short term, medium term, and longer term, which will include improvements for the customers. We want to make it an experience going to the market, but also recognising the traditions that we have there.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. You mentioned that in this Common Strategic Policy you are focusing is the revitalisation of town, but do you feel that that shared vision of the whole Common Strategic Policy will provide you with the backing you need to fund your priorities that you mentioned other areas in the next 2 years?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think there is wide understanding among the Council of Ministers that infrastructure needs investment, whether that is drains, whether that is shoreline management, whether that is the roads that we drive along, whether it is the new hospital which is not currently sitting under infrastructure, but the properties generally do. So I think there is an understanding from the Council of Ministers that we have to do those things. We are going to talk, I hope, about active travel later on, perhaps. But there is lots of work that we can do. It does not all have to be expensive, and we are looking at ways that we can streamline processes and the team will working really hard on that.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

The Chief Minister has been quite clear that the Common Strategic Policy is very much about what can be delivered in the next 2 years. Do you think that also at the same time there is that long-term vision and what level of support, if infrastructure is, as you have said, it is much longer than 2 years.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

In my experience, if you keep looking at your boots, which is 2 years, you are going to fall over. So you have got to look at the horizon. You have got to look where you are going as well. But if you want to get things done, then I always use the adage, what gets measured gets done. So I think there is urgency. I think there is energy to deliver things in the short term. But infrastructure, the team here have been here far longer than I have, but they are always looking at the future. They are always looking, whether that is drainage, whether that is rising sea levels, whether that is the road network, whether it is the buildings, they have always got to look to the future, but they have to be mindful of the immediate future as well.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. Part of the Common Strategic Policy was about delivering affordable homes. That was one of the key elements. How will you work with other Ministers, especially specifically the Ministers

for Environment and Housing, in order to play a part in delivering this affordable housing priority for the next 2 years?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I think we are already doing that and I meet regularly with both of those Ministers. We have got to make sure that the road network information that is fed back in a timely manner, that the drainage information is fed back in a timely manner, so that the planning decisions can be made in that manner. I think we are going to talk about liquid waste later. So perhaps I will talk more detail about that then. But the whole team are very conscious of the need that we have rezoned sites and we have got to be able to deliver them. Only yesterday I was at a meeting with officers where we were talking about one of those sites and the challenges on getting traffic on to the main road, not insurmountable challenges, but the team are working hard on those.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Yes. I think that is one of our concerns as a panel is that under the heading in the Common Strategic Policy about delivering affordable homes, it is focused on rented dwellings rather than the delivery of the rezoned housing and the challenges around that that you are talking about. What level, and this is where we are concerned, is what level of priority can this be given?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think some of that is just seen as business as usual. So, if a developer is looking to submit plans and they need information from the highways team, that is seen as business as usual. If we have got a potential development of multiple homes, then I am hoping that the team are giving that priority over a single unit because we get the bigger gain from that. But, in general, I have been really pleased with the response of the team and that goes right across the team, whether that is highways or whether that is drainage.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

So do you believe that there can be delivery of these rezoned housing sites as quickly as possible, putting all these together? Really, the main question here is, is it realistic that greenfield sites can be used to construct housing with all these concerns or elements that are kind of blocking being able to develop the rezoned housing as quickly as we can?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I think we have got some terrific engineers working for us, absolutely talented people, and I believe that they are going to come up with the schemes. I think you have got a briefing later this morning about financing, providing we have got the financial resource, then I am very confident that the team can deliver.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. I think moving on to another area that we saw was not part of the Common Strategic Policy is the climate emergency and the carbon neutral road map. Of course, in sitting within you and your remit and that is something that you have mentioned is adaptation to climate change. Can you explain a little bit about the rationale for leaving the climate emergency out of the Common Strategic Policy?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I think the list could have been 120 rather than 12, and I think we are working hard, the teams are working hard, whether that is with active transport, whether that is with recycling, whether that is, as I have mentioned already, the shoreline work, the teams are working hard on that. They see that as their day jobs, as their business as usual jobs. I do not need convincing about the importance of climate. I think that the team do not need convincing of that. We are just going out to see if States Members want to receive training on climate. I forget the terminology now, but carbon literacy training. We are going out to see if States Members want to do that. Quite a number of staff across the organisation have already received that training and accreditation, so we will also be approaching parishes directly to see if we can encourage some of them to get involved.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. You mentioned specifically the shoreline management plan and that is related to of course the adaptation to climate change. Can you confirm that you will bid for funding for the plan in the next Government Plan?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Absolutely. Havre des Pas is the first area that we are looking to do work in there. There is already a huge amount of work that has been done and the officer leading that is absolutely first class. He briefed members of the Havre des Pas group. I am not sure what the correct title is, but briefed members of the public on that about 6 weeks ago. It is very clear the work that has gone into that and, as I said, it is not a nice-to-have, the tide is coming, and we have got to do things to protect that area of the Island and other areas of the Island. So whether it is Havre des Pas, whether it is St. Aubin, whether it is West Park, you know, the list goes on. But we have got to get on with that.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Are you confident that you will be able to get this funding through the Council of Ministers list of many business-as-usual elements?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is not just the Council of Ministers. It will also be the States Assembly, which will ultimately have the final say on things, and I am going to be up there putting a case forward for infrastructure projects. We are going to have those discussions and debates and I will be fighting the corner very much for infrastructure.

Deputy A Curtis:

On the shoreline management plan, and you mentioned Havre des Pas being the number one priority, the plan provides various policy options as to how to pursue adaptation. When we see a bid come through, are we likely to understand clearly what the proposed engineering solutions look like and how closely they will be linked to any regeneration work in the area?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes. So I think the options being looked at is to either raise the wall or to create a promenade which would allow walking and cycling and so some leisure space. That is the option that we are pursuing is the 20 metres, I think it is 20 metres extension. So if you imagine Gorey as an example where you have got a sea wall, you have got walking, cycling, you have got some green space, and I can see that as being the solution that we are going to pursue.

Director, Transport, Highway and Infrastructure:

Just to add to that, there will be a communication engagement programme later on this summer, with the residents of Havre des Pas, where we will be discussing the various options and putting forward the advantages and disadvantages of what is feasible, but will also protect that community.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

So we have got 7 workshops that are going to take place. We are communicating with 2,500 households, which is due to take place next week. So all of that feedback will go into the scheme.

[11:15]

Deputy A Curtis:

Do you believe in delivering for that, for the preferred option and advance aligned approach, there is flexibility in how that looks and feels and what provision, as you said?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, there has got to be, otherwise no point in going to consultation.

Deputy A Curtis:

So you are going in with an open mind.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, we have got to rely on the engineers in terms of the technical solution, but what it looks like and feels like, we want to involve the community.

