



Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny

Panel

Government Plan

Witness: The Minister for the Environment

Tuesday, 1st October 2019

Panel:

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

Connétable S.A. Le Sueur-Rennard of St. Saviour

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence

Witnesses:

Deputy J.H. Young of St. Brelade. The Minister for the Environment

Deputy G.C. Guida of St. Lawrence, Assistant Minister for the Environment

Ms. L. Magris, Director, Environmental Policy

Mr. W. Peggie, Director, Natural Environment

Mr. A. Scate, Group Director

Mr. K. Pilley, Director, Planning Policy and Historic Environment

[11:36]

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

Going straight into money, Minister. Are you satisfied the level of funding sought in this Government Plan is sufficient to meet the functions of the Environment remit, including the additional investment that is being requested?

The Minister for the Environment:

The answer is a qualified yes, for now it is a good start. My position is well known. A starting point on this is that budgets for the environmental functions or the functions that sit within the Minister for the Environment is around £4 million, which is a net budget. That is a very minuscule amount of money compared with the States overall budget. I think it is about 0.5 per cent. I have always thought that falls well short of what is really needed to bring the Environment more into balance with the way we put money into our economy. But nonetheless, what we have had to do is be practical about it. It is a major start that the new Council of Ministers, of which I was pleased to join, has decided to make the Environment a priority. Therefore that is one of our 5, which meant that it has therefore received favourable treatment in the plan and there are additional funds in there. You have seen the numbers and where it is planned to go. I think that, relative to the very poor amount of money that has been historically spent on the environment, it is a very, very significant improvement but is it enough to, I think, transform the situation? I think the jury is out on that. The way I see it, this is a plan for 2020. There are illustrative figures in 2021, 2022 and 2023, but there is no doubt about it, that as we progress we will be certainly revising those figures and I believe we will be revising them upwards.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

You put £7.3 million in for 2020, that is on page 138 of the Government Plan.

The Minister for the Environment:

Let me just turn to that page for a minute please.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Could you give us a breakdown of how the £7.3 million is split across your portfolio?

The Minister for the Environment:

I think what I asked the officers to do for you in preparation for this meeting was to send to you the papers that I had had drawn up as part of the work we did in producing this plan of where the current spend was, which is £4.2 million, which I asked to be made available to you, which is what I would describe as the base budget for 2019 for the Environment team.

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence:

I do not know but there seems to be a difference between your sums and ours.

The Minister for the Environment:

The figures that I asked to be handed to you are these figures that I have been provided with. If you remember from previous discussions we had at hearings, when I took on the role of Minister I was not aware of what our budget was, I got criticism for that. But nonetheless it took me a while and I

eventually did get this list of what our budgets were during the Government Plan process because I frankly did not see how, as Minister, I could form an opinion on that unless I knew what our starting point was. I did get that starting point. I have to say I got it quite late. My memory is I probably got that around the end of May 2019. So, it was almost a year before I got that information, which I thought was frankly very poor. But nonetheless, it did give me an opportunity with the team to go through and identify areas where we need to strengthen our budget. I also asked for the papers to be released to you. I did make a late intervention in the corporate processes to require where, as Minister, I thought the current budgets were inadequate. As a result of that, additional funds had to go through a process of rigorous examination but as a result of which some of the requests I made were approved and went into the figures. They are in the figures that you have seen. I am very pleased about that because those resource improvements are, for me, a very significant movement but will they meet the whole environmental needs in the future? No. I have to say that I was very pleased that the Council of Ministers came forward on one particular one, which is obviously a very strong highlight, which is the Climate Emergency Fund. I have to be frank about this, I cannot really take the credit. It was a Back-Bench proposition which was very, very visionary and I supported strongly - I supported it at the Council of Ministers - and that decision was done late in the day and I think it was a good decision of the Council of Ministers to try and put some funds in the way so we could deliver towards that. But, as I said at the time, the costs of achieving climate carbon neutrality are frankly, I think, potentially enormous. I think what we have got there is a line of funding which is going to help us very significantly but will it meet the whole needs? I cannot sit here and say I believe it will. The work is ongoing so we get a better handle on those tasks and those objectives and the resources required and that will be coming back to the States after ... sorry, I cannot remember. I just need to check with Louise when we are going to be publishing it, but the debate will be after the Government Plan, I think.

Director, Environmental Policy:

That is right.

The Minister for the Environment:

So there will be a lodging in November, is it?

Director, Environmental Policy:

December. So of course you remember we were charged by the Assembly to bring forward a carbon neutral strategy by December, so it will be lodged at the end of the year.

The Minister for the Environment:

My apologies for diverting off there but the point is that we were having this discussion, we had to put together our Government Plan in June, which is only just very much after the proposition from

Deputy Ward had been approved and we did make an amendment about resourcing. So we were able to put that fund in the plan... that commitment to having a fund, by way I think giving us the opportunity to at least have a means in the future of funding the work in that plan when it comes forward. Obviously we have had to take a view of what the timescales will be. I think that was the only practical way of achieving it. So when you ask me ... sorry about the long speech, but when you ask me can I sit here and say: "Is it sufficient for everything?", no, I cannot give you that. Is it a good start? It is a very good start. I think the challenge now for us all is how to use those funds and to use them to best effect. That is the challenge.

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier:

I would like to pick up on one of the details. This is what I see a lot through the explanations and Government Plan. For example: "Please can you provide further details about cost?" Policy development for carbon neutral strategy in sustainable transport plan we put half a million. When we ask what is this based on, it is based on costs for similar projects. Can you please advise what type of similar projects it is based on?

Director, Environmental Policy:

Very happy to do that. Obviously that is 2 enormous pieces of policy development work. We are asked to bring forward some strategic objectives around sustainable transport and carbon neutrality by the end of the year. As of course I am sure you recognise, full engagement and full consultation with the public and full action plan details for something like an S.T.P. (sustainable transport policy) will probably not be achieved by the end of 2019 because that would be too soon because there would not be the time. So there would be strategic documents brought before the Assembly to agree and serious assessment of policies and direction of travel perhaps being asked for agreement by the Assembly. Going into the future, what we want to do is the detailed studies. There are a lot of technical studies that need to be undertaken, public engagement exercises and then drafting and then a represent to the Assembly. So when we say roughly what would the budget for that work be, what we have done is we have looked at some internal resourcing and the types of grades of officers that we would be thinking of bringing in for that work. So obviously the costs of that because it is a post. What contracts. Then thinking about the types of technical study. We contract out technical studies quite a lot so we have got quite a good idea of those costs, the magnitude of the types of tasks. These are obviously estimates but we think we know what the technical pieces are. We think we know roughly what they cost and that is why we came to the conclusion of about half a million for those 2 pieces of work. Obviously we would love to bring them in cheaper if we can, and if we can we will. But that is how we make these sorts of assessments because obviously we were asked ...

Deputy I. Gardiner:

What was interesting, I see it a lot “similar projects”. What similar projects perhaps are similar to carbon neutral strategy or sustainable transport plan? Basically the scale of the similar project that you can estimate.

Director, Environmental Policy:

Absolutely. So I will give you a good example. The technical piece of work that we undertook to look at the calculation of a standby charge that we were asked to form an economic opinion on for P.88, Deputy Labey’s proposal around standby charges, that they took into account. So that was basically a piece of work that took a certain length of time using a certain level of technical expertise and the type of consultancy that you might use. We would know the cost of that because we have tendered for that sort of work before. So that would give me a price that I would know and then thinking about the type of magnitude and task that we would be needing to be undertaking. In this piece of work we can read it across. Obviously any piece of work that we do will go out through the portal. It will be tendered and it will be of best value. So it is not a case of saying: “Oh, we think it is going to cost this much and therefore it will cost this much.” We would always tender the work and bring in at best value through the Financial Directions that we are asked to follow, which of course we have to. But I would look at a task of a similar magnitude and seniority and apply my professional experience in coming up with a rough price.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

In terms of the carbon neutral strategy, current development work is being undertaking with the Jersey Energy Forum. Who are the members of that?

Director, Environmental Policy:

I can tell you exactly. Let me show you around the table. So we have got representatives ... first of all the Energy Forum, their terms of reference and their membership is on gov.je, so I can easily forward that afterwards. But the chair of the Forum is Jeremy Harris, who is an independent chair and he comes from Jersey Climate Action Network as the chair. That is who he is representing. We have got representatives from the oil industry, from Jersey Electricity, from Jersey Gas on the Forum. We have got representatives from the Chamber of Commerce. We have got representatives from Jersey Architects. Memory test here. Other key stakeholders, we have got people who were previously on the Jersey Energy Trust. There are a couple of independents on the Forum. My memory is probably failing me for the last couple as well; 14 or 15. I think we have previously sent you through names and who they represent but very happy to do so again.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

How often are they meeting?

