



Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel

Quarterly Public Hearing

Witness: The Minister for Infrastructure

Wednesday, 31st May 2023

Panel:

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

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

Connétable D. Johnson of St. Mary

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

Witnesses:

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

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

Ms. E. Littlechild, Director, Operations and Transport

Mr. T. Daniels, Director, Jersey Property Holdings

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

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

Ms. L. Phillips Senior Policy Officer, Strategic Policy, Planning and
Performance Department

[11:01]

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

Welcome, Minister. I am sorry we are a couple of minutes late. It is my fault. Before we start, there is a lot of us here today so we will just have a quick whizz around the table, if I may, and certainly from our side of the table. My name is Deputy Steve Luce and I am the chair of the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel.

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

Mike Jackson, vice-chair of the panel.

Connétable D. Johnson of St. Mary:

David Johnson, the Constable of St. Mary, member of the panel.

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

Deputy Mary Le Hegarat, District North St. Helier, member of the panel.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Tim Daniels, Director of Property Holdings.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

Andy Scate, Chief Officer for Infrastructure and Environment.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Tom Binet, Minister for Infrastructure.

Director, Operations and Transport:

Ellen Littlechild, Director of Operations and Transport.

Assistant Minister for Infrastructure:

Deputy Steve Ahier, Assistant Minister for Infrastructure.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Thank you very much indeed. Minister, we are going to start off with some questions on the bridging liquid waste strategy, if we may, but I am aware that we have got 1½ hours and that you have got an important briefing at quarter to, which we would all like to attend so we will be very keen to finish off at 12.30 p.m. if we can. The first thing is a general question, Minister. Under your ministry you have waste and we are looking at the liquid waste strategy as something of a review, but before we start today could we just identify the number of different waste streams that you have in your department to deal with, liquid waste being one, contaminated waste would be another. I do not know if that is how you describe it, but how many other waste streams do you have? Ellen I am sure is the quickest way to get the answer.

Director, Operations and Transport:

Liquid waste, which comprises of the sewage treatment works, the drainage network and pumping stations. Then on the solid waste side we deal with the black bag waste and bulky waste, which goes to the energy recovery facility. We have got our household reuse and recycling centre. We manage the contract for scrap metal and also for our aggregate recycling contract, which is inert waste. We also deal with green waste, plasterboard, hazardous waste, inert waste. I think that is it.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

I think the simple answer is everything generally comes our way. We are the waste disposal authority for the Island, so whether it be plastic, electronics, metals, green waste.

Director, Operations and Transport:

Clinical waste as well and obviously abattoir, animal incinerated waste.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

Clinical waste finds its way ...

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I suppose it would be fair to say, Minister, that some of these waste streams are being dealt with properly and you have got it completely in order whereas other waste streams are a challenge, not just liquid waste. Inert waste is in some ways an issue because we know there is a planning application pending to super fill. We know contaminated waste is an issue that is coming to the States. It is not just liquid. I think the point I am trying to make is that waste generally is a big subject, getting bigger and is going to be of increasing concern.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Absolutely. To put people's minds at rest, you said some of it is properly managed and perhaps some of it is not, but I think it is fair to say that it is all ... is it not fair to say that it is all managed within regulations, anybody that might be listening to put people's minds at rest. I do not think there is anything happening that is illegal or dangerous. Some of it might technically be illegal from a planning perspective, I mean illegal in terms of breaking regulations for contamination and so on.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

No, but the point I am making is that moving forward waste generally is a challenge for the Island and it is not just liquid waste that is an issue.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

A challenge, yes. No, that is quite right.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Chairman, if I can just come in, could you elaborate where the scrap metal contract is? What is the status of that contract at the moment?

Director, Operations and Transport:

We are currently reviewing that contract, Constable. We are looking at what our options are, whether we extend that contract or we go out to tender again. We are currently in that review, so we are looking at that over the next year to see what we are going to be doing and how we move that forward.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I should not ask this because we are short of time but now you are dealing with scrap metal, is there a possibility in the new contract that we may be able to recycle car parts more? Certainly it is pointed out to me on a regular basis that in this age of trying to use as little possible minerals and stuff and resources, that there is a lot of spare parts at our scrap metal dealer that could be used back into the industry but do not get used. They just get scrapped. Is that something that we could look at?

Director, Operations and Transport:

It is definitely something that could be reviewed as part of that before we go out to contract and tender, so we will have a look.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Thank you. Minister, back to liquid waste and, as I said, we are going to concentrate for the first half certainly on liquid waste because of the start of our review. The first question is to ask why you have not seen the need to seek States Assembly approval for this bridging liquid waste strategy here or is that something you will be doing in the future?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I have to say, and this is just off the top of my head, that I do not really see that we ... should we be going to the Assembly? I would have thought that it is a fairly obvious thing to need to be getting on with. One thing we will need to be looking at is funding for that.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

The reason I ask the question is the previous liquid waste strategy was issued in 2013 and approved by the States in 2014 and I wondered if there ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Unfortunately I am not aware of the history so perhaps Andy can add to that.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

Yes. I think that we see that certainly as an operational strategy as to how our current assets and current network needs to respond to the pressures that are being asked of it. The principal strategy, the previous one you referred to, certainly the new sewage treatment works was part of that in terms of the longer-term treatment of liquid waste. The approach to that is around the capacity of the existing network and of assets, so a bit more of an operational response, I would say.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is a maintenance issue, effectively. It is a long overdue maintenance issue and it is big sums of money because it has not been done because there has not been the funding but I think it is a straightforward piece of work that needs doing.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Could we assume then that the rationale for having a bridging liquid waste strategy is to just inform Islanders of what we are going to be doing moving forward?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is what I would see it as being, yes.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

How many housing development sites ... Minister, are you aware that any are currently paused until the funding for the strategy or the outcomes of the strategy are fully in place?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have had a number of people saying that there is a risk of that happening but I am not sure that anything has been physically prevented from moving forward. You have to bear in mind that if a development has not started, if they start it now there is a chance that however things are prioritised that work could be done in conjunction with it. I am not aware of anything that has been completely put on hold, not to say that there is not but I am not aware of it myself.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

I think there will be a risk of potential planning refusals if capacity is not available in the network. What we do know is that we are at capacity across the vast majority of our drainage network and our sewage network. The likelihood of refusals coming on the back of that I think is high if we do not do drainage capacity improvements.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

It is a bit of a technical question but when we say “at capacity”, because that is mentioned a number of times in here, what in numbers terms is that? If the capacity is 100, are we at 90, 95 or actually are we at 100 in many cases and we literally cannot take another litre?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is probably easier if Ellen, who is closer to the actual detail, gives a bit more and perhaps talks about prioritisation as well.

Director, Operations and Transport:

Just going back to your previous question, we have been working really closely with the housing policy team and looking at future developments. The work that will be done on that strategy, we would like to update Scrutiny at some point to try to say what are the schemes that are most likely to be coming forward over the next 4 years so that we are trying to tie in our development of the network to be able to support those future housing developments. We have put forward some bids as part of the Government Plan process for 2024 to 2027, which is effectively saying if we get this investment we will be able to support effectively those developments being able to connect up to our network. Again, it is subject to some money within that period of time.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Given the fact that we know we have got some housing targets, which may not even meet what we need, given that we have just recently passed a Bridging Island Plan, which was for only 4 years, are we not expecting all those housing sites that were approved in the Island Plan debate to come forward in the next 4 years?

Director, Operations and Transport:

I think we have commented on all of those plans within the Island Plan as part of that rezoning and looking at that work. We have given our periods of investment of what we think we can deliver within those 4-year periods, so that should support the majority of those ones that are coming on within those dates, but again that is subject to us getting the money within the Government Plan.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

We will come to money in a minute. Did you go out to consultation at all with anybody outside of your team to come up with this document?

Director, Operations and Transport:

Only with some of the internal departments and the policy team. It is a very technical document and again we worked closely with the Island Plan policy team and they had some input into that to look

at are our assumptions correct with what we were looking at planning for the future. It also has to be a live document. As and when we get population data this year, we will updating the strategy and the plan moving forward.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Yes. It says in the document: "In the absence of population growth models and any certainty on size, location and timing of new housing developments, it is difficult to set firm dates." It is a lot more than aspirational but it is very difficult to put any firm dates on anything that might happen in here unless you can be sure you are going to have the funding.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

You said we will touch on funding shortly.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Yes. Could you outline, Minister, the list of priority areas within the strategy you believe need urgent attention and funding? It is difficult to know because reading through there are so many touchpoints tied ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is the work Ellen is doing with the planners in the Housing Department to make sure that what we do ties in with what is likely to come on stream.