Deputy A Curtis:

Okay.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. Another area around adaptation of course is the follow up to Grand Vaux and other areas that have been identified as risk of flooding. Could you give us an update on discussions that you have had around what is next for Grand Vaux and what engagement have you had with stakeholders?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

So I have met with Jersey Water. I have not met with residents to date. I have met with the team that are responsible for that. We had great communication a couple of months ago when we had a lot of heavy rain, I drove through Grand Vaux that night to see for myself what was happening. So I think we are in a much better state of preparedness than perhaps we were. I think the communication with the Met Office, for example, I think is greatly improved. I think the communication with Jersey Water is good and I think we have just got to look at what is the long-term solution, because it is not going to go away. So, while I am confident that we could cope with an event at this time, I do not think we should be sitting back and doing nothing. I think we have got to look at alternatives. As the population increases, no doubt we will need to capture more water and so we should be looking at that as well.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Are there specific plans in place already or is that something that has to be developed?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

My ambition is for us to work more closely with Jersey Water and those discussions are ongoing. I was due to have visited sites recently, but that is been postponed because of diary clashes. So the dialogue will continue.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. We are going to move on from the C.S.P. (Common Strategic Policy) to estate management specifically and I will move over to the Deputy Coles.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Thank you. Please can you describe your vision for the development of Fort Regent?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I have seen some really exciting plans for Fort Regent. They are not elaborate. They are functional. They are going to require in excess of £80 million worth of investment. But the thing that worries me most is around the revenue. So we are quite good at finding capital to build new shiny things. Where we struggle in the past is to maintain these assets of ours. So I am hoping that plans will be shared with the Council of Ministers in the coming weeks and then shared with States Members shortly after that. But basically it is about providing a facility for locals and visitors alike, for all age groups, with some play areas for young children, which I think is essential, some activities for youths, so the not so young, and certainly a skate park features in those plans because we really want to get a permanent solution for a skate park in St. Helier.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

You made mention obviously about the allocation of funding for maintenance, so what changes will you seek for the allocation of funding which was outlined in the last Government Plan?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I think there is no casino, there is no hotel in the plans that I have seen. What we have to be confident of is understanding what will it cost to run Fort Regent and revitalise Fort Regent and maintain a revitalised Fort Regent. I do not have those figures to hand at the moment and therefore I do not know how much money, if any, we will be seeking to support the operation. There are some creative solutions that have been discussed but that has an impact on other areas. So, if money is currently being used for one fund, if you take that away, you have got to replace it. So those discussions are still ongoing.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Will you commit to delivering at Fort Regent during your term of office?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not think it is possible to commit to delivering Fort Regent during the term of office because we have got 2 years and I dare say there is probably 3 to 4 years' worth of work. So I would hope that we will have plans approved and funding approved during my term of office, but I cannot commit to delivering it in that time.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

You aim for at least to be, as the construction industry, shovel ready.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I think there is a fantastic piece of work, which would be good to share with you. We have got one of the team has done a lot of work in terms of looking at what we have got coming down the pipeline in terms for the construction industry, not only ourselves, but our A.L.O.s (Arm's Length Organisations), and we are also talking to private developers to ensure that we do not overheat the market and also to make sure that we do not have severe dips. So I think that is work that we could share. We are sharing it with the industry shortly and you would be very welcome to see that information. So, in terms of shovel ready, I would love to say yes, but I do not want to commit to something that I cannot do. Again, it will depend on the Assembly support for funding. So I would love to think that we were ready to go. I recently walked around Fort Regent, both the outside of Fort Regent, because we were looking for somewhere for a temporary skate park, and then I had a tour of the inside of Fort Regent. It is surprising how much activity is still happening there. We have recently started a pickup ball, which is some form of tennis or paddle, or a mixture of whatever it is, but we have got table tennis being played there regularly. We have got 5-a-side football, we have got gymnastics, we have got the soft play area. So there is a lot happening at Fort Regent. It is not closed. We have got people there and we have got plenty of people visiting.

Deputy A Curtis:

Can I just touch on, you mentioned, Minister, about work being done to understand the construction industry and obviously J.P.H. (Jersey Property Holdings) in the A.L.O. and S.O.E.s' (State-Owned Enterprises) positions within that. I am sure I would like to hear obviously what comes up, but are there any high-level observations you can share today from that work that are kind of top of mind for you before sharing obviously more detail later?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is a really good piece of work in terms of looking at the pipeline in terms of what we have got coming on, we know about a lot of things, but I was not aware of everything that was coming down the pipeline. Andy, did you want to comment on that?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Yes. So, firstly, it is the first time we have got a full picture across all of our public sector agencies of all of their construction activity, current and planned, over the next 10 to 15 years. So it includes Ports of Jersey, Andium, ourselves, the hospital programme. So we have got a full look across as much data as we have got at the moment. It splits it into all forms of construction spend from professional services, design spend, procurement and commercial spend, all the way through to construction and the delivery spend. So we have got a full picture of when, we have got clarity about what hits planning when, we have got what hits commercial and procurement and the market when.

So, in terms of I guess the headline message, it is the first time we have got a full picture of that. It is a really powerful tool for us to be able to make decisions as to when Government invests or does not invest its own money with an aim of trying to be countercyclical in the market so that we can keep construction industry steady in the market. We are looking at adding private sector investment on top of that as well. I think that the big message is there is a lot of spend being planned over the next 10 to 15 years and so capacity is really important for us to manage. We cannot be competing with each other in the public sector across our various agencies and the more we can share with industry, we have got a Construction Council industry group that we meet regularly with, the more intelligence we can share, the better confidence we can create as to what the outlook for the Island is. There is a very positive outlook for the next 10 to 15 years.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think what is also encouraging is the cooperation between Government and the other organisations, as well as including the private sector, so they see the value of this tool as well and we can arrange for a briefing for you of that.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

So, just to the point about competing with each other, can you just tease that one out a bit more?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Yes, I think so. It is natural that every organisation, whether it be the development company or Andium, they want to get on with their capital programme, they want to get on with their projects. But we are all pitching for the same quantity surveyors, the same project managers, the same architects, or whatever they may be. So we need to be less inflationary around that. We cannot be competing with each other about who we hook. We are paying a bit more than someone else or they are paying a bit more than us, that sort of thing. So it is good data. With good data you can make some good decisions about timetabling and profiling and who works with who.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

With this, you have said a little bit about procurement and I know this goes out of our remit a little bit, but that also fits into that being able to align procurement and being able to buy in bulk.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Absolutely. So, staffing for example, just by rescheduling the time of a job starting may enable staff to go from project A to project B rather than having a peak between the 2. So I think there will obviously be some strong discussions, I am sure at times, but at least we are having that discussion. This is your point earlier about are we are looking just at our boots or are we looking a bit further. So this really does help us look to the future as well.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. It would be good to hear more about that later. Thank you.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

This kind of works in quite nicely to say, there has been the recent closure up at Les Quennevais Sports Centre. So could you inform the Panel what your understanding is of the ongoing costs and what investment will be needed to ensure that the centre is fully functional?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not have those figures to hand. I think it is very unfortunate what happened, but safety has got to be absolutely our priority for both staff and the public. So the decision to close Les Quennevais was a difficult decision, but it was easy because safety is first. We have had a report which is being completed for us as to why we got to that situation, because we do try to do preventative maintenance where possible. Clearly, it has not worked on this occasion, we are dealing with lot of humidity, a lot of heat as well as water, so we have to be careful. Those conditions do cause challenges to some of our infrastructure. I do not have a price at the moment or a cost. The costs are varied, we have got the cost of the work, we have also got the cost of the closure. I have to pay tribute to the staff who did a fantastic job. I think we were quite lucky in as much as we had some school holiday time, so we were able to divert people to other venues. But the staff have done a great job to reschedule and get things done. We also took the opportunity, while we were closed, to make improvements. So areas that we had been looking to do in the future with flooring, et cetera, we have done that and we have moved some of the facilities around. So the team have done a very good job I think in minimising disruption. We will be closed again, unfortunately, in the summer for planned maintenance. We tried very hard to do that plan, bring that earlier, but we were not able to because of procurement issues. So unfortunately we will be closing again, I think it is in June, but I have to say the team from Property Holdings were working weekends, late at night, to make sure that closure was as short as possible. But unfortunately I do not have a cost at the moment.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Do you know what that fault was?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It was to do with an electrical fault, I do not know the full details. So we were planning to do some work, which would have been done during the planned closure, which we had to bring forward. So all I know is it was electrical.