Director, Environmental Policy:

They have met as a group, I think, 3 times since we have worked with them. They meet on a monthly basis from now to the end of the year and we maintain contact. But of course the fundamental development work for the carbon neutral strategy lies with the Council of Ministers who of course are charged to lead this piece. The small team working on this piece of work has been at the Council of Ministers every meeting since the declaration of the climate emergency was made and we have been discussing principles and scope and policy development with them at each of those occasions.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Given that Jersey is in quite a good place, primarily because of our electricity links with France, do you think there is a risk that we could spend a disproportionate amount on other mitigation factors, if you like, leading towards carbon neutrality when it might not be cost effective for the public to do so?

Director, Environmental Policy:

I think the balance of costs is a really important question that you ask and what is the level of achievement and attainment and ambition that the Island would like in reaching neutrality. If we go back to the exam question that was set to us by Deputy Ward in his proposition, it was to bring forward a plan that aims to be carbon neutral by 2030.

[11:45]

It does not say that we definitely will be. It has an aim. Our plan will demonstrate how that could be achieved but also gives some other scenarios. So it may be look at what other jurisdictions are doing. There are quite a lot of jurisdictions that are aiming for carbon neutrality a little bit longer in the future. So we are reading across policies from other jurisdictions and looking at scenarios by which we could reach neutrality by other routes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Are there any jurisdictions that have this fortunate circumstance that we find ourselves in?

Director, Environmental Policy:

There are others with far better renewable energy so they have low carbon energy that they are using as their transition fuel. I think your point about the fact that we have got a good starting point is absolutely right but we have 19,000 homes who are heated by oil or gas. Basically all of our car fleet is petrol or diesel. There are a lot of emissions on the Island.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

But we would not need to spend any money on renewable energy. That is the point. There is no point doing that because we have essentially got carbon free electricity.

Director, Environmental Policy:

The Minister might want to go in first, but I am happy to pick that point up.

The Minister for the Environment:

I certainly do. We are talking about a long-term plan here. At the moment we know, and certainly Gregory and I have had meetings and the officers have had meetings with Jersey Electricity Company, we have had meetings with Rubis and so on. There is quite a broad range of opinions. At the moment, yes, we get security of supply of cheap electricity over the cable.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Cheap carbon free electricity over there.

The Minister for the Environment:

Well, certified carbon free and obviously that is a good starting point. My understanding is that there is a contract in place for 5 years, so I am told from Jersey Electricity, and so beyond ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

A contract with E.D.F. (Électricité de France)?

The Minister for the Environment:

Sorry, yes, E.D.F., 5 years. The question of course, we are in a world of dealing with the fallout of Brexit and whoever, and the question that I ask: what assumptions can we make about future exchange rates, what assumptions can we make about future security of supply? I question whether we can say: "Look, job done." That argument being made is we need not worry about that ever. I think we do need to look at that and also recognise that within the community there is a very substantial body of interest both from the commercial firms and from the public of wanting to be able to embed renewable energy within our network. That is reflected by other businesses who have told us in confidence of their own business strategies; I do not want to go beyond that. But there is no question, we need to look at our electricity strategy. I think it means looking at the structure of our energy market, who has access to it and so on. Pricing will be key. So this is a tough challenge and we are going to have to try and present the States with a report that will clarify those issues for us all and potentially offer us alternative routes and choices to go. But as we sit here today, I do not think we can make the assumption, which I think was from the suggestion from the chairman, that we can just think that we get cheap electricity, we need not worry about that. I do not personally accept that because one thing is clear to me, I am told that if we move to an all-electric Island and

therefore those 15,000, 19,000 users of oil and gas go, (1) who is going to pay the cost and (2) that would double potentially our electricity demand, as I understand it. We will need more energy or there will be a very substantial shift in the volume of energy requirement. These are things we need to plan for. All these issues are raised as a result by a policy objective that says carbon neutral by 2030 because our emissions ... oil and gas are very significant in our economy. We are much better placed in Jersey to achieve that than other communities that have got major carbon emissions from their electricity generation. We do not. It puts us in a good place. But if you add that, all the conversations I have had and across the table at the Council of Ministers, there is a massive reputational issue for Jersey about striving to achieve best environmental standards. Therefore I do not think that is a case for complacency in this area. We have got a policy decision of the States. What we are obliged to do is to come up with the information on what the implications of that and those decisions, as Louise said, are going to be before the States later. But for the moment, what we have done, is we have put provisions within our Government Plan of how we can answer those questions and those decisions downstream. We will follow the States decisions on the climate change plan and then what we put in place is the methods of having a climate change fund and an appropriation of money to at least give us a source for however we play that. There are lots of different directions we can go.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What sort of effort should we put into renewables such as wind, sun?

The Minister for the Environment:

Certainly, as you know, I think at the moment my understanding from again all the dialogues we are having, is that solar P.V. (photovoltaic) is very much an economic proposition at the present time. Therefore, certainly I am looking to encourage through policies, building control policies, Island Plan policies and so on to facilitate the uptake of those solar P.V.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

That comes in at 14 pence ...

The Minister for the Environment:

Pardon? I know that we have got a problem because people say to us is that the incentives through the current structure of the energy market, which is based on the single ... what we have got is an energy market which is based on a single provider's business model. I think we need to look at that and see how that works on an Island based on a decision to go carbon neutral in a renewable energy world. It is a long-term thing. It is not going to happen tomorrow. But I think the States have said you need to start on the journey. Because climate change, the way as it ... climate change is hugely importantly to the public. Everything where I go now. Every meeting that I have, every public

meeting, body, there is no question, there is a worldwide push for this and I think the States has embraced it, and it is our job to bring forward the implications of it. Those decisions are for the States. If the States want to say: "Look, fine, we will just tick the box and say we do not have to do anything about this", okay. I am determined though that we will bring forward plans that will realistically do the job.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can I take you into the world of sustainable well-being? I just wonder what you, and perhaps the Council of Ministers, what sort of level of consideration you are giving to that?

The Minister for the Environment:

Well-being is an interesting thing. Obviously this emerged ... we are moving so fast down this journey of change in the States it is hard to keep up. I am not sure I can fully. But of course the previous ... this Government Plan is produced under the new Public Finances Law, which has only been in a few months. Well-being did not exist in the previous law. It was a straight financial plan. Very sensibly a number of us Ministers said: "Look, other jurisdictions have this requirement for well-being", for example New Zealand does, I think, in their law and New Zealand, I am told, are a bit of an exemplar in how public finances are managed. Therefore that was written into the law. How we are going to do it I think we are going to find out ... we are going to make progress as we go. The Government Plan is year one of that and I think the processes have been not perfect in a number of areas. They have been kind of dynamically developed but they will get better. Well-being is one such thing. The way I understand that is that to me that means that rather than just look at spending decisions on the basis of money and their economic value we will look at the benefit that they give to the community. What benefit people get. My belief is that on the environment section of this report, which is where I am primarily responsible, is it is about equality of life of people, of our Island residents.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

How can it be measured?

The Minister for the Environment:

The measures are of course listed in the plan... what we have had to do is we have had to pick some criteria. These are not perfect but they are a pretty good starter. I think we could have produced a lot more measures. I am just trying to find where they are in the publication. They will be developed and enhanced. One of the things that disappoints me greatly about Government is years ago we used to have a traffic light system of performance objectives. Previous Chief Executives have published this but somehow or other that has all stopped. We do not get performance reports. We do not get those measures. This (the plan) I think is a start towards getting back to that. We have

had to select a number of methods. We were not, as Ministers, allowed to have more than a certain number. So I am still struggling to find the page in the plan.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Can I just take you back to the climate ...

The Minister for the Environment:

Page 88, there they are.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

At the moment I think there is £5 million in the Government Plan to go into the Climate Emergency Fund, that is right?

The Minister for the Environment:

That is an initial start.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Obviously that is from the Consolidated Fund, so that is from revenue.

The Minister for the Environment:

It is from reserves.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Why was the Strategic Reserve not considered to provide that £5 million because I would call a climate emergency a rainy day, and also are you considering, as far as financing this large expenditure, it could be for transfer into renewable energy over time, are you considering things like a green bond, which obviously you would potentially use Jersey's finance industry? You know, I believe, I was talking to the United Nations last week and there were 2 green bonds in existence. There is a blue bond which is coming on at the moment as well. So are you looking at these sorts of funding mechanisms which will spread it over time and do not land it out of our current account on to offset?

The Minister for the Environment:

I think those are really good ideas. Firstly, can I respond to why the proposal was out of the Consolidated Fund and not out of reserves? Frankly I have not a clue. Nobody gave me a choice.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It strikes me that a rainy day fund should be used for an emergency.