Director, Operations and Transport:

Within the plan it obviously talks about a lot of ageing infrastructure, the rising main replacements, what we are looking at investing in the next 4 years, looking at the Le Dicq rising mains, St. Brelade, Greve De Lecq and Maupertuis and First Tower and then again looking at the strategic storage tanks, certainly one out west, which we have spoken about before, St. Peter and airport. Also looking at one for West Hill, which looks and supports the northern parishes. Tied into the West Hill storage tank would be looking at the replacement of the Bonne Nuit sewage treatment works and pumping station, so again a lot more development of the works on the northern side and support some of the Trinity developments as well. We have got some works along St. Aubin's Road and Beaumont outflow. So there is a number of projects that we think are the priority on those - also included the Five Oaks within there - that we have started to work up what those schemes may be looking like. It is not just one particular project. There are 2 or 3 more projects related to each of those schemes and at this stage we have done the feasibility to look at what that funding is. Obviously we are not into detailed design for any of that work yet but we have put forward business cases for those projects and hope that we will get the funding to be able to support that so we can move that forward and allow people to connect to the network.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Would I be right in thinking that we do not need any more reviews or projects or work to be done to know that places like First Tower, for example, have got to be done? We do not need to ask another question. It is at capacity. That is the station that pumps all the liquid waste into our new sewage treatment works and it is not big enough.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

In fairness, Deputy, this is work that should really have been started some time ago that has not had the funding and we are really looking almost down the barrel of a gun. There is an awful lot of work to be done in a short space of time.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

The next question would be: are you at this very moment in time not working out how you are going to start that project at First Tower just as soon as you possibly can, irrespective of funding?

Director, Operations and Transport:

A lot of work has been done on First Tower but we are really limited to the space and size of what we can do there. That is why we are also creating the other projects across the network that will ease the pressure on First Tower.

[11:15]

First Tower can pump but you are limited to how much you can pump up through to the network. We have tried to look at the space there and trying to look at doing something different but we are very limited in what we can do. The team have done a review within that space but then they have looked at all the other critical areas across the network, as we have done with all the modelling work and the modelling data to come up with those options and trying that.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

I think our strategy really is ... I guess we have got 2 big focus points. We have got about £1 billion worth of infrastructure assets, which are in need of constant renewal and replacement because they wear out. We have also got increasing demand for the use of those infrastructure assets and so we have got to manage demand into that infrastructure as well and try and increase capacity. So certainly a number of the projects in there helps manage demand in the existing network. When people are awake obviously there is a lot more demand; overnight there is less use. It is about managing the flows through the network for efficiency, but also with something like First Tower it will

just wear out because it get used 24 hours day and so there is an element of asset renewal that is required on our assets. We have got pressures across both areas.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can I just come in, Chairman? In terms of balancing flow then, do you think you could keep First Tower going in its present physical size just by balancing the flow further out on the network?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

That is certainly the plan, yes.

Director, Operations and Transport:

We have upgraded First Tower recently, so we have upgraded the pumps to the maximum capacity and work that we can do there. But you are right, if we can have some more areas to balance those flows so that we can manage during those peaks, then we can manage First Tower better, which helps us but also we are not just needing that for First Tower. On certain parts of the network, we are at capacity or close to it.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

We read in the report that 25 per cent of the Island's pumping stations are over 50 years old, off the top of my head. How many stations is that roughly?

Director, Operations and Transport:

110.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

In total?

Director, Operations and Transport:

Yes.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Okay. Is there a contingency plan in place? Can we safely assume that the funding will be available?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, I think that is fair to say.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

So we do not need to worry about a contingency plan in case the funding does not become available?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have been given Treasury's word that they are going to make available enough money certainly to get the thing under way for the first 12, 18 months. We may be having to look at funding mechanisms going forward in the longer term but certainly in order to move straight into this towards the end of this year the funding will be available. That has been guaranteed.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

It will be subject to a Government Plan decision.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, and subject to the Assembly passing it.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Can we safely assume that this is work that has to be done? Regardless of whether or where the funding comes from, we cannot hold back?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The work has to be done and it has to be paid for and we have to have the money, because we cannot just go and do the work without the money, but I think that has been understood certainly at the Assembly and certainly as Scrutiny you seem to be fully aware of it and very supportive of it. I genuinely cannot see the Assembly saying no to this. Perhaps I am being over optimistic.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Constable Johnson has got a few more questions on funding.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Leading on from your answer, Minister, you have indicated that it is going to have to happen in any event but could you please elaborate on what discussions have taken place with the Minister for Treasury as to the streams of funding for both the initial phase and subsequent ones?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The initial part of the funding Treasury basically have said they will look after that. I am not quite sure how they are going to do it and in fairness that is not my responsibility, so I am not entirely sure where Treasury are planning to get the money from but they have said they will fit it into the ...

The Connétable of St. Mary:

So there has been no detailed discussion?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, as I say, we put the case to them. I think we have made a very good case. They seemed very accepting of it and they have said that they will ensure that we get the funding to get the thing under way and to get it moving forward.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

It will be reflected in the capital programme with the Government Plan. We have got a capital programme that is detailed in there, so we are expecting it to be reflected in that.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

You do not anticipate a struggle with the Minister for Treasury on the necessary funding?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

I think it is about priorities of where capital goes. The Government spend a significant amount of capital every year. We generally have a capital programme of about £80 million across all forms of assets, including I.T. (information technology) assets and our own infrastructure assets. It is about prioritising where that money gets spent.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think it has been readily accepted that this is long overdue and it has to be done and we are behind the curve already,

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Yes, I would not dispute that at all. Another aspect is international reputation, which is something that comes up with every Scrutiny Panel not just Treasury. Do you have concerns about the effect of our international reputation if we are not able to develop as we should do or have not done already in fact?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I have to be diplomatic as I answer. I do not think it is going to come to that. I do not think that the Assembly is going to have us allowing sewage to be running through the streets. I am comfortable and confident. The discussions that we have had have gone very well and I have been very reassured. So, yes, I do not see this as being an issue that is going to threaten our international reputation because I think the job is going to get done. There is a very efficient team and they are ready to do the work.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Some would say our international reputation is already not at its best because of the number of properties which are not on mains drainage.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The *Balliwick Express* have really tied things as far as international reputation ...

The Connétable of St. Mary:

No, it is a comment I would make 10 years ago.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

... sewage in the streets. As I say, I genuinely think that the work will be done in a timely way and will be funded.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

On the same theme, some households are apparently being denied connection to mains drainage. Could you advise the responsible developer to ensure it is connected or is it government to ensure that connections are available?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

For detail I will have to ask one of the team to comment, but I think in principle the further you get into the countryside the more difficult ... at the end of the string those properties are very costly ... individual properties are very costly to connect. If there is a shortage of money, the focus has to be on getting the main system right rather than worrying about the small independent connections at this stage, but I think Ellen might have more comment to make on that.

Director, Operations and Transport:

Obviously there are properties that would like to connect and cannot. We do not have capacity or it would be too expensive in order to be able to do that. In some ways, for us as a department it is very difficult to connect people when we know that we have got issues, because we are at capacity. We need to create this additional storage space. At the moment developers do have the option so they can put in tight tanks or something like that. That is costly but that is an option or a package plant on their property if they have got the space to be able to do that. They are the options for developers. If you are developing up a property, I think that is what would be asked of you at the moment.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Is there not a legal obligation if somebody comes to you and says: "I have a property alongside a sewer and I want to connect"? Do the Government or the States not have the legal responsibility to accept that?

Director, Operations and Transport:

No, there is no legal responsibility for us to do that. What we will do is the developer or the person will speak to us and if we have got the capacity on that part of the network and they are able to connect then it would be at their cost to be able to connect up to that network.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Just pursuing that point at the moment, are there situations in, say, the U.K. (United Kingdom) where this has gone to litigation? Are you aware of it?