Deputy A Curtis:

So moving on to the wider estate, of course the state of the estate report for 2023 is out. Would you be able to provide us, Minister, with a view just of the purpose of it and any conclusions you have drawn from it?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I think I said earlier, what gets measured gets done. I look forward to seeing the next edition and the edition after that. For me, I think I have said this publicly already, that I believe we have got properties that we do not utilise and so we should look at divesting in those. Equally, there are areas of land and property that perhaps would be better in our estate than in someone else's from a strategic perspective. The focus on the maintenance of the estate, we focus very much on ensuring that we meet statutory requirements, so whether that is fire safety, electrical testing, legionella, for example. What we do not have, if you look at Morier House, for example, you can see that that really needs a coat of paint. There are lots of other examples similar to that. So the team are working hard with the resource they have got. We are doing a lot of work around service level agreements with departments that use our facilities. It is really important that we remember that every building or asset owned by the Island is that, it is an Island asset. It does not belong to a head teacher or a board of governors, for example. It is an Island asset, and we have to make sure that we understand from a Property Holdings perspective what we are going to do, and the tenant needs to understand what they are going to do.

[11:30]

So there is a lot of work going around that. I am due to meet with the Minister for Children and Education in the next week or 2 before we start to meet with the head teachers. Then we are going to be rolling that out across the organisation, so putting in place service level agreements, so we all know what we are going to be doing.

Deputy A Curtis:

It was mentioned by I think the Chief Minister, obviously the need for potentially new schools and the state of the estate looks at the condition and some of the challenges of maintenance. Are you seeing a requirement perhaps to over subscribe to new builds because of a lack of maintenance and has the Department considered the cost-benefit and presenting that to the States as to whether maintaining assets extends their life versus the level of new build that is being suggested might be required?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There is a combination of challenges for some of those assets and some of that is space, simply the lack of space we have at some schools. It does not matter how pretty or how good and robust the

building is, if you do not have the space that is required to carry out what you need to carry out in that building. Then it is never going to be sustainable. So I can think of a number of schools which do not have the level of space to operate in that they should have in terms of minimum standards. So it would be absolutely right, and I constantly question why do we need to do something new when we have got something already, and we were talking about the sports centre just now and people tell me we need a new sports centre and I am asking, Well, why can we not put a new roof on the sports centre we have got, for example. So we will look at trying to maximise those assets, but unfortunately I think with the school estate a lot of the buildings we are occupying are very old. They are listed in some cases, which brings its own restrictions. A lot of work was done last summer in terms of fire safety to ensure that it was safe for staff, pupils, and visitors. So a lot of money and time went into that and you cannot keep doing that. Sometimes you have to say we need a new facility.

Deputy A Curtis:

You just mentioned earlier about the fact you have disclosed, and you have mentioned it to the Panel, about disposing of asset. So, is it possible to explain if you have any criteria or schedule as to how you are evaluating what might be disposed of, what might be retained?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, it is too early at the moment. It is too early at the moment. But I have asked to be updated at all of our meetings on empty properties. I know this subject is close Deputy Warr's heart. For me, I look at it differently. If I am sat here saying I have not got enough money to maintain buildings, but I have 20 assets that are not earning any revenue, which could be going into maintaining buildings, what are we doing about those 20 assets? So, we have got that now as a key performance indicator, because we want to see whether or not the buildings we have that are not occupied, there could be a good reason for that, it may be a department that has got first choice on that building, but we as Property Holdings are responsible for maintaining it, so we may be waiting for decisions from departments. So we are going to be looking at that very closely, but I can talk personally for 3 years, and my predecessor tried to get a couple of grass verges in St. John, which we have not looked after as an Island, and I believe that the parish could do a much better job of looking after that. Those will be listed as assets that the Island has, but liabilities in that case. So we have also got buildings, which are occupied by people who may want to buy them from us. Depending on what the building is used for, where that is located, so there will be a number of things that will come into any final decision. Then, if we are going to dispose of any asset, then that will be under a 168, I think that is what it is called, and so we will go to States Members before it is done. I would propose to brief States Members before signing a 168 to say: "This is the reason that we are considering releasing this building". We have to think, what do we do with the money we gain, if it is going into

the general coffers, is that what we want to do or do we want to ringfence that to provide another service somewhere else?

Deputy A Curtis:

So you have kind of pre-guessed where I was going to head with this, which was about the idea of hypothecation with Jersey Property Holdings' money, investment, and you have mentioned to the Panel about an investment fund that either will hold assets to generate money, but also you have mentioned the disposal of assets in that. So could you just share some more thoughts right now? Do you have any updates on either creating funds for generating investment, but also those thoughts around, if you dispose of an asset, are you dispersing capital to invest in new assets or does that become revenue for maintenance?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

So that is, yes, we have got a number of options. The Minister for Treasury and Resources mentioned when she was proposing the appointment of the new Chair for the States of Jersey Development Company, that wished to look at whether the 2 organisations can work more closely together. There is no decision made on that, but I think it is something that is worth exploring. So we need to look at what we do with the assets, how we look after them and if we do divest, what do we do with those funds. But at this stage it is too early to say what we would do.

Deputy A Curtis:

On that potential working together that you mentioned the Minister for Treasury and Resources suggested, where do you see both the opportunities and risks of closer engagement with S.o.J.D.C. (States of Jersey Development Company)?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I think it is fair to say we have got a lot of expertise in the Jersey Property Holdings team and so does S.o.J.D.C. Whether that expertise is duplicated or whether we could benefit from working more closely together, and we have seen this in the Transport Department working with S.o.J.D.C. on the western gateway for the bus, that is a project where we have worked with S.o.J.D.C. and I think there are other examples. So I think we should just go out and explore whether it is something we can benefit from. I personally believe there is benefit, but I think there are also risks as you have identified, and we have to quantify those benefits and risks before we come back with a proposal.

Deputy A Curtis:

But there are no ... okay, yes.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There is no vision that says this is what we are going to do today. There is a commitment to explore opportunities, but there is no set commitment.

Deputy A Curtis:

Moving then on to a part of the estate that you have mentioned before, which is of course the access to the school estate, what progress has been made in looking at increasing public access to school estates?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The short answer is not enough. Again, I am due to meet with the Minister for Children and Education because there are lots of opportunities, not only for sport, but for recreation. We could put up a basketball net at some schools that youngsters could use, in my opinion. We have to be conscious of safety. We have to be conscious of safeguarding. But really there are opportunities I believe around the Island where we totally underutilise our estate and where we could do better.