The Minister for the Environment:

What we are is ... let us be clear about it. You know how things work. We have a highly corporate government with our chief executive in firm control. Yours truly, John Young, Minister for the Environment, does not get asked how boxes we slot the money in, in the budgets. I was content. Right, I asked for £10 million, I got £5 million. Right, so are you going to turn around and say: "No, I am not having that" and do I fuss around where it has come from? No.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

You can supplement that £5 million with from £5 million from ...

The Minister for the Environment:

I think it is a good question. I am going to duck out now. Have I got a say, again as the Minister for the Environment, how we fund huge capital investments beyond the scope of what is in here? I hope I would have, if I am in post, but I suspect they might be beyond my time, as it were, as a Minister. But nonetheless everywhere one goes people are coming up with really novel funding ideas like that. At a conference I attended last week every jurisdiction, in fact we are in public so I cannot name the jurisdictions that are already working on that. I would hope Jersey will play its part because we are an international finance centre and we should absolutely link up our financial capability and our international reputation with how we deliver carbon neutrality and making our world secure for the future. We need to do that. That will put Jersey in a good place. Sorry, Louise wanted to get in, I think.

Director, Environmental Policy:

I just want to remind ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I think she is just worried where you were going. **[Laughter]**

Director, Environmental Policy:

It was just to add in that of course the £5 million, you are absolutely right, comes from where it comes from. There is also a proposal to have an above R.P.I. (retail price index) increase on fuel duty, which builds into the fund, which at the end of the plan, if that is adopted, brings in an extra £13 million. So of course the £5 million plus the £13 million gives the war chest the £18 million, which is obviously a substantial amount of money. Again, picking up on the Minister's point, not knowing what our carbon neutral journey is just yet, because it is not agreed but recognising there will be costs, what the fund does is allows for hypothecation and further money to come from all sorts of different sources. I think the point that you made, Deputy, is absolutely perfect. There are many,

many ways of funding this. It does not have to be necessarily direct taxes and charges to the public. There are plenty of novel ways of thinking about how we continue to fund the response to the climate emergency. The balance of resourcing and costs will be something that the strategy will look at in principle and detailed work will carry on in this area because it is absolutely vital to be able to fund a transition away from carbon.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

You mentioned other jurisdictions and we are talking about collaboration and their reducing cost. Can you please advise what work are you undertaking with other jurisdictions such as Guernsey and Isle of Man to collaborate on climate neutrality initiatives?

The Minister for the Environment:

Obviously I was very pleased to attend the conference this weekend. Although it was in Alderney, all those people were there, including overseas territories. In particular with Guernsey, our arrangements with Guernsey on energy policy are very close. I meet regularly with Deputy Brehaut who is the chairman of their Environment and Infrastructure Committee. Interestingly enough they do not have a separate Infrastructure Minister.

[12:00]

Their Environment Minister deals with all infrastructure issues as well, which means he does not have to go through the potential differences of opinion that may occur between Ministers in this area, which is a story for another day. So there is close co-operation and our officers continue ... Louise, I think you spend quite a lot of time in Guernsey and I know because those political members in Guernsey have told me how much they value the executive support that Jersey gives them.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Guernsey, of course, have a much higher electricity charge due to the fact they self-generate.

The Minister for the Environment:

Maybe it is true that our relationship has been cemented by my approving the cable between Jersey and Guernsey, the replacement, which is now in progress and not far away from implementation because the previous cable had failed. Of course I inherited a situation where I understand, when I went to Guernsey they told me that their application for that cable had been held up for several years by the previous Council of Ministers and they were not very pleased about it. I approved that and I think it has really meant ... because I was not prepared to see Guernsey's infrastructure in serious trouble because of the failing infrastructure. My understanding of where Guernsey is, is that that will provide 60 megawatts of capability, which is enough for their summer capacity but not enough

for their winter capacity. Of course they are also looking at climate change beyond that. So there is work going on about the creation of a Channel Islands grid. Guernsey are pushing for a link to France as well which would make, if you like, the circular network. I can also tell you that Alderney have now signed an agreement with a private firm in France also to provide them tidal energy; that contract has now been agreed. So there is a lot going on that we are very close to and I am very keen ... there is no question. If we are going to achieve carbon neutrality in this way I think the islands have to work together. I think that is strongly happening.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just to explore a little bit what, in effect, is a bilateral agreement probably within J.E.C. (Jersey Electricity Company) and France. Maybe the Assistant Minister might comment on the security of that in the present political situation. What is your feel of the resilience of that agreement, Minister?

Assistant Minister for the Environment:

The contract itself is not at risk whatsoever. E.D.F. is a global company, it is not just a French company, and they are not going to put at risk any of their contracts in the world. However, we are at risk because, for example, the exchange rate. If it rises greatly our cost of energy will directly. If Brexit happens on bad terms the U.K. (United Kingdom) might decide to impose a tariff on energy and vice versa. Anything started by one country will be immediately matched. We could have 10 per cent, 15 per cent on energy, which of course would be quite problematic. What we are trying to do here is look at the problem we have been given and what it looks like in the future. So if we can solve our autonomy energy-wise and at the same time solve carbon neutrality those are the best goals possible. How can we develop Jersey and the other Channel Islands so that they have ... they probably will never have complete autonomy but they could be much more autonomous. They could generate and then instead of just buying from France we could sell back to them. There are very long-term projects that we can be looking at together. It is small, it is experimental, but the first, and I really like to see this happen, tidal power development in Alderney is going to be an extraordinary example of this if it happens.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

This is really for Louise more than anything. Last week in Uganda at the C.P.A. (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association) a gentleman from the United Nations environment programme gave a presentation about the work the United Nations have been doing to help small islands particularly. He showed that they have an amazing suite of resources including legislative toolkits and things like this and I just wanted to know have you been able to use those and see whether any aspects are worth incorporating into the work that you are doing?

Director, Environmental Policy:

Absolutely. You are right. The world is dealing with this accelerated ambition now, which is fantastic. There are a lot of great pieces of help out there. We are doing a technical piece at the moment with some technical consultants who are doing some policy read across this for us from comparable jurisdictions and best practice and taking policies that are likely to be applicable to Jersey and the relevance of them in an accelerated carbon transition. So we are using exactly those sorts of toolkits but if I could pick it up with you after the meeting to have a look at exactly what you saw, that would be really helpful. Thank you.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I have got something small. Minister, you gave the reference to Overseas Aid interim report about the consultation. What consultation was taken so far with Jersey Overseas Aid and the Minister for International Development on the climate change emergency?

The Minister for the Environment:

It would be good for you to talk to the Minister for International Development direct but certainly we have had discussions on our regular meetings at Council of Ministers when that has come across about how far our ambition goes about whether or not that involves sequestered carbon and so on, and whether that means buying into carbon funds and so on. I think that work is ongoing. I think that will feature part of our plan but conceptually I think there is no question we need to link up. Certainly Deputy Labey has strongly supported the carbon neutral work. She has particularly raised, possibly more as a Deputy, the issue ... she took an issue to the States about having a review of our energy market because her view is that the current - I do not think I am misrepresenting her - our energy market system in Jersey does not favour the uptake of solar P.V. and she wants changes to make that happen. But anyway, we produced a report. That is in the public domain. That work will be followed up. But again, I think there is potentially conceptually, I see real big links between the work we do here and what we do in our overseas work and Jersey's reputation. I do not know if Louise wants to add to that.

Director, Environmental Policy:

Just to add that we have a working group that comprises Jersey Overseas Aid, Durrell, some other local players who are involved in carbon sequestration locally so Trees for Life, the National Trust. The aim of that working group is to discuss the potential for using offsets and local sequestration around achieving neutrality. So we have got a piece of work going on with them but will feed into the carbon neutral strategy that you will see at the end of the year because obviously there is the potential for a portion of Jersey's unmitigated carbon emissions to be offset in international markets as one mechanism to reach a neutrality if we choose a very early date and we still have carbon emissions. So obviously understanding how we might be able to link our overseas aid objectives with carbon reduction projects and good environmental projects and projects that achieve other aims

that we are supportive of is obviously an exciting possibility. So we are working with Jersey Overseas Aid to present something to the States that might suggest how that might be possible.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Minister, what do you think it says about the Government's priorities that it spends more on overseas aid in this Government Plan than it does on Jersey's local environment?

The Minister for the Environment:

I am definitely in support of Jersey's work on international aid. I supported that. I think it is all part of having a rounded society.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

But do you think it should spend more on international aid than it should on its own?