Director, Operations and Transport:

That might be a different law. I am looking under the drainage law for Jersey and there may be some differences and I can get back to you on that. Certainly in Jersey we do not have the legal responsibility.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

You referred to tight tanks. My understanding was some years ago that is something the Government do not encourage.

Director, Operations and Transport:

Soakaways. So you can have septic tank soakaways, which is something the Government do not encourage at the moment. A tight tank is effectively a container that you have to get emptied if you are a household every month or every other month. Environmentally it does the job but not all developments and property have the space to deal with those tight tanks.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

To the political question, do you think it is right, Minister, that Government deny or the States deny somebody connection to main drains when their taxes pay for main drains because the capacity is not there and then ask them to install tight tanks at their own cost and have them pumped out?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is not ideal, I have to say, but it is a product of underinvestment over a long period of time. If the network cannot take it on at the moment, it cannot take it on, however unjust that might be. It is an unfortunate fact of life. If we could turn the clock back, perhaps we would have done more work on

our drains earlier and the States would have funded it properly at an earlier stage. We have not and we have to accept where we are, I think, unfortunate as that is.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Do you know how many tight tanks we have on the Island, as a matter of interest, roughly?

Director, Operations and Transport:

We have some record. I do not know if we have got the total Island because people do not have to come to us to empty those tight tanks, so we do not have a record of all of those tight tanks. I can find out for you.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

That would be useful. Also, obviously there is the cost of installation of a tight tank, but what is the cost of pumping out after that? What do you charge? When people phone up and say: "Can you come and empty my tank?" what is the charge for that?

Director, Operations and Transport:

The private sector do that work as well, so generally for a lot of tight tanks the private sector picks up that work. I do not know what the latest private sector rates are. We help on some areas where we give some free charges for the first one or 2 and then there is a bit of a discounted rate but generally the private sector picks up that work.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Is that one or 2 every year?

Director, Operations and Transport:

One or 2 every year, but if you have got a tight tank normally a family of 4 might need that tight tank emptied every month.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

That leads to another question about if these are new costs to sort tight tanks or whatever, that is something the developer will have to fund himself, presumably?

Director, Operations and Transport:

A householder. I will say from my experience that if you are developing your property you look at those options and that is something that you have to fund yourself, or if you can connect to the network and you are not then you might have to fund your own pumping station and effectively connect through that way as well. That is other options that are available to people.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Just on the tight tank again, I understand you say there are 2 or 3 emptying visits a year. If the only means of coming out to the development is to install tight tanks, is that not something that the Government should bear more rather than throw it on to the householder?

Director, Operations and Transport:

That is very much a political decision I think on that side.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

I think it is seen as a cost of development, so it is the infrastructure that is required to support the development, no different to a road connection or other forms of infrastructure. They are all borne by the developer in the development.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Yes, but there is an ongoing charge afterwards which will fall on the householder.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Similarly, if you live a distance from the main and you want to install you can arrange agreements with landowners and so on. That is a costly business too. I have been involved in that myself.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

I know, I am afraid.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The developer or the householder has to pay for those costs.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

If we have an area of the Island where people, individual units are being denied access to the main drains because they are really at such a capacity is that then the priority area to tackle first, Minister?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The priority area is to get the liquid waste strategy implemented. It is basically looking after the main structure of the drains. That is where the money has to go at the moment because they are going to have gridlock otherwise.

Director, Operations and Transport:

Some is on capacity. I also think we have got a lot of rising mains that are at the end of their life and at risk, so we want to replace some of our ageing and old infrastructure but we also want to be able to create the capacity to allow people to connect to the network, because that is the ideal solution, but again it is just the priority, how much money that we have got in order to be able to upgrade and support.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

No doubt our review will highlight it much more than we could today but my concern, even at these initial stages, is that there is so much to do that we will not be able to do it all in a timely fashion to avoid the problems that might happen, but that is just a throwaway comment. Constable Jackson has got some questions.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Historically the department has been a consultee in planning applications when it comes to drainage connections. I am trying to understand what conversations you may have had recently with the Planning Department as to whether there will be new guidelines on homes where they can approve planning permits for any capacity issues at the moment. How are you instructing your officers to respond to planning applications, is my question at the moment?

Director, Operations and Transport:

We have got a small team that comment on all planning applications. Again, they provide their comment and advice and that goes back to the planners to take that forward as part of whether they are going to agree or not to that planning application. I think there is more work that we could be doing following, once that planning application is approved making sure, I think, that that work has been carried out or that advice has been followed. Officers are trying to work closely between the 2 teams to look at how we can improve that moving forward.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Those officers, are they up to speed with the capacity issues within the system?

Director, Operations and Transport:

They are, yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I was quite surprised to hear the other day that a development in St. Brelade had had approval from the department for a development of a dozen houses and yet we are hearing on the other side there is a capacity issue at First Tower to where all the sewage will be going. I wonder what the breakpoint

is and if we are gaily just ticking off every application that comes in or whether they do have a detailed examination as to what effect that development will have on the total capacity.

Director, Operations and Transport:

I think what we have got to check is that we are not statutory ... we do provide the advice, does that follow through. I do not know the particular example that you are talking about but we need to review and ensure that that happens.

[11:30]

We have done an awful lot of work on our modelling information and our data, which has been able to help us with this, preparing the liquid waste bridging strategy, so we have got better data and information than we have ever had with regards to the capacity of our network, the issues with surface water, being able to look at developments and the impact of those developments and what we can and cannot take, so things are improving. If there are things that are falling down, we need to be made aware of it and try to pick that up.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Are you statutory consultees in a planning application?

Director, Operations and Transport:

We are but ... yes, we are.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, okay. Minister, appreciating that a lot of this is prior to your tenure of office, have you asked why problems with liquid waste management and network capacity were not highlighted prior to the debate on the Island Plan last year? You can maybe blame previous Ministers, I know, but ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not really want to blame anybody.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What has been explained so far is the Minister for Treasury or Treasury will provide the funding necessary but I have to say that is a discussion that has been brought to the surface before and every time it comes to the issue of whether the Council of Ministers is prepared to accept increased taxation to fund the necessary work. Do you envisage that is the direction in which this will have to go?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Certainly at this stage, no. That is not what has been said to me to get this project under way. We have been just told that that money will be available and I genuinely think it will. In terms of looking backwards - and I have not really taken much time to look backwards - I arrived in this job, realised there is a crisis and what I did guarantee to the teams is I would use my best endeavours to argue the case for getting the money. That is what we have done and what we intended to do.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

We all know that money does not grow on trees. Do you envisage that coming from increased taxation? All our money does come from taxation.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

In the long term it may do, but at this point in time at the initial stages I am not envisaging that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Moving on to the sewage treatment works and we were pleased to have a visit down there and were very impressed with the results of what is going on down there, what is the update on that and the completion of it and the decommissioning of the old works? Does this work and the associated timescales tie in with delivering the new strategy?

Director, Operations and Transport:

Yes, it does. We are still on track with the new S.T.W. (sewage treatment works), so it should be complete ... we are saying October but we will say the end of the year. It is looking slightly ahead of schedule, which is good news for us. There is always a few issues as part of the commissioning, which we are working through at the moment but nothing there that is going to stop it. I think it is a great asset, we are using it and it is working well. We are decommissioning at the same time, so by the end of October we will be there or thereabouts. The only thing that we are still looking at is as part of the funding for the future our sludge and our biosolids and trying to find enclosed areas to be able to contain that. That is a separate project but we will continue on with that next year on that side as well.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

In terms of long-term funding, do you have a long-term plan for how much it is going to cost to run into the future?

Director, Operations and Transport:

Yes, we do on the operational costs and we have already, from previous Government Plans, made some savings on that because of the electricity and other things, the T.H.B.(?) unit that we are using

has worked out more efficiently. We have also put in as part of the Government Plan what we think is the capital cost that we need to maintain and to be able to look after that as we are moving forward into the future.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Sorry, Chair, could I go back to ask a question?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Yes, certainly.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Previously the Environment Panel looked at liquid waste in terms of funding on a user-pays basis. While your predecessors basically joined the debate, it was deferred or put on one side. Is there any intention to or is it in contemplation that there will be brought back a scheme whereby the user does pay for collection or for disposal?