Deputy A Curtis:

Mentioning safety, mentioning, safeguarding, and thinking about Jersey Property Holdings' role as providing access to, in essence, sport estate that has, with your other hat on, a real power, do you think there is an open conversation about the balances between safety, safeguarding, and your responsibility as an estate owner, but also the opportunity it can bring?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, absolutely. So I come from a period of 16 years as a director of a trustee of a sports centre. I am no longer either of those. So I am very familiar with the challenges and opportunities. But the challenges of safeguarding in particular, particularly where you have got buildings that are not manned by staff, but with C.C.T.V. (closed circuit television), et cetera, you can do a lot, and Education you can do a lot. So I think the opportunities are there and this is nothing new, I am not reinventing the wheel, there is lots of organisations around the U.K. (United Kingdom), around Europe, where there is a central booking system where you can book a sports facility and an asset at another part of the Government's buildings.

Deputy A Curtis:

Are you happy that it is possible to have those conversations with the other stakeholder schools to ensure that that kind of balance and perhaps use of new technologies can be found or is there more work to be done in exploring kind of that change in dynamic that would need to occur?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not underestimate the challenge ahead of us. No doubt we have challenge, but I do think the opportunity is worth pursuing and I think it will be a combination. You can look at different models where at X o'clock the teachers finish and a caretaker arrives to oversee what is happening in a sports hall or in the sports ground, so those models are there, or it could be that the teacher finishes work as a teacher and then supervises something else on a different contract. So there are different opportunities to do it. We have to maintain these facilities. We are not going to let people run amok, they need to be supervised. But I do think we have a lot of opportunity with the estate we have.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Can I just jump in here? I am excited by the fact that you recognise there are all these opportunities out there and that is fantastic. One of the things that concerns me is about this, we always seem to be waiting to make that big decision, that final decision to use something and stuff like that. The concept of "meanwhile use" is being brought up obviously in the press lately. Is there not opportunity, more opportunity, to do what I call "meanwhile use" in all these different sites before and ahead of the final use being determined? So, in other words, instead of just leaving spaces, your vergee in St. John, et cetera, can we not just get on and do some stuff in the meantime rather than just wait for the eventual final plan to come through?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I think there may be opportunity for that and I have recently identified somewhere for a skate park as an interim solution. So we are getting plans drawn up for a temporary solution for a skate park in St. Helier. But it is not a long-term solution. It is about finding a solution so that youngsters, and not so young, can enjoy skating if they live in town or the east of the Island. Then that site will then be used for something else in the future. So I do think there are opportunities, but equally I took the advice of officers around the car park and in Kensington Place, and I would serve to say my personal view was I would have used it during the closure of Patriotic Street, but I fully accept the view of the professionals that say we need to make sure this is ringfenced and ringfenced. So I think, if there is an opportunity, we will pursue it. But I do not think that every empty space is an opportunity.

Deputy A Curtis:

Minister, you just mentioned a temporary skate park, which is something obviously the Panel was eager to hear more of. I was going to ask if you had a short list, you have got a site, could you update us on that site and your plans, give us a little more information?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am sure I will be able to do that at the next quarterly hearing. We have explored over 50 sites in and around St. Helier and I have visited a good number of sites with Ellen and other officers. I have

written to Constables. Sadly, I have not had responses from the Constable of St. Helier, St. Saviour, I have had a response from St. Clement and visited a site with the Constable of St. Clement. Grouville and St. Martin did not have sites. So that has not prevented us from really working hard. We want something quick and we believe that we can build a skate park in St. Helier for a reasonable amount of money to a decent standard, but it will be a temporary solution.

Deputy A Curtis:

Okay. So looking at those options and I wish we could have more today, Minister, but of course you are not joined by your Assistant Minister, the Constable of St. Helier, today. But he has shared his aspirations for ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I can tell you that the site I am looking at is not Gas Place. It is not Gas Place. We do not own that site and so it is not Gas Place. I think it is unrealistic personally to even think about that site. I think we have to have a site that we can get access to quickly, that is in our ownership, and that is the kind of site we have identified.

Deputy A Curtis:

So you have identified a different site, which we will hear about another time. By mentioning Gas Place, of course that is a site that could host a range of things. It could be a school, it could be many things that this Government might bring. Have you been considering the purchase of Gas Place under your term?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It could be a number of things. I think the Government currently see that as being a site for a school, but I think we are also looking at other potential sites for a school. So there is no final decision made, but I think as we sit today, then the likelihood is we will come forward with plans for a school.

Deputy A Curtis:

Okay. Then, moving south, could we touch on the Havre des Pas Lido, could you provide the Panel an update on the lease of the Havre des Pas Lido?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, the Constable of St. Helier is leading on that. A licence agreement is due to be signed this week.

Deputy A Curtis:

Okay. Could you provide any detail as to what is in that, of course recognising that P.61/2022 asked for Jersey Property Holdings to provide a long lease, is there any detail you could provide within that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not think I can in a public forum today, I am happy to talk to you outside of this forum, but there is due to be a licence signed this week.

Deputy A Curtis:

Then moving away from the licence, looking at the role of Jersey Property Holdings as a landlord with obligations, what work is being undertaken to fulfil the landlord obligations for maintenance of the site?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The Lido is no different to any other site. So we have to make sure that it is safe, that we meet statutory requirements.

[11:45]

Deputy A Curtis:

Are you comfortable priority is being given to the level of safety provided on that site?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, we had a risk assessment done only a matter of weeks ago.

Deputy A Curtis:

Okay. Thank you. Lastly from me, looking at one more site, you have shared a number of press releases looking at possible plans for St. Saviour's Hospital. So would you be able to detail your plan as of today and its rationale?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I was asked about the state of the estate report and I did an interview at St. Saviour's and I was asked for my personal view. My personal view was I would knock it down and create a flat site. I think perhaps we would have to retain the entrance and the chapel above the entrance, but I do not think that many people have got happy memories of that site. I recognise that it is listed and there would be lots of things to do to get it delisted. I am not sure if even that is a possibility, but I think if you are looking at the site as a whole at St. Saviour's, I think if you were looking at a flat site, or a

majority of it flat, then you could create an awful lot more, whether that be for housing, health, a combination of both.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Is that something you have discussed with the Minister for the Environment, to see where that could go?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, but we are due to discuss it at our next meeting.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

It is interesting on that site that the lawn is part of the listing. Now, of course, open space in any sort of development is a key thing. So talk about delisting, but you have to protect an open green space.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I had a tour around St. Saviour's Hospital recently. I had a tour around the new facility, which is a fantastic facility, but it is quite depressing as much as there are no taps and all that kind of stuff, it really is sad that people need to use a facility such as that. Then I had a tour of the old facility and the only way I can describe it is what appeared to be cells, small, tiny rooms, very dark. I really was not comfortable in there at all. If you look at it, and the cost of maintaining what we have got with the listing, it just seems prohibitive and that perhaps we should keep more of the frontage, I do not know, but I do think we should have these discussions that say, what is the viability of this site? Because ultimately it is the Islanders that will pay to restore or to keep that site in its current condition, and I do not think it is necessary personally. I think whatever solution is found there, you want to keep as much green space as possible. In order to do that, then I would be looking to use the current built space to develop. That is a personal view.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. That was a lot of questions on estate management and we are going to turn now to liquid waste and just turn to the Connétable.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Before we do, can I do a postscript to the last chapter, as it were?