The Minister for the Environment:

I do not want to be drawn into that comparison. Does one ever succeed in one's case by denigrating somebody else's? No. As far as I am concerned, that is correct that we have got that international identity. We live in a risk world and we need to do that. What I am concerned about is that locally we have had too much emphasis on our economy and growth in our economy and money and less on recognising our beautiful environment and how we look after it and care for it. I have made comments today, and in the press and I shall carry on doing so. But of course as an individual Minister I am entirely dependent on how fast my colleagues and the Island are prepared to go. This is a good start. Is it enough? No, is the honest truth but it is a good start. I suppose being practical, we have got a very small team and what I think we have got are plans that are within our capability. There probably is not any point in saying: "Let us have a grand plan" and we are going to have a huge increase in resources that we cannot deliver. That would not be sensible. What we have put on the table is what can be done. It is an ambitious plan.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

One more question about carbon neutrality through trees. You previously voiced the support to plant the equivalent of 30 football pitches full of trees to make a cultural land in Jersey. When can we expect you to bring forward legislation to begin this procedure and how much it will cost?

The Minister for the Environment:

There are 3 bits of work. First, we are working on Planning Law changes to give us a better regulatory framework for existing trees. We are losing too many trees. We are losing 4,000 trees a year; not good enough. Gregory is leading on that work. Perhaps I will ask Gregory to speak on that in a minute. But the other aspect of that is the review of the Agricultural Land Law where at the

moment it is not easy for landowners to plant trees within the agricultural sales and licences. I have got it on my list to review. That probably will take a bit longer than the Planning Law changes, which are in progress. Then we have got major money here on trees, which is one of the aspects of where I interfered, if you like, with the Council of Ministers and said: "There are some core environmental business where I want that money" and we got it and Gregory is leading on that project.

Assistant Minister for the Environment.

The first thing that we are trying to do is tree protection. It is not terribly strong in Jersey compared to almost every other jurisdiction. So this is almost done, we are very, very close to that. The other bit, you are talking about replanting. It is a little bit more nuanced than that. The first thing is that it is not terribly expensive so it is not something you need a huge project for and it is a little bit more nuanced than just having a new forest. Tree growing accumulates the carbon that composes it. After that you get about 2 per cent of the restoration staying in the ground if you do not disturb the ground but it is very, very little. There are other forms of reforestation or rewelding that are much more beneficial to the environment but we are looking at these and our very first project was this idea that we get. So we are going forward with this.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

This takes us neatly into countryside access and I believe you had good stakeholder response when it went out to consultation. There was sort of continuing work going on with Jersey Water and National Trust, how is that proceeding? Are you continuing that work?

The Minister for the Environment:

On the access?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes.

The Minister for the Environment:

The access project, the money we have in the Government Plan I will need to address. What is frankly an appalling situation where a department has had responsibilities for looking after large swathes of our wildlife areas and coasts and parks and no money to do it. Thankfully we have rectified that but we have gone beyond that as well. It is about how we can improve access to the countryside by arrangements with other bodies and I think Willie is probably better placed to talk about the detail of that work. John Pinel is leading it.

Director, Natural Environment:

Our staff are engaging in conversation with the bodies that you have referred to, Water and Electricity. We are also engaging with private landowners and the National Trust to try to establish where best we can get bang for buck in terms of planting. That sounds a bit difficult to reconcile in this conversation. What I mean is that contrary to simply planting in agricultural areas, some of which may be good areas to take land out of agricultural production when it is only marginal land. The thought is that we do not just want to grow these trees for carbon sequestration. Why do we not use them for the improvement of the local biodiversity, increasing corridors, increasing areas ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It is not necessarily about planting, it is about pathways and access to the countryside for town residents, if you like, and making it easier and leaning towards the sustainable goal.

Director, Natural Environment:

Yes, you are right. I got side-tracked there. The 2 are hand in hand essentially. So the conversations are where would we wish to leave set aside where we would wish to have pathways, where we would wish to have tree corridors, et cetera, and try to make accessible pathways for not just walkers but cyclists or the equestrian community as well.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Would you ever consider working with law officers to establish how pathways could be made more legal, shall we say, more formal than they are at present?

Director, Natural Environment:

It is a very good question insomuch as certainly in dealing with some sectors of the community who have large swathes of private land which are adjacent or immediately abut rather public land.

[12:15]

The relationship is not necessarily always clear as to how we would go about accessing that land specifically in terms of the willingness for those private landowners to take any risk on that land. There obviously is a concern about people crossing that land having an accident on their particular cliff path, for example. Where does the risk lie? Who fronts up to that risk? That is a conversation we are currently having with our Property Services team as to how we would engage with those private landowners to try to limit their risk but try to increase our pathway network across the Island.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It is central to get people off the roads and away from the risks of cars.

Director, Natural Environment:

Which is one of the major benefits.

The Minister for the Environment:

One of the issues I would like to raise and I voiced this but it has been misunderstood. Where it is possible I would like Government to acquire more area of amenity land into public ownership to help us with that, particularly in St. Ouen's Bay in the Coastal National Park area because there are opportunities to buy land. I think somehow or other we ... years ago those opportunities were taken up but we seem now to not be doing that and it is something I would very much like to see, where possible, through willing landowners, we can open those up and provide public access.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Going to the Island Plan again, you have asked for additional funding for the Island Plan this time, another £650,000 is being sought for approval in the plan in addition to the £350,000 which has already been secured. We are not quite clear what the reasons are for this. You did give us a bit of an answer. It is not clear what the detail of the £650,000 is required for.

The Minister for the Environment:

The honest truth, it was never possible to do the Island Plan on the sums that were available from the existing contingency fund. That was ridiculous that we could get the job done for £350,000, which is what we have had voted to us, if I am right, in 2019. I can tell you that when I worked in Alderney and I worked a similar project, that cost around £300,000 and the Jersey project is infinitely bigger. So obviously this is the remaining part of it. What the department has had to do is produce a plan, as it were, right through to completion and work out how they were going to make best use of that money. I have not been party to the contractual arrangements that have been made with our partners to allow us to do that - and I am sure Mr. Pilley will help us but for me it was always a £1 million task. Always. No question. In fact, some people might say that is a huge sum of money but it is a plan for 10 years, which is £100,000 p.a. ... some authorities would have clocked up £100,000 every year, put it in the bank and then 10 years do it. But no, budget cuts meant that was taken out. Any provision was taken away. Therefore one is in a position they need to bid for it. Could Mr. Pilley explain a bit more of the detail, how we got to the million?

Director, Planning Policy and Historic Environment:

As the Minister said, the review of the plan comes around on a frequent basis but with quite a long time period in between so some are at least on a 10-year basis. Provision is not made for it on an annual budgetary basis so when the time comes to review the plan we need to secure additional resource to do that. As we discussed in the previous session, we have approached this review of the plan in a different way to what we have done in the past. So we have engaged a strategic

partner to support us through the process. That obviously comes at a cost. I think it is worth bearing in mind that when we did the last Island Plan we had certain pieces of work that helped form our evidence base for the review of the plan. Last time we reviewed the Island Plan we relied upon work that had been done previously so some of you may be familiar with the countryside character appraisal, which was done in the Island in 1999, which helps to form the basis of a lot of the countryside policies that we have; the green zone and the Coastal National Park policy. That was not reviewed when we did the 2011 Island Plan. It needs to be reviewed for the current Island Plan because it is now quite dated information. We are reviewing that.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The strategic partner, which you justified a strategic partner previously, half a million pounds which is half the budget is going on the strategic partner. That suggests they are playing a lot more than a supporting role.

Director, Planning Policy and Historic Environment:

As I suggested earlier on, they are doing a range of activities so they are providing us with critical advice. They are providing us with additional capacity. We are a small team and there will be key stages during the plan-making process where we need additional professional planning and other resource in the team. They will also be carrying out some specific tasks within the Island Plan review process. They may be helping us to deliver some of those evidence base reviews to ensure that the plan is robust. That is a sum of money that is available to use for that element of ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

When they won the open tender process was that because they were cheaper than everyone else? Were there others who tendered for this?

Director, Planning Policy and Historic Environment:

There were others that tendered for that and they were selected on the basis of a range of criteria; cost being one of those but also their experience and their ability to provide the range of support that we think we need for this piece of work. As I was saying, we are reviewing things like the countryside character appraisal. We are reviewing the urban character appraisal for St. Helier, which was last done in 2005. So these are key pieces of evidence that are very important to help inform the review of the plan. So that is an additional cost in terms of ensuring that our evidence base is robust.

We are also doing something that is called a sustainability appraisal, which is testing the plan against a framework of sustainability objectives to make sure that the plan is delivering not just in environmental terms but it is also delivering in terms of the Island's economic objectives and its

social and community objectives: that we have a plan that is truly sustainable. So that is something new that we are doing. That is standard practice in there U.K. We have not done it in Jersey before so we are doing it this time around.