Director, Operations and Transport:

It may be a conversation for the future. At the moment certainly you cannot do any work on liquid waste charging unless you go back to the States, and that was from a proposition from John Le Fondré at the time. A lot of money is required in order to do the work that is required on liquid waste and these will be conversations that we have with the Treasury to see can it be funded within its existing spending envelope or do they have to look at other options. I think the Treasury will be leading probably on that.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

I will go back to my previous statement around the amount of assets that we have and are responsible for in infrastructure, about £1 billion worth of in-ground assets. We have also about £1 billion worth of property assets. There is a big debate to be had around how we fund their continued existence because they do wear out and they do need replacing. What that looks like going forward we have to get it on the agenda, whatever solution that might be. It may well just be a reprioritisation of existing government funding. It could be something else, but that is the scale of the problem we have. We have a lot of assets, they wear out and they do need replacing. If they are not replaced then the Island cannot function thereafter, whether it be waste or water.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

The user-pays idea has not been jettisoned. It might have to be returned to?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

If it does get worked on it is potentially something to look at but, as Ellen said, we need to go through various approvals and would have to come back to the States Assembly for that debate.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

You mentioned water there, Andy. In the U.K. we see the vast majority of liquid waste treatment works aligned to water companies where they do water and liquid waste under the same umbrella. Is that something that you think we should be looking at over here?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

It is something that has been raised previously, so it could be something we look at. I think ultimately that would lead to a charging debate because I think water rates and water disposal rates elsewhere in other jurisdictions do cover liquid waste as well as drinking water supply. We just do not have that. I think we would need to wrap that up in the same States debates really as to whether there is a different delivery model or not.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Okay, well, that might be for another day.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think in fairness it has got to be carefully considered because people will feel that they pay a certain amount of their taxes towards what they are getting at the moment in terms of waste disposal. So it may be a case of looking for something that handles the increase that reflects the undercharge that has been in place for some time, if that makes sense.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Yes, okay. Well, I am sure there will be a lot of people interested in that conversation.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is a complicated one and that is very much in its infancy. We are probably going to come on to it but the whole funding of the whole Infrastructure Department is something that we are taking a look at it. We will come on to it when we talk about property. As I say, I think that all fits ...

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Okay. Well, we are almost halfway so before we move away from liquid waste, just a couple of really quick ones that I thought of here. Am I right, Ellen, that a certain small amount of liquid waste is gravity fed into Bellozanne from the north or is it all pumped from First Tower?

Director, Operations and Transport:

Some of it is gravity fed from the north and that is where I was talking about West Hill.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Okay. That just leads to a question to the Minister, and it has already been alluded to. It was before you were elected, Minister. Hindsight is a wonderful thing but have we missed a trick in the last Bridging Island Plan with the knowledge that we have now in this plan and the fact that we can gravity feed into Bellozanne? Should not the States Members have been told there will be an absolute priority to housing sites that can gravity feed, that do not need to go through First Tower?

Director, Operations and Transport:

That helps on the First Tower.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

That is a political question. You might choose not to answer that.

Director, Operations and Transport:

But you also have capacity issues at the top of St. Johns and going down to West Hill. As part of the liquid waste bridging plan, you will also look at creating again these big containers effectively at West Hill in order to be able to deal with the sewage before it gets gravity fed down. Again it is not just the pumps, it is the size of the pipes and everything else.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

There is no one part of the Island that could help us through this crisis that we have got coming down the line. We really have issues in every ...

Director, Operations and Transport:

There is challenges in a lot of areas, yes.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

I think the other challenges, the other reasons for designating housing sites, whether it be public transport routes or near to parish facilities or parish centres and other bits of the community, there is a number of other reasons why sites get allocated. Drainage could be one of those but I think there is a number of other things on the list as well to assess.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

You will be pleased to know we will leave liquid waste there for now but obviously we will be talking to you a bit more about that in the coming weeks. On the subject of liquids, Deputy Le Hegarat has got a few questions about flooding.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Yes, Grands Vaux flooding and future flood protection, Minister. We were advised in our last quarterly hearing that a flood assessment report was being worked on by Government that would set out what happened and what the short, medium and long term measures are that could be put in place to protect against future flooding. Can you update us on progress with this and when the assessment report will be published?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I have to say that a good deal of work has been going on between Jersey Water and the Infrastructure Department. Correct me if I am wrong, Ellen, but I think it is once a fortnight that you meet.

Director, Operations and Transport:

Yes.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

All the things that we said would be looked at are being looked at. I think there is an update meeting with the Grands Vaux residents pencilled in for late June and what we are hoping to have is a full package of measures ready some time in September before we come into the winter period. Ellen can state a little further in a bit more detail.

Director, Operations and Transport:

As the Minister said, we have got like a multiagency group set up. Our officers and Jersey Water officers, as well as the Met team, are looking through all the options with regards to the flooding issues at Grands Vaux, so looking at what happens upstream, what happens downstream, looking at are there any options with the reservoir to look at doing things differently and also looking at Met data so people get early warning. There is lots of different projects. We are working closely with Jersey Water on these projects. The officers meet regularly and there is a project board that it reports to. What we are hoping to do is get some recommendations ready by certainly end of August, beginning of September, so we can maybe see if there are any short-term things that we can do, some quick wins that would make a difference before we enter the winter again. Then if we are looking at attenuation of some of these bigger schemes or looking at upgrading the pipes downriver then we will try and look at getting the investment and delivering those projects moving forward. There is a lot of work that has gone on within that space and there is lots of different options that we are looking at.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

If it helps, you mentioned a report. There is a report that I have drafted as the chair of the Recovery Co-ordination Group. That is a post-incident report, so it is effectively a report that says what happened, what damage was incurred, how did agencies respond, what learning has come out of the event and the response. That has got a number of recommendations in it covering a number of areas, so that is the first stage report and then the work that Ellen and the Minister have highlighted is around some of the practical solutions focus as to what can we do differently. There has been some learning from the event about how different agencies responded. Some of those I would broadly put into how the infrastructure works is one area of focus, how we forecast rainfall and how we get flood warnings to the community, whether it be this area or elsewhere. That is something that we are looking at. How agencies respond, because obviously we have got a number of agencies working in this area and I think there is some longer-term thinking that will go into different portfolios, but planning rules and things like that about what we build where and that sort of thing. The main focus is looking at how can we get the infrastructure in that catchment area working more in concert with each other. That is where our focus is going to be and the upstream management, downstream management, then the immediate area itself around the reservoir. That is where there is a lot of technical work going on at the moment.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Will that report become available widely to the public or at least to Scrutiny?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

Yes, to both. I think the aim is to ... it is a fairly factual report, it has got some recommendations in there. Some of those recommendations have been as a result of public feedback through the public meeting, for instance. That was a very helpful public meeting we had with the Grands Vaux residents and they raised a number of issues, which were very good suggestions that we have added into the report. So, yes, we definitely want to share ... we are aiming to send it to the Council of Ministers next week and will certainly share that with Scrutiny and then it will be more publicly available. It generally just signals where the work is going to be. It does not have all of answers in there but it does say ... we are about 4 months on, so it is about this is what you need to be working on, Government and other agencies. That involves the parishes, involves Jersey Water, involves ourselves and then the blue light responders as well and indeed Andium.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Talking of Andium, Minister, are you able to update us on timescales of when displaced Andium Homes residents will be able to return to their homes?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

To be honest, I have not got the absolute detail. Andy, have you got any details?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

I do. If I can just refer to an email that I received this morning, which is exactly giving that answer, if you just bear with me. We have 18 properties that were affected as a result of the flooding, 16 of those were in Nicholson Close, 2 were in Pillar Gardens. We have 7 families already returned home within the ... Andium have done a lot of work around drying the properties out and then repairing them, effectively. There were 4-beds and 2-beds affected. All of the 4-bed houses have now been reoccupied, 4 other homes will be completed and returned by 12th June.

[11:45]

We have got 7 families of the 18 who have chosen to be relocated elsewhere. So at the moment, 11 of the 18 are back and then we have 7 that will be vacant and they will be reallocated again.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Am I right in thinking that some of them will not be utilised again?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

At the moment, Andium's focus is to get all their properties back in use.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

All back, okay because I know there was some sort of ...