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Of course.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Apart from listing in regards to St. Saviour's Hospital, we use that word in relation to educational facilities are listed buildings or listed thereof, an obstacle to progress in many ways, and is there a greater dialogue going on with planning as to the relaxation of these?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There is no dialogue going on at the moment, David. But my personal view is listing is very important, very important for some buildings. You can see what a great job was done with the College for Girls site and Rouge Bouillon, which was a listed site which has been reused. But I just think there are times when we should relax some of the listings personally, again it is a personal view. It is not something I have spoken to the Minister about. But I think St. Saviour's Hospital is a great example where you may want to keep a small part of it and maximise the site. We have got some terrific listed buildings which you would never want to see delisted, but I am sure, like me, you get parishioners approach you because their property is listed and the ability to make it energy efficient is prohibited because of that listing. There are some times where we could be more flexible with listings. But, again, I emphasise that is my personal view.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Yes, your neighbouring Constable is of similar view, but that is not for now, but I was more concerned about the age of buildings being ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, listen, I am not here saying we should bulldoze all listed buildings. Far from it. But I have identified this site, you know, which is a key asset for the Island. If you look at the size of that plot of land, then I really do think we should have an informed discussion and debate about the merits of listing or delisting that site where we can maximise what we own as an Island.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay, thank you. I will go back to my script now. It is on liquid waste. The power remains to serve out the delivery of the Bridging Liquid Waste Strategy and the level of investment that we needed. Are you satisfied that, despite your own concerns, the Council of Ministers as a whole appreciates the urgent need to invest in this network?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, I am reasonably confident. It is fair to say we invest over £6 million a year on our rolling vote for liquid waste. We have invested 10s of millions of pounds on the sewerage treatment works, so I think that has demonstrated, not only this Government, but previous Governments' commitment to it. In terms of the rezoned housing that we were discussing earlier, we have identified 3 sites, preferred sites. We are in ongoing discussions with landowners about those sites, they are in

Maufant, St. Peter near the airport, and also West Hill. We are looking at West Hill as a 2-phase project. We have funding for this year and for next year. I am looking to my right, but we will then need additional funding. I think last time I spoke to you, I told you that there was some work getting done on the Bonne Nuit area, which is going to enable up to 67 homes to be reconnected, a decision made long before I became Minister I hasten to add, and that sewerage treatment plant at Bonne Nuit will become a rising main. So we will pump the sewerage up and down to the sewerage treatment works rather than treating it and putting it out to sea.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

You mentioned a rolling fund, but what is your view as to the understanding of the total level investment required, because clearly these are ageing resources and need replacing?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I do not have a figure at hand in terms of this is like this never stops, does it, because it is used every day, all day. So you have to continue to maintain what you have and hopefully expand that network, whether that is for new developments or for existing properties that do not currently enjoy mains services. Now, I appreciate that you and I both have areas of our parishes which are unlikely to ever be on mains drains, but we also have main roads where people are not currently on mains, which you would expect people to be on mains. I think I mentioned earlier about working with Jersey Water and there is a great opportunity where it may not be viable for one service to go in, if we both go together we hopefully will get economies of scale and hopefully we can increase that network.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Has that level of cooperation being identified within Jersey Water?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, I think I have mentioned the Bonne Nuit works and there is works to go there with the water and they are going to try to use the same trench. We have also seen, again from personal experience in St. John, where the electric company brought power to a facility near St. John's Manor and Jersey Water jumped into the trench with them, so that has enabled some additional homes to be connected to water. So I think the utilities as a whole work together and I am particularly keen on the drainage team working with Jersey Water, but it is all of the utilities.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

I think your neighbouring parish again would back you with that.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Sorry, can I just jump in with one question, David, sorry, apologies. Just about the funding, you are saying £6 million per annum is your spend. What is the funding gap, would you say, on that? Would you say ideally we need £8 million per annum?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not know the answer to that question, David. I do not know if Ellen can help me.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

So what we are requesting roughly is an additional £10 million per annum to be able to spend money on enhancement of the liquid waste assets. So we have £15 million from this year and next year and then from 2026 we are having discussions with our Treasury colleagues to put forward proposals on how that could be funded on the longer term. I know we have a conversation this afternoon.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

So have you identified the funding you will require in the next Government Plan then?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes. Yes, we have, yes.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Which is, again?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Ellen is going to remind me of that.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

An additional £10 million per annum. So, within the Government Plan, we have money for our existing assets, but we have also got a vote for additional monies for enhanced work on the liquid waste programme.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay, these requests merge with each other. So this Panel's predecessors, of which I was one, were particular about the security of longer-term funding for large infrastructure projects. Again, I presume you share those concerns, but what options are you exploring with the Minister for Treasury and Resources to try to address them?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I understand you are getting a briefing directly after this.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

It was originally pencilled in prior to this hearing.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

So I am not going to steal their thunder, but we continue the dialogue with them and there are a number of options, which you will be familiar with, and they will explain in more detail. So, yes, I think I will leave it to my Treasury colleagues to explain that to you rather than me get it wrong.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay. You may also knock this next question for 6, but a previous panel, when I was Chair, looked into the proposal for user pays for liquid waste charges and that was withdrawn by the Minister on the day of the debate, largely through objections by certain organisations that had not been consulted. The Minister's view there was the States have approved that in principle, so there was no need to consult. Can I assume that you would go out to a greater consultation this time, if that rears its head?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I think it was 2016 that there was a debate and I was on the other side of the table representing one of the organisations that was consulted with. To us at that time it did not seem to be fair because it was targeting certain businesses rather than the Island as a whole. I think there needs to be wide discussion. There is wide understanding that we have to have infrastructure. It is vital for us. We have to have this, not only maintain what we have, but improve on what we have. How that is funded is up for discussion and debate.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

So I go back to your objection at the time, wearing a different hat as it were.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes. Yes.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

I expect that was because domestic users were not going to be included; it was probably business.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We identified many Island homes that use significantly more water than some of the businesses that were proposed to be charged and we did not feel that was appropriate.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay, so that will obviously come up in consultation. Thank you.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

On that, will we then be seeing a strategy being brought forward or plans to be brought forward in the next 2 years, is this something that you will be delivering?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think that a lot of that will depend on how we get on with our discussions over this Government Plan. I have said at the start of this meeting that I am going to be trying to get investment in infrastructure and, if I cannot convince my colleagues to do it one way, I may have to try and do it another way. But those discussions are ongoing.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

My final question on this relates to Bellozanne in particular. In a previous briefing with this Panel, you advised you needed to secure medium and long-term funding for Bellozanne, which would allow for the creation of holding tanks. Can you inform the Panel if that is progressing?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

So that is what I had mentioned earlier, sorry, about Maufant at the west of the Island and West Hill. So that work is progressing well. So some of the team that were working on the sewerage treatment work projects are now working on this element of work and the discussions are ongoing with the landowners. But I understand that they are progressing well.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

And is the funding ...