I mentioned earlier on, we are also doing more outreach and engagement in terms of producing the plan and again that has a cost associated to it. I think it is also worth bearing in mind there is a requirement in law for us to subject the draft plan to independent examination with independent planning inspectors who run an entirely independent, impartial examination in public. That has a cost associated with it. We are required to do that by law and that is part of the funding.

So the level of resource that we are seeking to secure, as the Minister said, is what we think is required to ensure that what is a very significant document for the Island is produced in a way that is sound. It is produced on good evidence. It is robust and it is transparent. It is produced in a way where all Islanders can engage in the process of making the plan. We think it is an appropriate amount of money to ensure that the Island has a good plan. As the Minister said, we have got some big challenges to deal with. The Island Plan is a very important corporate document. It is a requirement under law that the Planning Committee have regard to the Island Plan in all its planning decisions. Of course, the Island Plan is not only regulatory but it is also there to make provision for the Island's development needs over the next 10 years, so we need to make sure it is well prepared.

The Minister for the Environment:

The fact it was done in 2 chunks is probably me because when I got elected Minister, because of the timetable, we needed to start the Island Plan straightaway. All that could be achieved was the £350,000 through the contingency but we always knew quite clear the project had a bigger cost and we obviously had to put it right. Obviously if we do not spend that money it will be returned. Do the job properly, I am afraid. That is what it is for.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

There is a mention on page 43 about provision of minerals and it suggests that 60,000 to 70,000 tonnes of aggregate and sand are imported annually through St. Helier Harbour. Where does that come from?

Director, Planning Policy and Historic Environment:

We have an existing mineral strategy, so the mineral strategy sits in the current Island Plan. Again, that was not refreshed for the 2011 Plan: it had its basis after the 2002 Plan. That mineral strategy runs to 2020 and we need to revise the mineral strategy. Essentially what the strategy seeks to do is to ensure that the Island has an adequate provision for aggregates and building aggregates and sand to support the Island's construction industry.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Clearly at the moment we are not importing any at all.

Director, Planning Policy and Historic Environment:

We are importing some. Members may be aware that the current strategy, if we talk about sand specifically, envisages that Simon Sand, which is our local source of sand in St. Ouen's Bay, winds down. Originally that was due to wind down in 2018. The level of extraction from Simon Sand has been lower than was anticipated because some sand is being imported and other materials are being used to substitute sand. Things like recycled aggregates are being used to substitute sand. An additional consent has been granted for Simon Sand, not extending their area of operation but just extending the time that they have to operate. That now extends to 2023. But as part of the Island Plan review process we want to ensure that questions about where does the Island source sand from in the future, where does the Island source crushed stone in the future, are addressed as part of the new planning framework. So we need to refresh that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

But has that incorporated a facility to discharge them into St. Helier Harbour?

Director, Planning Policy and Historic Environment:

If the revised strategy continues with the direction of the current strategy, which was to wind down local sand production and then to rely on sand importation, then that is right. Clearly Ports of Jersey are aware of the current strategy and we will be talking to them about the revision of the strategy to ensure that, if that is the direction that the States Members decide that we take the new mineral strategy down, that they are suitably equipped to be able to deal with sand importation.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can we expect to see mountains of sand on the New North Pier, perhaps?

Director, Planning Policy and Historic Environment:

Well, they will need to look at how they deal with that, whether the New North Quay has got capacity to deal with that, I doubt. I suspect it is more likely that Victoria Pier would deal with that.

Group Director:

I think it depends on how the sand comes in, chair, so whether it is bagged or containerised or bulk delivery it can be delivered in a number of ways, so that would have either a land use implication immediately at the port or it would potentially have a land use implication elsewhere, depending on how the product is brought to the Island.

The Minister for the Environment:

We have had some tentative expressions of interest on that, so I think clearly the Island Plan will be where the decisions are made.

Director, Planning Policy and Historic Environment:

Yes, that is right and as I say we need a proper evidence base so that when Members are asked to make decisions on this they know what the options are and know what the situation is, so it is important that that work is commissioned as part of the Island Plan review.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Would it be possible to resuscitate the pier at Ronez?

Director, Planning Policy and Historic Environment:

Who knows?

The Minister for the Environment:

It depends on the owner, I suppose. I mean, planning-wise, as long as there are no marine objections I suppose the planning issues potentially are traffic-related, but I do not know. I think, subject to planning consideration, I would not be opposed, no.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Jersey National Park, why are you the lead Minister for this?

The Minister for the Environment:

I do not think I am. **[Laughter]** This is really a very interesting one. The bits that you have got in the plan are flagged up as being the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture and I think I was quite clear that what these things are for is to use or to promote the national park, promote it as a tourism and recreational resource. Of course up until now, as Minister, I have had a lot of stick from people who complained that we have not done anything, because the Jersey National Park was formed a number of years ago, but of course it was never intended that the role of the Minister for the Environment would extend into promoting our environment in that way. What happened in the previous 2011 Plan, if you like, a planning zone was titled the Coastal National Park as a means of, I suppose, promoting the principle of wise use. Therefore excellent, outstanding local individuals came on board and put a huge amount of effort into getting the thing running, but then found they could not get any resources in Government. Of course I have explained there was just no money anywhere in the Environment budget to facilitate that.

[12:30]

What we do is do our best, but fortunately now the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture, and I am sure he has been here in front of you and explained what he wants to do, what we will do in the Island Plan work is to reconsider again what zones we have and what titles we have, because I think there has been a lot of confusion about this. In my head the Coastal National Park is a labelling and branding of an area that carries with it a certain cachet that can be promoted and used. The Department for the Environment can provide resources in terms of expertise as to what are the valuable areas of land that need to be protected, what advice we can give, in terms of setting the lead I think it is right that it is the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture, and I think one of the things I understand has happened, and I have certainly pressed for, is to release the Frances Le Sueur Centre which was a States-owned building that sits within Les Mielle de Morville at the north end of the bay to be made available to the small team to promote it and I am delighted at last, having agitated for that for nearly a year and a half, that it has happened, but it does not sit within my brief. It sits within the Minister for Infrastructure, who controls who uses what States property, not me. I am sorry, I have used it as an example to stray a bit. I do not know if there are any particular specifics on the Coastal National Park that we can help you with.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think it is identifying what the focus is on it. That is the unclear bit and clearly there are individuals involved who have put their heart and soul into it and one would like to see some clearer strategy, I think, from Government, as you indicated, as to what it is doing, what it is supposed to be doing.

The Minister for the Environment:

One of the things that I have heard them say is they would like the area redefined, because at the moment the Coastal National Park includes the whole coast, because that is in a special zone where there is the highest standard of planning controls. Whether it is a high enough standard is open to question. Personally I would like to see it higher, but I do think there is a case for splitting off the St. Ouen area, St. Ouen's Bay, as a separate designation, as opposed to the remainder of the coast. Personally I would like to see some of our inland valleys added to the special designations as well, because we do not have a great deal of woodland and where we do I want to see those as well.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

My election manifesto said that about Waterworks Valley so I would be pleased for you to do that.

The Minister for the Environment:

Of course that ties in with the work on the Island Plan that Kevin mentioned about the Countryside Character Appraisal and of course the work we are doing on trees and biodiversity. Somehow or other we have got to try and bring all these links together to create informed policy, so rather than just go along to the States and say: "Look, we want to have these protection zones here, here and there" we can justify them and explain why. That is what we want to try to do. I think that is a very separate issue to how we can - and I hate to use this word - exploit St. Ouen's Bay for tourism and recreation. Wise use is probably a better word than exploit.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It does get very congested down there and with the campervans as well.

The Minister for the Environment:

I think that illustrates the pressures very well. I have taken the view that our laid back informal way of using those areas worked well when we were 80,000 population. They work less well, much less well, when we are 110,000 and things come into conflict. You only have to go down there at the weekend to see ... I think the degree of laissez-faire regulation will need to change, and that means trying to designate areas that are special and people will need to accept, I think, some restrictions on how we can use them and other areas where we can say: "This is a place you can use" and so on. I think that is part of the work. How are we going to do that? The Island Plan will look at the big picture. That work, I think, will have to be done by others and I will contribute to it as a Minister, but I think they are all part of the issues of what happens when your population grows to the extent that it is. We have only got a finite land area, we have only got a finite number of special places and there are these hotspots that are subject to more and more pressure. Ouaisné is another one that will be coming and so on.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

With your connection with it, rather than responsibility, do you think the funding allocated to the project is sufficient?

The Minister for the Environment:

I am sorry; I am going to have to pass. I do not know. I did not have a hand in setting those figures. They are an Economic Development proposal. It was promoted and dealt with by the officers of that department and it has appeared in our ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

There was a suggestion in the media this morning by the chief executive of the National Trust that it should be spread around the coast.