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

Yes, there is a conversation about what the longer-term solution is there in terms of, firstly, flood defence measures on those properties, if they are required. Ideally we would not need the flood defence measures, so the work we are doing that has already been referred to is about how we manage water in that catchment area. Our aim has got to be to prevent water that needs handling in the first place. That is our first primary focus. If water does need to get handled, we need to make sure the drainage system is working efficiently. We also need to make sure that properties are protected efficiently as well. I know Andium are looking at some improvements to flood defence, some practical things on doors and windows, that sort of thing. They are updating some of that. There is also a longer-term conversation about that specific bit of that estate is quite low-lying and whether it is rebuilt at a higher level. That is something that Andium spoke to residents about already. That is obviously a much longer-term solution if you build things higher on a podium then they are more flood resilient.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Thank you.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Andy, you mentioned 18 homes. Is that the total number of homes that were affected or is that just the number of Andium homes?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

They were Andium homes.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

What is the total number including private residents?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

We do know there were some private homes affected. One of the learning points from this is how we gather data across private ownership is a bit patchy. We have gathered information from residents at the public meeting, so a number of private residents informed us that they were affected but a lot of private residents then sorted their own arrangements out for drying out and recovery, that sort of thing. A lot of the focus has gone on the 18 Andium homes. That is where I still think we had the primary sort of damage. There were other private properties affected. A number of private gardens were affected. We also had the tennis club affected. They were very clear what happened there. We also had another couple of private homes did get water ingress, then it went and those homes have cleared their homes up, sort of thing. It is one of the learning points from this as to how do we really capture all of the effects across both public and private ownerships. I do not think we can guarantee that we have captured all of the damage. We do not have a consolidated list of everybody who has been affected, so we have relied on people telling us that they have been affected rather than something more systematic.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

You say you are drafting or you have drafted a report. Are there any initial headline costs to resolving these issues? I imagine that there are again some very big numbers.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

Yes. It could vary from a do-nothing, which we would not advocate, up to a do-a lot, especially if you are putting capital investment in and building new structures or ways of holding or managing water that could run into tens of millions of pounds. What we are trying to do is make sure that we are using the infrastructure as best it is designed at the moment. We know we have some pinch points. There is a couple of pinch points in our drainage networks that we have identified, well, the public drainage networks. That includes parishes. Building new structures that hold water back

further upstream are very expensive, so we will try to avoid that. The aim here is to get the best cost benefit really and if we can use the existing infrastructure more efficiently that has got to be where we focus our efforts really because we know we do not have the money to go and build tens of millions of pound worth of new drainage infrastructure.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

No, but at the same time, let us just say 20 homes, even if you rebuilt them all at £500,000 a pop, for £10 million you could almost be guaranteed that those properties would never, ever flood again.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It still would not stop flooding happening in that general area, like the tennis club and ...

Deputy S.G. Luce:

The point I am making, Minister, is that valley sits at the base of our largest catchment on the Island and we will not be able to stop the water coming down it.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The question has to be can we manage it. That is the big question. It is the elephant in the room that everybody sort of dances around not wanting to talk about it, but is reservoir management the answer to the problem? If it is, it is a much cheaper way of dealing with it than spending tens of millions on housing.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I am sure we will get there, but I am under the impression that even if Grands Vaux reservoir was empty at the start of one of these large rainfall events that it would fill up very quickly and we would still have the flooding. That might be something we need to consider.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

The technical work that is going on at the moment is not just about capturing water and holding it. It is also about how we distribute water away from the area, so how do we utilise all of our pumps and pipes and drains in the area. It is not just about holding water, it is also about distributing it at the same time to keep levels managed. That is where a lot more technical people than me, hopefully, will be certainly applying their minds.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just a quick one that. Have there been any insurance connotations? Have you had discussions with insurance companies? Will people still be able to get household insurance on these houses?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

We had certainly some early conversations immediately post-event. I say “we”, that was mainly via Andium because the question has been raised about insurance. It is very clear from insurance companies here that insurance premiums have never been loaded around this issue and people have never been refused insurance because of this. The insurance products for this area and in other areas of the Island are all there, so I think it has opened up a bigger conversation about how Islanders are insured and we know that many Islanders in some areas are not insured at all and some are. That is something that has become quite clear in this event but it has also been clear in other events that Islanders are not buying insurance to cover against risk in certain areas. I think it is a bigger societal conversation we need to have.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Okay, Minister, we are going to go from here to a briefing that you are going to give States Members on the hospital. For the benefit of the public, could you just give us a very quick overview on where you are with the hospital project at the moment?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are just reaching the end of the strategic outline case, which is what is going to be given to the States Members shortly after this, and that is an assessment that has been undertaken utilising both the Gloucester Street and Kensington Place site and the Overdale site. The work that has been undertaken is an assessment of putting acute on one site and ambulatory on the other. I do not know how much I can or cannot say here, but the assessment compares the 2 models and it is fair to say that one model comes out with all of the 5 essential criteria as good and the other one comes out very good. I think both options can work but one clearly is preferential to the other. It also involves a health facility at some stages rather than just mental health facilities, stepdown beds and some dementia care. That is a fairly big piece of work there as well and the retention of Les Quennevais. That is it in round terms.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

When you say retention of Les Quennevais, is that in perpetuity?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Longer term, yes.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Any suggestion that we will be acquiring any more land in Kensington Place to move the budget forward?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, there is an intention to ... we are certainly investigating the possibility of purchasing Sutherland Court on the one hand and the 2 small shops at the other end of Kensington Place that knock on to the junction by the park.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Okay. That seems eminently sensible to me. We will not dwell on the hospital in anticipation of this but I just wanted the public to be aware.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There is a presentation and that will come to the main issues.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Switching major projects, can you give us an update as to progress on the construction of a new government H.Q. (headquarters) building to be completed by the middle of next year?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Strangely enough, I was due to have a full update yesterday but the meeting had to be cancelled for various reasons, mainly down to hospital stuff, but what I do know is it is running slightly ahead of schedule.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Ahead of schedule?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes. With that in mind it could probably make sure that we will be finished on time, July next year.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

That is fine.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Fort Regent, closure facilities and future proposals. We note that the active gym at Fort Regent was closed as part of the long-term plans to prepare for future developments at the fort. Can you provide an update as to the next steps at Fort Regent? When will the next closures be and what facilities?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

To be honest, I have not got a list of the actual sequence of closures. Andy might be able to help with that.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

I can. As part of the process of the future direction of Fort Regent, we have always had an issue around is sport there or is sport not there? It has been pretty clear, I think, through various situations over probably the last decade that running like a municipal sports centre in the fort is not going to allow us to then regenerate it into other things. We also have some real operational issues running sport there because it is impinged upon. It is in a building that is decaying and getting older and the operational costs of running the fort is high. It is also either too hot or too cold. We have issues around the building fabric, water, electrical, et cetera. The aim of putting sport into practical sport facilities has been a big primary driver for the recent moves with the Inspiring Active Places strategy. We still want to carry that on, so the next phase will be to move the sports hall activity out of the fort into the Oakfield sports centre. That has got planning permission, so we are going through a refresh on our tender on that at the moment but it is still our anticipation to build that, start commencing that build this year. That will be game changing for some of our sports. There will be a permanent gymnastics facility, for instance, in there, which the community and a lot of our gym clubs will use. At the moment, they are set up, they get displaced, they get set up. The fort gets used for a number of things and sport never gets primacy. We also have other things coming in and out of Fort Regent, so it will be really good for sport to be in dedicated facilities where sport can exist. That is where we are with the sports facilities side. The conversation around the rest of the fort really is then starting with structural, we are doing a structural assessment of the roof at the moment. We have had a number of previous thoughts, I think it is fair to say, on the fort. Some previous thoughts have been to keep the roof; the most recent ones have been not to keep the roof. We want to make sure that before we make that decision we know exactly what the structural integrity of the roof is now. It is getting on a bit in age. It is many decades old, so that bit of work is live currently. It is a structural assessment and once we have that we will marry that up with other condition surveys that we have got across the building. What we do know is that the electrical system is very old and it is very complex. The plumbing system is very old and it is very complex. We have asbestos, we have leaking rooms, the building fabric is ageing, I think that would be fair to say and everyone can see it. Once we have those base bits of information completed, there will be a conversation that we need to have politically, publicly about how much investment we are willing to bear, I think, to keep the fort going.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Is the fort still safe for the public to access, given what you have just said about electricity and plumbing?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

Yes. We have to actively manage it. It is an old building so it gets active management and our property team under Tim do a lot of work, so we focus on the things that have to be focused on. Most of our property spend goes into managing health and safety issues. It does not go into spend on betterment in our property estate. It solely is on keeping our property alive, if I can use that description. Yes, it is safe but it needs constant attention.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

So, Minister, when will be the proposal for what happens next with Fort Regent then?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is a pretty good question, Deputy. The way I look at it, we were presented, when we came into office, with a report that I think had cost £250,000 proposing all manner of different things, none of which were feasible. I think that added to ... perhaps somebody can help me as to the number of reports. Tim, if you can tell me how many reports have been done?