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

That is part of the £10 million. So where we require £10 million a year, that includes the storage capacity as well as the enhanced works we need on the rising mains and all those replacements.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay, all right, thank you.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Minister, coming back a little bit to kind of like how to fund all of this work. You stated that it could be worth exploring whether the Island-wide rate would be considered as a mechanism for funding solid and liquid waste. Have you progressed any of these conversations?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I have not. I expressed my personal view, but we have not had those discussions at this time.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Do you think that those kind of questions, the questions on user fees and how to pay for infrastructure, do you think this aligns with the Common Strategic Policy and priority, which is about keeping fees, duties, and the like low, how to marry up those 2 elements and how will you be able to convince your colleagues?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, it is really, really challenging and last weekend, or weekend before last, we put the price of car parking up in St. Helier. Well, anywhere where you use a disc or a parking card or the app. So it is really challenging. The aim for the 2025 Government Plan is not to increase charges by that kind of level, but we will be faced with some serious decisions to make and whether that is Health, Education, Infrastructure, Home Affairs, these all vital services that we provide to Islanders and they have to be paid for.

[12:00]

Yes, we are looking at efficiencies. We are absolutely looking at reducing our reliance on consultants. Infrastructure is no different to any other department where the team have been challenged with that. They are responding well to that challenge. We are looking at productivity as a group, as a department. We have to demonstrate that we spend the money that we have well and wisely before we look for additional funds, but there may come a time when we do need additional funds.

Deputy H. Jeune:

Of course, I completely recognise what you are saying, Minister, but it comes back to the questions I was asking at the beginning about the priority for this Government is delivering affordable homes. One of those which has been identified in the rezone field is the infrastructure and lack of infrastructure and then being able to pay for the infrastructure. Where we are trying to get to is knowing where we are going to get to within the next 2 years. Are we going to be shovel ready, as Deputy Cole said? That is related to understanding where the strategy and liquid waste, et cetera, comes in.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The team are working tirelessly to ensure that there are robust plans in place, agreements in place to do the work, there is funding in place for this year and for next year, and the challenge we have is for 2026 and beyond.

Deputy H. Jeune:

Do you then envisage that this is part of then ... continuously for the Minister for Infrastructure to do bids within the Government Plan, there is no look at, for example, as you mentioned, the Island-wide ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are looking at a whole range of opportunities. We are 3 months in. We are making progress. I was only gifted 24 hours in each day and so were these people around me. We are trying to work at pace. We should perhaps talk about that when we talk about another subject. We are doing as much as we can in the time we have. Without going out and spending money on consultants. There is dialogue that happens. A lot of work has been done in previous years. Sometimes it is about doing some research on what has been done previously. Also looking at what other people are doing in the same area. There is a lot of work happening, it is just not ready to discuss and debate yet.

Deputy H. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister. I hope we can explore this issue again. The Connétable mentioned, for example, since 2016 and you mentioned since 2016, so this has been going on for quite a while.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do think there is a realisation among the Assembly of the importance of investing in infrastructure. The previous Government recognised that. This Government recognises that. I am hopeful that we can make progress.

Deputy H. Jeune:

Yes, thank you. Moving on, you stated that there needed to be a further £8 million for road surfacing and that you have secured the funding for this. Do you think this is enough?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, I said we spent £6 million and that we needed £8 million per year, so we need £2 million to fill the gap. No, I have not filled that gap either. We spent an additional just over £600,000 on pothole maintenance. The winter that we have just experienced has been very difficult, not only for infrastructure, but for all the Parishes as well. We have seen a much higher level of potholing caused by the volume of water. I suppose we should be grateful we did not have a cold winter as well,

because that would have impacted it further, I dare say. The team are doing their best on that. We have a programme of works, which is published on the website, in terms of where we are working this year and next year and in 2026. That is really quite good communication from the Department. I was not aware of that until I became Minister, even though I had been a Constable I was not aware that that information was available, so it is really quite good.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

If I could just repeat a question asked of you in the States, Minister. You say the shortfall for roads, which as you identified, applies to Parishes as well. Given that the Parishes are used by Islanders as a whole, is it a case for Infrastructure raising money and transferring funds to the Parishes to enable them to carry out more work?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That would be fantastic as a Constable, would it not, if that happened, but we have just been talking about priorities. I need to make sure that for those people who have drains we can maintain those drains, because that is down to Government. Whereas for the roads, we have 13 highway authorities and we each shoulder our responsibility. I know the costs in St. John. Storm Kieran cost us £10,000. We will be discussing that at our next rates Assembly.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

We will be similar, that is what worries me. Thank you.

Deputy H. Jeune:

Thank you. You mentioned there is a shortfall of £2 million. How are you going to secure again ... it is that wider ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There are 2 things there. One is around looking at our efficiencies. Can we do things differently?

Director Transport, Infrastructure and Environment:

We have undertaken a number of different exercises. Where roads are at the end of their service life we do a deep resurfacing, reconstructing the top layers of the road. Where roads are cracking and coming on the cusp of failing what we do is localised patching. We apply a surfacing called grip fibre. That effectively waterproofs the road and improves the friction and slows its deterioration. As I said, we are in the business of safely managing the decline of the Island's road infrastructure. We are not in the business of improving it.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes. We follow what is happening with technology. We are going to see some work done this half-term with the grip fibre. Again, the utilities work closely together, led by the Department. There is a monthly meeting talking about programme work, to ensure that we do not end up with multiple trenches and where we are going to do some resurfacing then there is an embargo for 5 years.

Director Transport, Infrastructure and Environment:

That is right, a lot of works go on co-ordinating the utility activities. There are 4,500 road events and excavations a year. The grip fibre is interesting because it does extend that asset life. It is slowing the decline of the network. We have benefitted over that programme from the last 10 years or we would be in a much worse place.

Deputy A. Curtis:

Could I quickly touch in, Chair? On those 4,500 events, are you satisfied that the Island, as a whole, is taking advantage of those events? Are neighbours being proactively alerted they may replace our water mains or upgrade their drains? If not, is there work to be done to ensure that the most is made of each event, reaching beyond the statutory bodies that perform that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We could do more, because, as I said, until I became Minister I was unaware that we advertised these things 2 / 3 years in advance. I chair a roads committee, one of those 13 highway authorities, and was unaware that that information was available. Clearly, we can do more to communicate. Certainly when we do works, we go round and deliver leaflets and explain. That is often too late if you want to do a water main. If you had been along Rue des Issues last week, you would have found there were traffic lights, because someone was taking advantage of crossing the road in the hope of attaching to the mains drains. We have communicated, but I am sure we could do better in that area. I would pay tribute to the team, again, there because they are fantastic, the work they do. We have people out every day looking at the state of roads. The high frequency used roads are visited more frequently. They use technology to do this. It is not just someone going out for a drive. It is a really good team.

Director Transport, Infrastructure and Environment:

Yes, you objectively safeguard the investment the public put in the roads, so that where the utility comes along and replaces a piece of infrastructure ... the utility had the same problem as us, they have an ageing infrastructure, some of which is 100 years old. We make sure the roads are reinstated to the same standard as we would do ourselves, effectively. That is an important part of it. As well as co-ordination and making sure that it is safely lit, signed and guarded.

Deputy H. Jeune:

Thank you. The last question around this is: are you intending to bring forward an inert waste strategy to explore alternative sites to La Collette by the end of this year?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are looking at inert waste. We are currently out for tender with inert waste, which does not only look at Jersey as a potential solution, but looks at other solutions.

Deputy H. Jeune:

Fantastic. You will come back to us with that information?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes.