The Minister for the Environment:

Really?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

To Portelet I think was a point he made.

The Minister for the Environment:

Portelet?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think it has been linked into perhaps the shoreline policy, which is gaining momentum once again and how does that link with the Jersey ...

The Minister for the Environment:

My view is that they are separate things. The Coastal National Park, my understanding of what Mike Stentiford and Jim Hopley wanted to see was a separate area in St. Ouen for the Coastal National Park. Personally, I see a difference between the management of the coastline areas, that area is very different, and I am surprised to hear that. I certainly would not have thought that those monies are going to help us look after the rest of the coast, absolutely not.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Portelet has been spoilt by development already.

The Minister for the Environment:

I am going to have to be careful here because unfortunately I end up having to do the planning appeals. The example I cite is what I regard as the awful development in St. Brelade's Bay of the Zanzibar, which I think is absolutely the worst example that we could possibly have done to our coast. I want to make sure that we do not do in that in our new Island Plan again.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can I take you to the Shoreline Management Plan? Is there action in the Government Plan to produce the Shoreline Management Plan? Does that require funding? You say it is suggested that it is fully funded and resourced. Would that be the case?

The Minister for the Environment:

This is a piece of work that is plugging definitely into the Island Plan. We need to factor in the Island Plan the effect of climate change and sea level rise, and that is why that piece of work was launched,

to give us the detail. As far as I am concerned at the high level of strategic delivery it has given us that. We have published it, have we not?

Director, Environmental Policy:

The consultation has just closed and the document will be published towards the end of this year, and then the work of the Shoreline Management Plan will integrate into the Island Plan, because what it is doing is it is giving us a lot of information and options around defending the coastal strips, particularly over the long-term in the face of climate change, rising sea levels and increased storm events, which is really the problem. That is what that work will give us.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It is a bit confusing, I think. We have a Jersey National Park, we have a Shoreline Management Plan and I think there is a Skyline Management Plan somewhere along the route. Is that still the case?

Connétable S.A. Le Sueur-Rennard of St. Saviour:

I do not think so, if you look at the buildings that are going up now.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Good point.

The Minister for the Environment:

I think we share your ... I mean, we certainly realised that there were a number, and I say "we", colleagues around the table here, suddenly realised that there is a whole set of pieces of work that all need to dovetail each other, so that is what we tried to do, is to run the consultations in parallel but they need to inform each other.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Will the Island Plan incorporate the Skyline Plan?

The Minister for the Environment:

I did not know about a Skyline Plan. Will it be in the Countryside Character Appraisal?

Director, Planning Policy and the Historic Environment:

That is right. The work that we are doing to refresh the Countryside Character Appraisal will look at what the nature of the character of the Island's landscape is. Obviously, we have some very sensitive scarp slopes and you rightly raised the issue of Portelet. Clearly that development challenged the scarp slope and the backdrop of the bay. We did revise the Island Plan in 2014,

parts of it, and we did introduce a skyline, views and vistas policy so there is a policy in the current Island Plan that enables decision makers to look at the impact of development on the skyline, but the Countryside Character Appraisal will identify where there are still bits of the Island's escarpment that are sensitive and it will make some recommendations about how we best manage those scarp lines and how we best protect them where they are sensitive.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Moving out of the country into St. Helier, the St. Helier urban environment, there was a suggestion that there is no agreed funding to enhance the St. Helier urban environment in a co-ordinated way and that it needs further consideration in 2020.

The Minister for the Environment:

I have to be frank, this is an area of disappointment to me. I do not quite fully understand how we got to that point. It is probably a dialogue that you need to have with the Minister for Infrastructure because at the moment I think he has certain funds for road projects and things like that, but from my wider viewpoint of things if we are to have to increase the density of development in our built areas and accommodate more people that has huge implications for the quality of our urban built areas. That means we have to have strategies for managing vehicles and their impact on people's lives who live there, about provision of adequate open space. For me that potentially should include buying up areas of open land on the fringe of St. Helier to try to give more breathing space for people, play facilities for children and generally creating a more pleasant environment for people to live. That requires an integrated St. Helier plan. It is a vision that I put forward and I believe the Constable of St. Helier shares it, into what we want to achieve in the Island Plan and I am very hopeful that at least we can have a planning framework for the future of our major built conurbation that will include identification of primary, secondary and tertiary routes so we know where the policies are on those and how we are going to provide those things that I have just mentioned, open space and so on. I hope we can achieve it as a planning framework. In terms of making things happen, I am disappointed that we have not gone express provision in the Government Plan for this. I can tell you now, and I do not think I am going to embarrass him, I am sure he will not be upset, John Rogers, the chief officer of D.G.H.E. (Department of Growth, Housing and Environment) and I have spoken about this a number of times and he agrees. We have both got an idea that we need probably at least £25 million to be able to make a significant difference with land acquisition, creation of public realm, improved spaces and so on with a major programme. We have not got it, I think, as an express provision, and nor do we have unfortunately yet the ministerial structure to produce an overall coherent strategy for our urban area, which is something the Constable of St. Helier and I are concerned about.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Can I ask why you have pushed on with different segments of St. Helier? We have got the South-West Plan, we have got the North Plan, and understandably you talk about ...

The Minister for the Environment:

I can explain that. It is puzzling. Historically we had ... what we are talking about is the Supplementary Planning Guidance, so it is not planning policies. It is kind of low-level detail which explain and help out and show how we mean to work with the planning policies. We had one for the north of town and obviously we have got one for the Esplanade and only the Esplanade area in St. Helier waterfront, that is 10 years out of date and it was imperative that be replaced, because it is so out of date. If you look at it it has got wall-to-wall offices, wall to wall right the way throughout the Esplanade site. It shows the roads buried, none of which has the slightest chance of anything happening, and major frustrations and concern with people that they want to see the town linked with the waterfront in some way. So we launched the south west St Helier consultation. Sorry, I cannot take credit for this. My predecessor, Deputy Luce, to his credit, launched it and he brought in the Design Council. That was a decision that I inherited, a good decision, and set in place that work by the U.K. Design Council and it just so happens that that work has come to fruition and I need to consolidate it. It will not set new policy. It will be supplementary guidance but which then will plug into the island plan next year. Sorry, it is a bit complicated. These things are quite complex but they do have statutory force, so for example that document, once it is adopted and the task for me is to take into account of consultation responses that I have not yet been able to do, to adopt that, which will then set, if you like, the guidance for planning decisions. Do you want to say ...

[12:45]

Group Director:

I was just going to say why we have previously done master plans for 2 specific areas. Mainly because they are the areas of most significant change that was likely to be seen in St. Helier, so there the north of town area and the Waterfront Esplanade area were the areas where there was significant change going on, hence a master plan was produced for those areas. I think the challenge is that we need to update those and make sure that there is a holistic view of St. Helier, which is being led through S.P.P.P. (Strategic Policy, Performance and Population) now, the Policy Department. The other thing I was going to comment on is around the infrastructure funding. We were not successful in the last Assembly in terms of getting any support for an infrastructure levy. There is a vast amount of change in the construction sector around private sector investment and I think one of our jobs is to ensure that private sector investment is also contributing to public realm enhancements around development sites, so I think the infrastructure levy concept is still a strong one. What this plan highlights is the fact that we need to set a framework to shape St. Helier, that is one thing we can do, but also the majority of investment in St. Helier through change is private

sector investment, and I think we need to secure public realm improvements through other construction projects as well.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

In a recent publication that will have 600 homes developed in St. Helier plus 150 parking spaces, we just had this last week, you are talking about £25 million that you think and your director thinks will need to be invested in St. Helier to create an urban environmentally friendly space. Do you have plans that you can say: “This is £25 million that we need and this is what we would like to do”?

The Minister for the Environment:

No, not yet.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Or you have this number, £25 million, and what it would include so we can receive this as Scrutiny and can look at it?

The Minister for the Environment:

No, I am sorry to say that we do not have the joined-up methodology yet. I recently went to the meeting of the Regeneration Steering Group and I expected that I would be able to get some agreement. That is a group chaired by the Chief Minister, but that group decided that the Minister for the Environment should not attend those meetings because there is a potential conflict of interest with planning issues, which frankly I was really disappointed in, and I have made it quite plain that somehow or other we have to find a way of having some kind of Government ministerial structure that can progress these big issues. Now, there is a reference, and I am maybe doing a bit of injustice, page 146 in the Government Plan talks about an infrastructure fund for Jersey. This is not something I have written, but something that it seems to me potentially might, if we got this right, be a way of footing the bill.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The trouble is, as with so much of the Government Plan, there is an enormous lack of detail about that particular fund because that is all the existing Government Plans about the infrastructure fund.