Deputy S.G. Luce:

We need a report to work out how many reports we have had for Fort Regent.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

To be honest with you, there was another proposal that we carried out another report this year and I said, no, I am sorry, we are not going to do that. What I thought we would do is find out what it is going to cost to ... what are we dealing with, what condition is the building in and what needs to be done to make it wind and watertight and is it viable to repair it. I think before you know what you are dealing with it is very difficult to decide what you are going to put inside it. Perhaps that is just a little bit old-fashioned, but I am certainly not in a hurry to see lots of taxpayers' money get squandered on putting bright ideas about what the public sector might do and the private sector might do, putting hotels and so on. I think we need to know what condition the building is in before we decide on the direction of travel. That said, we have got some people in the team that know where sport has gone, what might or might not come back, and I think we have got enough reports that we can skim through to get an idea of might be possible in there in various scenarios when we do find out the condition of the building.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

So what you are saying is potentially you could have some sport back there?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is a possibility. I do not think it is something that we would rule out. It is a big covered space and the Island has not got any sort of entertainment centre for wet weather, for tourists and for local kids,

but I do not think we need to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds getting lots of people to look at weird ideas. I think we have got some skillsets here that can perhaps come up with some ideas in-house.

[12:00]

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

I think our challenge would be then how we operate the fort. At the moment our sports division within the department generally operates the fort. They will be going into their sports centres and operate sport in sports centres. If we are to reintroduce any other uses up there ... we have a number of current tenants. We have a soft play, for instance. We have the Ballet D'Jerri up there. We have the vaccination centre. There is a whole host of different uses that are currently going on in the fort. I think the public response we have had over whatever report we refer to still wants to keep the fort as a covered indoor space either for entertainment or for events. I think that is pretty clear. We have got to really understand it will need some significant investment. I guess the challenge we have got is how do we invest and who is going to invest. The public purse does not have the money to invest and regenerate that all of itself, so we have got to find the sweet spot there in terms of what do we think these uses are and how much are we willing to spend.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Okay. I think we will move over to Mike with the sustainable transport road map.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Indeed. At the last quarterly hearing, Minister, you told the panel that work was progressing on the sustainable transport road map and that it would be published in June. Is it still on track to be published next month?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is indeed, yes, the preferred strategy, which maps out ... I have seen a draft copy and we are finalising that now, so some time during June that will be out.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just to develop a little bit on to road transport, in terms of roads are you on track in terms of road repairs and maintenance?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Within the constraints of the budget, yes, not that the roads are perfect but insofar as we have got funds, then yes. Ellen might have a little bit more detail.

Director, Operations and Transport:

I think, like a lot of our infrastructure, we could do with some more money in order to maintain what we have got. We have requested some additional ... I think it is an additional £1 million a year on top of what we get for road resurfacing as part of this Government Plan process. As we know, costs are going up for everything and we are able to do less with what we have got, and also just with more severe rain and everything else, you can see the conditions of those roads and some of those roads are reducing quicker as well. So Tristen is there, but I think it is every 3 years - no, every 2 years - when we go and do the condition assessments.

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

We do a condition assessment, yes, and we use that to prioritise the works.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

You are using micro-asphalt surfacing, for want of a better word, rather than resurfacing. What sort of period is that extending the life of the roads for?

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

Tristen Dodd, Head of Highways, Transport and Infrastructure. The micro-surfacing basically seals the road and stops the water ingressing. It does not add anything to it structurally, but if you get to it at the right point you can maybe get an extra 10 years of life out of it. The very first experimental surface we did was on La Grande Route De St. Jean, which is a material which is less sophisticated. That is still there now, so that is well over 10 years, so you do get a very good extension in life, so it is a good investment.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you see the department installing more in the way of speed mitigation measures, given that many of the public are always grumbling about the speed of traffic on the roads? Where do you see your department placed in dealing with that?

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

We have got the speed limit framework policy, which we agreed with the Comité des Connétables and the Island's police force, and that leads where we install traffic calming. I think with the formation of the strategic road safety group with I.H.E. (Infrastructure, Housing and Environment) we will revisit that speed limit policy with the parishes and that will determine the way forward, but where there are demands for lower speed limits one thing is clear, that changing the actual number on the sign has little effect, so you either have to enforce more or you have to put in physical measures to slow the traffic if you want the traffic to comply with those speeds.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thanks, and I am just going to slip into the Car Park Trading Fund, if I may, briefly. What is the status of that at the moment in terms of managing the outgoings necessary for providing or in maintaining the existing multi-storey car parks particularly? I do not know whose bit that ...

Director, Operations and Transport:

We still think we have got the balance. At the moment we are currently updating that model, so looking at what our long-term requirement is and doing a refresh to make sure that we have got enough money within the trading fund balance to be able to maintain our existing structures. I do not have a date of when we think that that review is going to happen on the Car Park Trading Fund. It should be ...

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

So work has started but there is a considerable amount of work to be undertaken, because there are quite a few changes happening in car parking that we have got to understand and take into account. One is to do with fitness of purpose of the car parks in the longer term because electric vehicles are typically 1 tonne heavier, so there is something about load-bearing capacity, which we are waiting for a report from the Institution of Structural Engineers on, which is going to apply to car parks nationwide. The other part of it with the sustainable transport policy is: are our car-parking facilities in the right place and are they servicing the right purpose? The vision of the sustainable transport policy is people moving/travelling to and from town who do not need to use a private car will reduce and they will travel by alternative modes, active travel, buses et cetera, and then there is a question of how you use the infrastructure you have got now best to support the commercial centre of St. Helier, but also the residents of St. Helier going forward.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you envisage the department providing better, shall we say, secure parking for electric bicycles, which can cost £4,000, £5,000, £6,000 these days, and people are reluctant to leave on a rack?

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

I think this is really what the study has got to touch upon, which is: what is the medium and long-term future of the car parks? I agree with what you are saying, as an officer, but they will have a role as a mobility hub and that mobility hub may include shared transport. It could include electric bike facilities as well as other measures where we can get parking off-street, so we can get in cycle lanes, as required by the active travel strategy, but then thinking longer term, at some point in the future when you have got automated vehicles, does that increase car ownership or does it reduce it? At the moment they are very expensive, but like iPhones, they will come down in price and if you look a long way in the future, an autonomous vehicle could carry a 7 year-old without any driver, so you have a vehicle for every member in the family. You know, how does it work in the longer term?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Interesting times. Just on a related issue, vehicle testing, can you provide an update on where you are currently regarding the vehicle testing regime, including the plan for a new centre to ensure we comply with the Vienna convention? Where are we with that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I can do, yes. The first thing we are doing is clearing up the data because I think - correct me if I am wrong - there are 140,000 to 150,000 registrations, not all of which have got a car attached to

them, so we are trying to find out exactly how many cars we have got to cater for before we decide on facilities.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

We have a lot of registrations. I think there is a legal duty to inform D.V.S. (Driver and Vehicle Standards) if you are no longer registered or the car has gone somewhere else or been scrapped, so we have got to make sure that the data we are operating with is 100 per cent accurate, because not everyone always informs us what happens to their vehicle.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I understand that, but I thought that work has been going on for some time or spoken about for some time. Have we not implemented it?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

No. It has been spoken about. We have not done a full data clearance yet, so that is ongoing.