Group Director Operations and Transport, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

We are out to tender. We are hoping that by the end of the summer we will have a solution for the short-term for inert waste. We are also doing a piece of work where we are looking at the Solid Waste Strategy, which will include inert waste. We are hoping to get that complete by the end of the year.

Deputy H. Jeune:

Thank you. Moving on to active travel, which is something you mentioned earlier, Minister. We will hand over to Deputy Warr.

Deputy D. Warr:

Please can you share your progress on establishing a park and ride scheme for the airport playing fields and also share your vision of how these fit into a wider scheme by encouraging active travel?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am delighted to tell you that the trial should start on Monday. There we are, there is a scoop for you. The idea is that people who want to participate will go to the reception in the sport centre to avail themselves of a permit. You will need to use a permit. You will be able to park all day at the playing field at St. Brelade near the garages. You will not be able to park overnight. It is not an alternative for people who are going to the airport. The permit will be for the day and you will be able to jump on the number 15 or 22 bus. I am hopefully that we see take-up of that, particularly from people who do not live near a bus stop and benefit from the efficiency of the buses and the cost efficiency of buses. I do not have the numbers in front of me, but I quoted them last week on the radio and the savings that you can make a year are substantial if you use a bus as opposed to parking all day. That is compared to 20 days using the Avanchi monthly thing and a monthly card.

There are significant savings to make. We will look at other sites around the Island to see if they are available, both for people parking their car and also a bike.

Deputy D. Warr:

We are all for scoops on this Panel. The Common Strategic Policy identifies the need to make town more accessible for walkers and cyclists. How will you set out to achieve this and is there a strategy for the goal for the rest of the Island?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am pleased to say work is going to happen again in St. John, not because I am Minister, but because we have been waiting 20 years. My predecessor was working on safer walking in St. John and I was delighted to pick up that project with the Infrastructure team 3 years ago. It has taken me 3½ years to get that to fruition. Other Parishes are being worked with. In terms of active travel, we held a workshop last week or the week before. I wanted everyone around Government involved in active travel to get there. Not just transport planners, but people who encourage people to get on bikes, et cetera. A whole range of people were there. We looked at the challenges, the barriers, and the enablers. What would enabled things to happen quickly? What are the solutions? We identified a whole range of topics that were being worked on and we have put them into 3, 6, and 9 months. I am hopeful at the end of this week, I will be see something next week. I am hopeful that in a short period of time we will see some tangible things. In addition, the Constable of St. Helier has walked around town with officers in his role as Assistant Minister. I have been on 2 cycle rides with officers and members of the public, looking at alternative routes. With some relatively minor treatments, we could make roads that already exist better and safer for cyclists. We have areas where we can separate pedestrians from cyclists, just with a bit of paint marking the surface. There are some quick wins. I am expecting quarter 3 to be publishing a cycling and walking delivery plan. However, we are not waiting to publish the plan before we do stuff. There is a lot of work being done with schools and safe routes to school. There is a huge project around the St. Saviour's area, which is planned for next summer. Engagement this summer and work planned for next summer. The other thing I have challenged the officers to do is around consultation. The point was made earlier: why do we consult for so long? It is important to consult, but once you have done that consultation, you should be making decisions and getting on with stuff. Not taking, as has been the case in St. John, 3½ years and longer. We are looking at that. That does not mean to say we are going to reduce the quality of the consultation. We just want to process that feedback quicker. We are looking at Bagatelle and Castle Street, Route de la Libération; La Blinerie, I have mentioned the work with the Western Gateway.

[12:15]

The key things for us are around making it easier to cross the ring road; that is vital. I have mentioned many times the fact that 24 per cent of St. Helier residents, who work in town, drive to work. How do we prevent that? How do we assist them? Sometimes they need a vehicle, but other times they feel safer, so how do we do it?

Deputy D. Warr:

Thank you. What work will you be doing to deliver on the commitment to encouraging Islanders to change the mode of transport, which was half referenced there? What actions are you undertaking to ensure sufficient car charging points? I will give you a list of ideas here and you can go through them. What measures are available to support companies offering alternative transport? Is the Sustainable Transport Policy achievable? I appreciate there is a lot there.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, that is quite a shopping list. We are in alternative transport month and locally there is going to be an alternative transport week, which is from 20th to 24th May with a launch on Sunday 19th May in the Royal Square at 11.00 a.m. I hope to be there on my bike. We are supporting that with communication. We have this month the Love to Ride bike challenge, which is something that Government have done for a number of years now. That works reasonably well. It is about choice. There are a lot of schemes that businesses use to encourage their employees to use different modes of transport. We certainly, with the new building, will see far better bicycle parking and changing facilities available. I am keen to look at how we can help and encourage other businesses help their employees to purchase bikes. If you do cycle to and from work you are generally fitter and therefore you are likely to have fewer days off work, so there is a benefit to businesses. Equally, there is an opportunity for some businesses to help their staff with buying annual bus passes, which work out much cheaper than paying each time as I do when I use the bus. There are a lot of things that we are doing. The walking and cycling strategies will tell us how close we are going to be to fulfilling that Sustainable Transport Policy. It is about choice. If we all chose a different mode one day a week then we would have the same levels of traffic we experience in the school holidays. I am going to look to my left to see if I have that right.

Director Transport, Infrastructure and Environment:

That is right or even share a car.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Even share a car, yes.

Director Transport, Infrastructure and Environment:

Single-occupancy car journeys are part of the problem and make up about 90 per cent of the traffic.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have work to do around providing enough parking for bicycles in town. I am keen for us to provide covered motorcycle parking. There is not nearly enough. We will probably have to charge for that and give people choice if they are happy to leave their bike out in the wet or they are happy to pay for it to be kept dry. Currently there is not enough choice. Again, cycle parking, we need more covered cycle parking. There is a lot for us to do. We have a lot of work happening and it is trying to get a bit of focus. We are trying to deliver some of these things, as opposed to having too much on. The 3, 6, and 9 months are short, medium, and long-term in my mind. When these engineers talk about long-term, they are talking about 3, 6, and 9 years. I want things to happen.

Deputy D. Warr:

I agree.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Next week the Road Traffic Collision Report is due out, which will identify we have a lot of work to do to help vulnerable road users. Later this week we are going to be promoting the hopper bus. Currently we have 21 bus stops on the hopper bus route. That is going to increase by a further 18 stops and will enable to go to the library, the market, the hospital, and all around St. Helier. It is about utilising the bus. It is running around empty, because we have not told people about it, so we are really keen to promote that service. With a transfer ticket you can come in from the park and ride, jump on a bus, and go anywhere in St. Helier for one fee.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

That may be more a question for the Minister for Treasury and Resources, in relation to employers helping their employees. Looking at the reverse, are employees or employers who provide facilities for their employees subject to a benefit in kind charge?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is a question for the Minister for Treasury and Resources. There have been discussions in the past about taxing parking spaces in St. Helier, but that is a question for the Minister for Treasury and Resources rather than for me.