The Minister for the Environment:

In I.T. (Information Technology) terms one would describe this as air ware. I think the point Mr. Scate raised is significant. The previous Minister anticipated this need and he proposed the Jersey infrastructure levy which is a way of taking a very small proportion of the planning gain that developers make from their developments and putting that into the public realm, and that was opposed in the last States, I have to say from my discussions, sadly it still does not carry the support.

I have not yet been able to secure the support of my ministerial colleagues but nonetheless I am not giving up, because that is a really important principle that people who make a lot of money out of developments in the urban area should make a contribution to help us improve the urban environments that are potentially affected.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can I just go to your presence or now not presence at the Regeneration Steering Group? Clearly there has to be an environmental input. Would it not be achievable to have an Assistant Minister on that group?

The Minister for the Environment:

That would be a sensible plan. You probably sense I was extremely disappointed that that happened. It only recently happened. I did send an email to the Chief Minister and the chief executive and other Ministers complaining about this. Nothing has happened. Were you there, Mr. Scate?

Group Director:

I can clarify a bit in terms of the terminology of the Regeneration Steering Group and I think some of the issue here is semantics around what it is called. It was set up in 2010 as a result of the reconstitution of the Waterfront Enterprise Board into S.o.J.D.C. (States of Jersey Development Company) and there was a concept there that the Government would have a property board, effectively, to act, to make property decisions around its portfolio. It was decided then that the Minister for Planning would sit outside of that, but set the regeneration strategy through master plans in regeneration zones, which are in the Island Plan. I think personally the difficulty is the title of the board. It is called the Regeneration Steering Group, when effectively it is the property board for the Government making decisions on property portfolio but taking on the regeneration strategy produced by the Minister for the Environment now. I think what the Minister has highlighted is there is a need for a political group to decide and agree the regeneration strategy or the future of St. Helier. I think my proposal would be that we call the property board the Property Board, because that is effectively what it is, but it is called something that is confusing.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

What is the membership of that property board?

Group Director:

So effectively it is chaired by the Chief Minister. It has previously had the Minister for Treasury and Resources, the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture, the Minister for Infrastructure, so property interests of the Government, effectively.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Is the Constable of St. Helier on that?

Group Director:

The Constable of St. Helier attends and the Ports of Jersey attend. I am not entirely sure if we have now widened that to Andium now, because Andium is obviously a new creation since it was originally set up, so it is meant to be there to discuss property interests of Government.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Any non-ministerial members that you know of?

Group Director:

No, only officers from those agencies or those bodies.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Thank you for your clarification, because now it is clear because for infrastructure, looking at the projects which is regeneration of St. Helier, all of them are property projects, excluding one review of greenfields which will be in 2020 and it is a really tiny amount, so we are not really speaking about urban environment, we are speaking about property, which can be together but it does not mean that they are speaking about the environment.

Group Director:

Certainly we would expect property decisions to be made and sit within the regeneration plans and the forward plans contained within the Island Plan and supplementary guidance and therefore produced, so I think there is certainly a need for a vision for St. Helier which sets out what we want to see happening in St. Helier. Clearly the Government is a big public sector owner of land within St. Helier, along with the Parish, so with our ownings as a Government, the Ports of Jersey, Andium as well as the Parish there is a lot of public sector land owned in St. Helier. It has got a role to play but I think the rules should be set through guidance and set by the Minister for the Environment.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It seems to me the ideal body to reutilise the Newgate Street prison stone.

Group Director:

In terms of if it is a property decision is required and a co-ordinated property decision I think it sits within that body.

The Minister for the Environment:

The reason why I highlighted it is, I think, because it does look likely that we will have to ... without prejudging I cannot see that, 7,000 homes potentially, we can achieve that in any other way except by looking in our urban areas. I do not know how that will come through the Island Plan but we have to have plans for how we improve and enhance that environment to make it a decent place to live. We have to plug in the environmental issues, urban environmental issues and if Government do not have money, they have got property, and so how they use their assets is a crucial part of achieving those plans. That is the link that I want us to make. I suppose to be fair, Minister, maybe you should ask the Minister for Infrastructure. It has got here: "Island public realm including St. Helier", there is money there in the capital programme. I do not know what is in that, but there does need to be an arrangement where St. Helier can have a clear resource. My answer to your question highlighted we have not got a specific provision for it, no, and that is a disappointment.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Moving on to fisheries, talking about the fisheries protection vessel, I think you identified a need to replace the vessel. Do you intend to instigate that process?

The Minister for the Environment:

Can I just say a couple of things first? First of all, some things I will not be able to say because we are in public session, but the whole issue of Brexit and fishing is fraught with problems and issues. It is very difficult to predict what is going to happen but I am clear whatever we do I think it is likely that we would have to increase our regulatory effort on our fisheries. The other thing is that we have to do a lot more on marine science, so fisheries regulation plus a platform for marine science and so on, looking at species, where things are going well, where they are not going well, how they are moving around and so on. That investment needs to be made. Now, thinking on how we do that, I will ask Willie to step in there, but as a concept we have to do that, and at the moment we are very lucky. We have got an excellent team on the marine team, we have got great support for the industry, but I am afraid the challenges are stepping up.

Director, Natural Environment:

In 2 major areas, one being Brexit and one being the challenges around the Granville Bay Treaty and to answer your question, yes, we seek to replace that asset. We have gone ahead and the budget that we would require through the Government Plan is for uprating of our existing assets initially and then a replacement thereafter. The uprating of the existing assets is on the basis of health and safety, the Norman Le Brocq and our existing tender R.I.B.s (Rigid Inflatable Boat) SeaRiders, needs to be improved in order that we can operate safely and legally at sea. We have pushed the button on the order for a replacement R.I.B. for one of those, but it is going to be a larger R.I.B. because of the extra pressures that we are going to see, we think, through Brexit. We are

going to have a larger R.I.B. which will be capable of operating on a standalone basis, operating possibly nearer shore, inshore and then we will have a secondary R.I.B. that is the tender and the States vessel to the Norman Le Brocq. That is the work that is ongoing now, to be to upgrade those vessels in a practical way.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

What is it about Brexit that will require you to have a larger R.I.B.?

Director, Natural Environment:

The pressure on our existing 800 square miles of sea is likely to increase. We know that we have an existing number of fishing boats. We know that the likelihood is that with Brexit, vessels will be pushed out of the U.K.'s territorial waters, the European vessels may be pushed out of the U.K.'s territorial waters. Some of those can quite legitimately come into our Bay of Granville area at the moment. They choose not to at the moment because they fish around the corner, as it were, and if they then come into our area of territorial waters, which will be legitimate, then our existing assets will not be necessarily enough.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Will that incur additional manning requirements?

Director, Natural Environment:

It will, yes, and I think we can only try. The rules around Brexit, as you know, are changing on a minute-by-minute basis. We are keeping an eye on it on a minute-by-minute basis and we have got to make sure that whatever we do in the future in terms of our asset base ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

You have ordered an additional vessel, so there will be an additional manning requirement?

Director, Natural Environment:

Sorry, we can operate that with the existing teams that we have. My apologies. We want to retain the existing number of players in order to keep the vessels going. It would not necessarily mean that we are likely to have all the vessels out at once, but we need to have specific vessels for specific tasks. We need to have both the regulatory construct and the research construct. Another issue of Brexit is if we seek to determine what stocks we are able to fish here, as opposed to having that passed down to us from Europe, then we need to do that on an evidence base. In order to provide that evidence base you need a scientific platform to determine what the health of the stocks are and a boat like the Norman Le Brocq or something similar will be required.

Assistant Minister for the Environment:

One thing that no one generally realises is that the Norman Le Brocq is the one single vessel owned and operated by the States. We do not have a vessel for bringing people around, we do not have ...

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

What happened to the Duke of Normandy?

Assistant Minister for the Environment:

It belongs to the Ports of Jersey.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

So that went to Norman Le Brocq?

Assistant Minister for the Environment:

We have a vessel that does research, that does enforcement, that does policing work, that does rescue work, that does V.I.P. (Very Important Person) transport, very occasionally, so it is very multi-purpose.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you work in conjunction with Customs?

Assistant Minister for the Environment:

Yes.

Director, Natural Environment:

Yes, and the police and the fire ...

Assistant Minister for the Environment:

Everything that happens at sea is done by the one vessel that the States owns.

Director, Natural Environment:

But we have S.L.A.s (service level agreement) with all of those third party bodies in order that we can operate safely with them, and we do some quid pro quo work with them. For example We will take them out diving. They will offer us a reduced price, if not free, training courses on something that they are able to deliver, so we have very good working relationships with them and wish to keep that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I take it the tugs are owned and operated by the States of Jersey?

Assistant Minister for the Environment:

The tug boats are.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I thought you said the Norman Le Brocq was also owned by the Ports.