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

I think the point on it is we have made informed and educated assumptions as to what the likely number of vehicles circulating are. The question is how do you get that definitive answer and there are lots of models to be considered. You can look at what some of our European counterparts ... at the moment, because we do not have a vehicle tax, there is not the motivation to inform D.V.S. when you scrap a vehicle, for instance, and so many vehicles have been taken off-Island and scrapped without declaring that is the case, so those registration numbers are on the database, but there is not a vehicle attached. Now, in some countries in Europe, what they have - this is just an example - is an insurance database so that you know that all vehicles are insured or are off the road without insurance, otherwise there is a question as to why you are not insuring that vehicle. So there are different approaches taken and we are looking at those as to how best we can get to that absolute figure, which we do not have now.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

In terms of compliance with the Vienna convention then, have we run foul of that or are we still compliant?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are seeking to make progress and, to be honest with you - perhaps it is just a personal preference of mine - I am not in any massive rush to start implementing stuff that is going to put another cost on people. One thing I do think is important is that we make provision in the not too distant future for testing cars that go on U.K. or European roads because they are travelling at completely different speeds. I think if we are going to use other people's infrastructure we have to comply with the requirements to make sure we have got the safety. The average speeds over here are 17 miles an hour. I do not see it as being a massive problem, but we are undertaking some work to analyse the best way of delivering the checking.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

Yes, so compliance has already commenced, so we are complying in the sense that we have legislation in place now, primary legislation, and we have testing going on already, for instance, motorcycles, light bikes as an example, so ...

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

Yes, and commercial.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

Yes, yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

We spoke of costs of roads. We used to have taxation on cars, which was absorbed into petrol costs, I gather. Have you had any thoughts about putting a licence back on vehicles so you can regulate the numbers better and get some income from that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is not a discussion that I have particularly been involved with, no.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Would you look at that in order to gain revenue to maintain roads?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

Again, I guess it is a possibility. Again, it is one of the points around our ageing infrastructure. The road infrastructure we have is also an ageing asset that needs constant attention, so, you know, we have an infrastructure rolling vote that is part of our capital programme. We always like to see that a bit bigger than it is, but it is a constant juggling act against road conditions, safety priorities and any road failures that we get.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Would you do it on car width rather than length, as used to be the case, do you think?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

Yes, we have got some quite defined rules on car width and vehicle width in the Island and I cannot see those changing because the roads are not getting any wider, so I think we are going to have to keep the road widths the same for safety reasons. So, yes, how we look at longer-term infrastructure funding I think it is a big question for us and it is something that certainly is in our minds as to what does that look like, because we have common problems across all of our infrastructure assets, whether it be in-ground or on-ground assets or property assets.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Just taking that a little bit further, when we are talking about roads, we are talking about income to provide new road services. Am I right in thinking when we scrapped car tax and we put a certain number of pence per litre on fuel, it is a tax in order to help to maintain the road structures in Jersey?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

We do not have any dedicated funding. You know, ultimately the funding goes into Treasury, we get our allocation back from Treasury, so we do not get any dedicated ring-fenced funding. We do get an annual settlement as part of the Government Plan process.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Okay, but from a general Exchequer point of view then we are seeing a reduction in the number of vehicles with ... you know, the electrical engines are starting to come on. Do we know, Minister, how many electric vehicles have been ... what the trend is? We know it is up, but do we know how many electric vehicles we have in Jersey now?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not know if anyone ... Tristen will probably be the one.

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

I do not hold that figure in my head, I am afraid. It is something we can give to you.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Okay. Well, I will get straight to the point. We are heading for 2030. The Minister for the Environment has already indicated he is not ...

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

Oh, we do have a figure, sorry.

Senior Policy Officer Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department:

We do have it, sorry. As of 31st March 2023, there were 1,936 electric vehicles, of which just shy of 1,500 were cars, 262 were vans, 151 motorcycles, one motorhome and 53 work trucks.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Okay. Do we know how that figure has increased in the last 12 months? Do you know when it ...

Senior Policy Officer Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance Department:

I do not have that, sorry, I am afraid.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Okay. The point I was going to get to is in The *Times* this morning there was a big article about the number of ... the take-up on electric vehicle sales is massive and that the provision of charging points is greatly reduced and people are now saying: "I do not know about buying another electric vehicle because I cannot charge it" and I have been bashing away about this for a long time. Are you concerned, Minister, that we get to a point where people will be saying: "We are buying electric vehicles, but we cannot find places to charge them because we do not have the charging"?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Most people would charge those at home, I would have thought, given that we are not into long-distance travel over here and, as far as I understand it, the J.E.C. (Jersey Electricity Company) have got a special offer where they ... for the installation of a charging unit for a fixed fee over a period of time, so I am not aware of it being a huge issue over here, and you do have some that plug into a 3-pin plug.

Director, Operations and Transport:

At the moment I think there is probably over-capacity, so there is a lot of charging facilities out there. I think J.E.C. have installed 100 and they are not all being utilised at this point in time, so I think in Jersey it may be somewhat different to the U.K. It is something we do have to look at and plan for the future, but there is a lot of capacity, I think, or ability to be able to charge vehicles.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Well, as long as somebody is looking at it because if the Minister does not change the rules and at 2030 we cannot buy a carbon internal combustion engine anymore, it is not something we can ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Capacity is probably running ahead of vehicle sales at the moment, so ...

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

Another debate about fuel types: we are doing a lot of work within government around our own fleet, certainly within the department. We run the Government's fleet of vehicles and are looking at a more sustainable fleet, so it is second gen renewable diesel or renewable heating oil as examples, which still give us very big carbon reductions, nearly 85 per cent carbon reductions, but different fuel types. So that is another debate, I think, about how we decarbonise government and decarbonising the Island. It may be electric, it could also be other fuel types as well.

[12:15]

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Well, I am not going to get into that debate today, because there is some interesting stuff about vegetable and animal fat, but we will not do that today. Very briefly, Minister, we are down into our last quarter of an hour and we have still got a lot of questions to go, so we will be really quick, if we can. A brief update on the implementation of a shoreline management plan.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There is a shoreline management plan. Once again, details ...

Director, Operations and Transport:

The shoreline management plan, that will be going to C.O.M. (Council of Ministers) next week, so that is looking at some projects that we can deliver in the first epoch, which is to 2040. There are 10 key projects within there that we would like to be able to deliver to help against flood mitigation and increases with tide in the future. Again, like everything else, there is a cost to delivering those

projects and we have put forward some business cases to see whether we can start getting the funding to be able to deliver those projects in the future.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Okay, we will not go there. I think that is going to be quite an interesting document.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is going to be a very expensive exercise too.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Just another one: foreshore encroachment policy, Minister. We had mentioned this in the last quarterly hearing. Can you give us a very brief update on where you are with this?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are in the process of commencing ... well, we are relooking at it, and to perhaps try to come up with a new policy and address some of the issues, the outstanding issues, for people that have gone to the complaints board and not had any justice, so that is sort of under way. Not a huge amount to update you on because this is in its infancy, but it is going to be quite a big piece of work.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Deputy Le Hegarat, question 24.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Yes, another update for you: La Collette capacity and any solutions that are under consideration in relation to the waste facilities.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Probably too difficult to say anything in detail at this point in time. As you know, we are working on 2 applications. One is a retrospective, which I think is going in - correct me if I am wrong - July, the retrospective one, to cover the work that has been done to date. The planning application will be in September, I believe, yes, because there is only a 6-month window, but that work is being undertaken at the moment.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Okay. AquaSplash contract solution. We note in your delivery plan that by the end of July 2023, which is marching to us, you will have determined the new contract solution for the AquaSplash facility. Can you provide us an update on the status of this new contract solution?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

My understanding is that has been agreed, has it not?

Director, Operations and Transport:

It is still in negotiations with Serco, so the contract is being drafted. It is currently sitting with Serco and we are just waiting for some comments, so there has been a delay but hopefully we will be able to finalise that very soon.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We do not envisage any problems with it either, I do not think.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Okay. We will move over to David.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Continuing with the theme on updates, the bus development plan; could you please advise us the progress on that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, the development of that is ongoing. I think that has all got to be completed by the end of the year because that goes out to contract, because there needs to be a one-year lead-in period if there is to be a change of operator but, as I say, all of those discussions are ongoing. That is being developed as we speak, so ...