Deputy D. Warr:

I will move on to the slightly controversial one of E.V. (electronic vehicle). Minister, in the recent States Assembly meeting you stated that there are "other providers". It will depend on usage of the bike; the bus services are a cheap alternative to cycles; regarding the issues of E.V. as faced,

leading to their close of business. Do you believe it is important for Islanders to have more than one mode of sustainable transport?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, I do. I am not sure why I was answering the question, but I was happy to answer the question. I do not have any funding to support any kind of alternative transport. The Minister for the Environment has the Climate Emergency Fund. It is disappointing, yes, but if we were going to operate something like that, we would have to do like we do with the buses and go out to tender. We cannot choose an existing provider and support an existing provider. We would have to go out to tender and see whether there are other people interested in running a similar service. I have availed myself of similar services around Europe and thoroughly enjoy the experience. The other thing that we are working on is, we see a lot of, what I call, unrestricted bikes. The technical term is s-pedelec. This is a bike that has electric assistance. I have seen these in Switzerland where they have a licence plate. You have to have insurance and the rider needs to wear a helmet. The team were looking at how we could do that here. That is another way of encouraging people out of their cars, to get around.

Deputy D. Warr:

Thank you.

Deputy H. Jeune:

Thank you. I am conscious of time. I will hand over to the Connétable for a few questions.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Going on to parking fees, the Chief Minister recently informed the Assembly that the recent increase in parking fees was to the order of 7.22 per cent, whereas Jersey inflation was somewhat below at 5.7 per cent. Given the low R.P.I. (Retail Price Index) that was announced, could you have done anything to affect the level of increase?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The issue is the decision was made several months before. We could have done better with communicating that change. I could have communicated that change earlier. The decision was made when the cost of living was circa 10 per cent. I hold my hand up, we could have communicated earlier rather than at the eve of the thing. I would say, I had this discussion with my wife, who was paying £1.37 an hour, because she had every conceivable extra on the app. She was paying for a receipt. She was paying for a SMS message and something else. By changing her phone settings, I saved her 40 pence an hour. We have to ensure that we maintain our car parks. You will have seen the disruption at Patriotic Street over many months with the refurbishment of that. That is a

rolling programme. Our car parks are mainly old. I would like us to create an additional car park somewhere on the ring road to assist traffic. We have to continue to invest. The last increase was 14 months ago. A large proportion of that increase went on road safety. We have to invest in road safety, as you will see next week when the report comes out.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Thank you. Moving on to electric car charging points, are there any plans or has any extra funding been provided to increase the number?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not have that in my gift. We work with the J.E.C. (Jersey Electricity Company), who are actively promoting their services. The Government has helped people to buy cars. We can have the debate on the whys and wherefores of that. I have a view, which may be different to other people's view, but we currently offer £3,500 off of vehicles, which may cost £12,000, so you can get a quarter discount ... or it may cost you £75,000. My personal view is we could spend that money more wisely.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Charging points are purely for the J.C.?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have charging points in our car parks and I presume we have worked with the local provider.

Director Transport, Infrastructure and Environment:

Yes, J. E. C. looks at where it has capacity and we have worked with them on every request where they have asked for dedicated parking bays for charging. That is how we have the infrastructure that we have. The J.E.C. potentially make a commercial return from that and we provide the spaces.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

They have taken an issue on this rather than the other way round, as it were?

Director Transport, Infrastructure and Environment:

One of the things is the cabling, which runs part of the capacity of the grid is part of the issue as to what can be provided where. There are quite a lot of parking places, say, up at Pier Road, that is because it has very high voltage cables and a large sub-station nearby. Other car parks need higher levels of investment in the electrical infrastructure to get them in. Obviously with electric cars there is a need for off-street parking charging, particularly in town. Most electric cars do about 180 miles now, so there is potential to charge them at home. It is a top-up facility. What the total demand is, is something to be looked at as the infrastructure develops, to be honest with you.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Moving on to parking places generally, are there plans to increase the number of parking spaces in town or is that against the philosophy of ...?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It probably does go against the Sustainable Transport Policy, but I think we need more parking spaces on the outskirts or St. Helier. We are actively looking at potential sites for that.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

If there were those extra spaces on the outskirts, could we assume that there would be a bus service to take people in or are they sufficiently close to work?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I would imagine you would be able to walk within 10 minutes. In 2015, I introduced a walking map for the Island Games. It surprised people how far you can walk in 5, 10, and 15 minutes. It is about education. We think places are further than they are, but if you are walking from A to B you can cover quite a distance. There are a number of potential sites around the ring road that could be utilised.

Director Transport, Infrastructure and Environment:

Can I just add, it really is about the distribution of the types of spaces. Where you have shop car parking, it has to be quite close to the shops, given people could be carrying heavy bags. Whereas commuter cars are there for the day and obviously the ring road is far better suited for those types of purposes. We have a review of the parking state to look at what that should look like in the future. Also, most of our car parks are over 50 years old and it is not just about the allocation, it is about their capacity to support new technologies, modern vehicles, and other matters in terms of sustainable transport hubs.

Deputy H. Jeune:

Thank you. Looking at the time, the last element that we were to focus on is recycling. That is Deputy Coles.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

During the briefing with us last month, you spoke of ways to encourage more recycling in Jersey. What work do you anticipate doing during this term?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Quite a bit. I would like to see us with a consistent offer across the Island. I would like to see us offering food waste recycling. We have analysed the waste that we receive and a staggering amount could be recycled. We have to do better as a Government and also as an Island. Food waste makes up around a quarter of the waste that we receive. We need to look at how we could encourage people to recycle that. I am going to be working with environment groups, with the Connétables, and with the Department to find solutions which make it efficient. The Connétable of St. Mary is well aware of the cost of refuse collection as it currently is. We need to be more creative. We are going to look at different models. We will work with yourselves as well to try and increase the amount of recycling that we do. On the last 2 occasions I have been to La Collette, on a Sunday, I have queuing because it is so popular, which is terrific on one hand. The staff there do a great job. It shows the demand and the will of the public to recycle. We have to make it easier for people to do that. There are 3 Parishes that are still not recycling, each of them would like to recycle, so it is how can we work together to find a solution. I am very keen to progress that.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Minister, do you intend to bring forward a circular economy strategy that would take a holistic approach to waste management on the Island, to reduce the overall waste, rather than focusing on recycling?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

If you follow my social media, you will see once a month I post Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. I am very familiar with that. We mentioned earlier we are going to be bringing a waste strategy, hopefully towards the end of this year. Watch this space.

[12:30]

Group Director Operations and Transport, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

That ties into the work that we are doing with the circular economy, so it will all link in.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

We are very fortunate in St. John to have a zero waste shop, without naming names.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is in St. Lawrence, but I am sure a lot of people from St. John use it. It is a great facility. St. John introduced recycling in 2006; the first Parish to do so. It is something that we are very proud of. We constantly encourage and try and convert people. We find that the best way is to get the youngsters in our community to see parents and grandparents the error of their ways in not recycling.

We hold boxes at the Parish Hall. I am delighted when we have to buy another 50 of each because they are getting used.

Deputy H. Jeune:

Thank you. Thank you, Minister. We are spot on the half hour.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Thank you.

Deputy H. Jeune:

I would like to thank you for attending the hearing today and for addressing the Panel's questions. We managed to get through all of them. There are a couple of points that we have committed to follow up with during the hearing. We will get in touch to follow up on that. Thank you also to Government officers for the support you have given the Minister and your contributions. Thank you to the members of the public who have attended and those online who have been listening as well. Thank you.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Thank you.

Deputy H. Jeune:

Thank you very much.