Assistant Minister for the Environment:

No, it is the only one owned by the States.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

It is owned by the States, because the Duke of Normandy gets rented out. It is loaned out, so it is the Ports that have the money and not the States. That was a very good move on the States part, was it not, to get rid of the Duke of Normandy? That is another story.

[13:00]

Assistant Minister for the Environment:

Can we talk about coastguards at some point?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

There were a couple of points I wanted to pick up with regard to the sustainable transport policy going back to the carbon neutrality side of things, in terms of electric vehicles and how we might stimulate usage of those, have you any thoughts as to how that might be incentivised? We have talked about putting up the cost of fuel, which will have a significant effect on commercial operators in terms of their increased costs that would be passed on to the user, one presumes. What incentives could Government give or are provided for in the Government Plan?

The Minister for the Environment:

Louise said that is going to have to be addressed in the report and you probably know I spoke to an amendment that the Council of Ministers brought to the climate change proposition that said that we should look at fiscal levers to encourage that. What I had in my head was an expectation of what I would call carrot and stick methods whereby we give people incentives who make changes that are positive to the policy we want to achieve and that there will be financial disincentives for those who do not, it being a matter of choice. That was my hope. Obviously the extent to which that is going to feature in the work that our advisers are looking at I cannot say. Again, there is also work being

done by the Minister for Treasury and Resources that I am not party to. I am not a member of that and I do not know what progress they are making but to me I think the problem I have got with this whole issue is we are a low tax jurisdiction and how do you have incentives when people do not pay anything? In other places if you are charging tax, if we had motor tax, for example, it would be a very simple matter. You would just exempt electric or hybrid vehicles, if you want, from that. I would like to see exemption from G.S.T. (goods and services tax) but all the time I am told: "We cannot touch G.S.T. We are not allowed. We cannot have a complicated G.S.T. regime. It is either all or nothing."

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It is easy to talk about private motor cars and I take your point, but when it comes to commercial companies running big trucks, such as Ronez, we referred to earlier on, they are talking about another £30,000 to £40,000 a year on their fuel costs.

The Minister for the Environment:

From the modest changes that are being spoken of?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

For increase in fuel duties.

The Minister for the Environment:

Really? I am surprised at that because ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

They have got significant usage as have other companies and I think the consequences of fuel rises to the commercial side need consideration because they are not ...

The Minister for the Environment:

Do you think they are significant, then?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

They are.

The Minister for the Environment:

I would like to see some figures on that, because to me there has been considerable fluctuations in pump prices, what one sees, and I did not come up with those figures. The proposals were put forward by others but I went along with them because I thought they were very modest.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Do you think those people consulted with the commercial sector?

The Minister for the Environment:

I do not know.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

No, they did not. I am sure they did not. They never do.

Director, Environmental Policy:

Can I add in there? I think that if there was going to be a transition to a low carbon economy one of the things that the Government Plan suggested it wants to do is price pollution and there is a polluter pays principle and the reason that fuel tax was picked up and proposed in this plan was because impôts duty exists. So that is something that can happen relatively quickly without a whole new law change, so if you are going to make progress quickly, it is an emergency, then that is a proposal that fitted those objectives. I think there are going to be costs to a low carbon economy and there will be polluters, unfortunately, the people who use carbon will be asked to contribute to those costs. I think that is going to be a decision ultimately that the Assembly and the Island makes in terms of its carbon ambition. I think the transition to a low carbon economy will inevitably carry some capital cost. As we go forward we believe that those technology changes will become cheaper and closer to parity, so I am almost certain that within 15 years we will all be buying low carbon vehicles, probably electric but maybe something different, that are going to cost a lot less than they cost now and the market will have adjusted, but if it is the Island's ambition to accelerate towards a low carbon economy very quickly then there are going to be costs incurred and someone is going to have to pay.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The issue is not that there will be costs. I agree, you and I know very well, that there will be costs. The question is: have you spoken to the people who will bear those costs to understand how much and at what scale those costs will be?

Director, Environmental Policy:

We have looked at the economic impact on the most vulnerable, which you looked at, sorry, which is presented in the interim response. We can do calculations around usage. It is clear, if people are using a lot of diesel or petrol they will incur that extra cost.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I understand that, but the answer just simply, can I put it to you, is no, you have not modelled or spoken to the commercial sector to understand what effect that increase in fuel duty will have on their operations and therefore on the economy of Jersey? Would that be a fair statement to make?

Director, Environmental Policy:

The answer directly is no, we have not had that discussion, but what we have looked at ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Yet again evidence-free decision making.

Director, Environmental Policy:

What I would suggest, perhaps, is that if you look at the differential in diesel and petrol prices around the Island you will find they differ very easily by 8 pence, so the potential is that the market correction and the ability of people who will incur costs from their current suppliers are able to switch suppliers to a lower fuel cost, so the difference ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

That incurs costs itself. When you have got a large fleet and let us say you switch to a different form of fuel requires replacement of ...

Director, Environmental Policy:

No, to a different supplier, not different form of fuel. A different pump, the price at different pumps.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

To change from diesel to petrol?

Director, Environmental Policy:

No, we are talking about the difference in diesel, not every garage charges the same price for diesel across the Island and the differential is very much more than 8 pence.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I see. I thought you said the differential between diesel and petrol, that is what I understood.

Director, Environmental Policy:

Sorry, maybe I did not speak clearly. Certainly I meant across the different pumps, so the ability for commercial fleets to bulk buy and negotiate and seek a competitive market price to bring down costs is there. The margins in Jersey's fuel costs are ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

You know that I understand that. The thing is, I just asked whether you had modelled or spoken to them and the answer is, sadly, no. It is a real shame.

Director, Environmental Policy:

The evidence is not difficult to work out.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

But you did not work it out. May I ask, how many more staff will be hired as a result of this Government Plan? How many more staff will be hired across the Department for the Environment including the regulatory? We have heard about 4 more staff in the licensing. We have heard about more people ...

The Minister for the Environment:

I apologise, I cannot give you a number but it will be extremely modest.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I have heard of at least 4 and possibly 5.

The Minister for the Environment:

That is still modest, I think. How many people do the States employ? The last figure I heard is about 6,000. I think when the Department for the Environment was one department it was less than 150, I think.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I draw no conclusions as to whether that is right or wrong. I just asked how many staff.

The Minister for the Environment:

I will turn to my colleagues to see if anybody else can come up with that answer.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

There is a suggestion they are fairly light on enforcement officers.

The Minister for the Environment:

Enforcement is a serious issue.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I agree, but it just indicates that perhaps there needs to be provision for additional staff.

The Minister for the Environment:

The problem I have got with that is we are going through a Government reorganisation and as Minister every time I ask about this issue of staffing, and I have asked it in other areas: "Can we do this? Can we do this?" I get told: "No, we cannot, because we are going through a Government reorganisation" that I think at least has taken 2 years and I do not ... and it seems to be that that has effectively frozen all staff decisions. I think that is a pretty bad situation, to put it mildly.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

In terms of the regulatory side of things, which is your area, there surely has to be a minimum point where you need a certain ...

The Minister for the Environment:

I think we are at the minimum point. I have not been a fan, and we are in public but I am not afraid of this, of the way that our Government Target Operating Model process has affected the department and the ministerial services for which I am politically responsible. I find that this has gone on too long, it has created too much uncertainty, we have lost key people and we are in danger of losing other people, and people are generally affected in a negative way. I have raised that with the Chief Minister in writing and expressed concerns about it, and I have also got issues of principle about grouping the regulatory function in with the other functions, which I have never been prepared to agree with. At the moment we are where we are; we have to make progress as best as we can. I would like to think these issues will be resolved as soon as possible. In the meantime they do inhibit our staffing decision. In theory I am told: "Do not worry, Minister", we are told this in the offices, obviously this is currently the position, that we can fill posts by freeing up posts, say, from here and X, Y, Z and we will be able to do that later on. I have not seen any evidence yet that that is happening. I am sorry to my colleagues if I have spoken out of turn.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Sadly, I have heard that about another senior talented person; I think they are leaving the organisation, just this morning, which is very sad.

The Minister for the Environment:

I am really worried. We have got some very high quality public servants - outstanding - and we have not sung their praises and what we have done is we have created a situation where some people are asking themselves: "Shall we stay employed with this organisation anymore?"

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Well, Minister I will say that we are very pleased to receive the benefit of your officers' knowledge and it is appreciated.

The Minister for the Environment:

Absolutely and without the team here and others, because we did not want to pack the session today, as Ministers we would not be able to do anything. Frankly, I think, we could do well, collectively, to say we achieve nothing without our people.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

With that, Minister, I thank you for being full and frank with your answers and thank you all for your attendance this morning.

[13:11]