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay, and within that context, the circular town bus route, is that something separate or is it within the general plan?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

All of the routes, including that one, stay under review. I have got some concerns about it and I think it probably serves a purpose, but per trip it is quite expensive. I think it only attracts 57 - correct me if I am wrong - users a day, which is not a huge uptake.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Again, I have got a specific question here I do not know personally. A new route 24 has been added to the circular town route. Is that what you are referring to? Has there been a good uptake?

Director, Operations and Transport:

That is one of the new routes, so the 24, which is via Oaklands, I think there is 1,400 passengers using that to date and that was from the beginning of April. Again, there is about 6 or 7 new routes that we started at the beginning of April and the team are monitoring that and seeing how successful they are being.

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

Can I just interject on that? Just from experience with new bus routes, where we have instigated them before, it takes ... you are talking about people changing the habits of how they live their life and how they travel about. These things do take some time to bed in and to build up if they are going to be successful or not. The reality of it is often you do not know for about 3 years. You can

see a trajectory. I think a good example of that was the bus routes that were seed funded by the development just off the perquage at the bottom of Beaumont, which was called ... do you recall the ... the housing development, anyway. So the development seed funded those and in the end they became self-sustaining and they became part of the bus route but, you know, you have got that people start using it, tell the neighbours about it, find it useful, et cetera, and it takes a little time to build up.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Yes, thanks for that. In that context, how about what is the relationship with LibertyBus and advertising? Do you do it, do they do it or how are new routes made known to the public?

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

The advertising is within the ... obviously the Government do some advertising when they announce that they are going to invest and they have a strategy, but the actual day-to-day advertising falls within the remit of LibertyBus, who are motivated to ensure that people are advised of it because it increases the money that they can potentially earn.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Do you monitor that or do you think it is not necessary to monitor it?

Head, Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:

We have a weekly meeting with LibertyBus to talk about all things and so those dialogues are ongoing at all times. Like everyone else, LibertyBus is struggling to find the right resources, but it is undertaking some recruitment at the moment.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay, thanks for that.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Okay. Very briefly, Minister, Coronation Park. It is very nice to see open space being gifted to the States, but we note that consultation ideas will be given out to the public and taken forward in the summer. Do you have any update on potentials for the park?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It has got a lot of potential. The trouble is funding, and we can touch on funding in the bigger sense, but we are unlikely to get any immediate funding for that, so the plan is for the moment to keep it mowed and leave children using it as a playing area for football and other such activities.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

So into the short/medium term then ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Short to medium term it will remain.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

... it will remain a grass open space for the benefit ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is it, yes.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

... and there will be no development there, as such?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Not for the time being, no.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Okay. Well, I think that answers that question. The Constable has a ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think that is probably quite a popular solution with a lot of people, just leave it open and it is classified as a ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think it might well be, yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can you just give us an update so far on the condition survey being carried out on the public estate? This may be one for Tim.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Yes, it is ongoing and we have completed a couple of major buildings and sort of centres of property - Highlands is completed - but otherwise we are on track to complete in the autumn. The information from that survey will then be put together with the sufficiency and suitability work that has been done. Earlier in the year there was sort of a questionnaire: "Does your building work for you?" or "What is the perception of the use, the suitability, the sufficiency of the estate?" and from all that information we are going to put together a plan that will enable us to look beyond the current horizon of 2 to 3 years' property management. The intention is that we will be able to understand if there is something ... if a roof is going to be getting to the point where it is going to need to be renewed in say 4 or 5 years' time, we can start to configure the capital programme so that we do not end up with a huge bow wave of activity that is required and that we can start to look and focus our attention more strategically on the way that we manage our estate. So it is progressing well, it is within budget and it will deliver the information that we need it to.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you think once you have received that information it is bound to throw up a significant amount of work? Is there capacity within the building industry in the Island to deal with the volume of work which may arise?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

I think that is something that we have to be aware of and we have to manage, but the intention is that we are not looking to do everything all at once, and then it will give us the ability to have a much more strategic view of how we approach the work, which again will enable us to deal with the industry and to be able to streamline and focus what we need, when we need it, so that we have a pipeline, an understandable and sort of communicable pipeline, as opposed to just sort of an annual rush for building projects, and that we will have something that we can communicate and use.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What is the timeline and the length of that pipeline? How far ahead are you looking, 10, 20 years or ...

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Yes. The intention is to get a 25-year horizon so that we can understand in building life terms how to manage our buildings more effectively.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

If I may say, I do not think the problem is going to be building capacity, I think it is going to be the money to pay for the builders to do the work. I come back to this business about inadequate budgeting and I think as a department we have been kept short of funding for far too long, so we are having some very detailed discussions in this Government Plan to try and make sure that we reverse that by whatever means, because I do not think we can carry on kicking the can down the road. It is very obvious in all departments, particularly property maintenance, that we are in trouble.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Given that we have seen issues with contractors going under because they have perhaps been on fixed-price contracts, in these inflationary days do you see contractors giving us fixed prices to do work?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

In the current environment, no, to be honest with you. I think if you are a building contractor in this degree of uncertainty, I cannot see that happening, certainly not until we get more stability.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

How would you propose to deal with that situation, given that we have got work to do?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think that that has got to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

Yes. It does mean the available money that we do have is going less far now. The inflationary pressures we are seeing, based on materials, contracts, chemicals, whatever, lots of inputs into our business, they are all under pressure from inflation, so what we can safely say is that we are not spending what we should be doing on our building stock. We have over £1 billion worth of property assets and we are just keeping them alive, effectively, and from a health and safety perspective.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is only a £7 million budget, which is 0.7 per cent of the total value.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Given Andy's last answer, we come to the question - our last question - that Deputy Le Hegarat is going to ask.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Yes. In your delivery plan it states that sites have been identified that will no longer be in office use will be transferred or released of leases. Can you elaborate on how many sites have been identified?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is with the office project.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

It is about the delivery plan in relation to leases and things and ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes. Well, it is mainly to do with the office project at Cyril Le Marquand House. The precise number, Tim ... as I say, there is still a little bit of discrepancy because I am not entirely sure how it is going to work and which departments are ...

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Yes. We are looking at 9 sites, but again, what is going to be done with them is a bit of an ongoing discussion. They may fall into the future provision of healthcare. Clearly there is a requirement for housing, but there are also other government needs in terms of Education and Home Affairs facilities. So we have got a number of sites, but the disposal is being ... or the future use is being considered by the future property group.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

If it helps, we can share the rationalisation of sites and which sites and buildings and leases. Some of those are owned by us, some of them are leased-in buildings that are private buildings that we pay for, so we have got a schedule of accommodation that we are coming out of, then when we go into the new building.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We will have a clearer idea next time we meet, so we can bring that with us.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

It would be helpful to know of those that we own, what are the likely uses moving forward of those particular sites.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

Yes. I think one of the conversations we do want to have is about how we do property, which is very clear. We cannot act as commercially as we would like. We have a big asset we do not reinvest in enough. There is always a lot of public commentary about us doing property, but the reality is we do not do property with a commercial focus because we are not allowed to within the rules that we operate. So we have to have a debate about when we do realise value, can we reinvest that back into our assets to keep them alive and improving them rather than the assets being taken out of the property system and being used for other purposes, so that is a very live debate for us.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

We really need to close up, but we were sold the new government building on the fact that we would be able to put everybody in one place and get rid of all these leases and properties that we have scattered all over St. Helier. Do you accept, Minister, that the massive increase in the size of the civil service is going to mean that we cannot get everybody in and use Cyril Le Marquand House any more?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think whatever the programme was we will be able to deliver that programme. I know there have been some increases in there in the last 12 to 18 months, but by and large most of those properties and most of those leases can be divided out, either sold commercially, transferred to Andium or reutilised, so there will be a number of savings. Whether they are quite as extensive as was originally said, I do not know, but there will be a fairly substantial saving.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:

Yes, so certainly the project is still looking at an annual saving of around £6 million a year across government. It is focusing on a lot of town-based office workers. The vast majority of our service workers in government are still wearing a uniform or hi-vis of some kind, so we probably have about 5,500 staff who are not associated with that building and we have about 2,000 or so staff who are associated with that building. So still the vast majority of our staff are located elsewhere.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Okay. It is 12.30 p.m. We said we would finish on time and we will call it a day there. Thank you, Minister, for you and your team coming today and we will see you soon.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, thank you.

[12:30]