



Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny

Panel

Quarterly Public Hearing

Witness: The Minister for the Environment

Tuesday, 29th September 2020

Panel:

Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade (Chair)
Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence
Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville
Connétable S.A. Le Sueur-Rennard of St. Saviour
Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier

Witnesses:

Deputy J.H. Young of St. Brelade, The Minister for the Environment
Deputy G. Guida, Assistant Minister for the Environment
Mr. K. Pilley, Head of Place and Spatial Planning
Mr. S. Skelton, Director, Strategy and Innovation
Mr. W. Peggie, Director, Natural Environment/Acting Group Director, Regulation
Dr. L. Magris, Head of Sustainability and Foresight
Mr. A. Scate, Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment

[11:33]

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

Welcome, everyone, to the Scrutiny Panel meeting of the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel. It is still called that at the moment; whether it is going to change who knows. We know that the other department has changed a bit. What are you calling yourself now for the record? What is the name of your ...?

The Minister for the Environment:

I am not calling myself anything. I look after 2 teams of people within a Government department called I.H.E. (Infrastructure, Housing and Environment). The 2 teams of people that I take responsibility for and have great pleasure in working with comprise the regulation division and the environment division. Those are 2 component parts within this I.H.E. body.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Will that be a proper word for Scrabble purposes? Maybe this was something we should discuss offline. So, I am going to move on. This meeting really is to discuss the bridging Island Plan review, and I am going to ask you initially what the process undertaken was in proposing this bridging plan that we have before us now. What other options were considered and can you provide details on how this was scoped, researched and evaluated?

The Minister for the Environment:

Well, obviously the original plan, when I got elected, was that we would have commenced work a lot earlier than we have done and we were planning to do the full 10-year plan, but unfortunately what happened at the beginning part of the year, all of that work ... we assembled the contracts, we had appointed the partners to work with us, but of course we went through a period of complete lockdown, seems to be a very long time, and then, of course, the selective opening up, all of which disrupted, so we had to take a paper to the Council of Ministers. So, I answered that in a question that I answered from Deputy Jeremy Maçon back in May, where we had taken the situation to the Council of Ministers. Now, originally the proposal was ... what I was told as Minister, we have now lost the ability to complete the Island Plan in time for the next elections. That is what I was told. The original plan just could not work. So the choice was: do we postpone the Island Plan until the next term after the 2022 elections and run on the existing Island Plan? The Council of Ministers were not content to do that. They said: "No, we have to take the Island Plan through." So I said the only way we can do that is to change the scope of the plan and deal with those matters that we desperately need to deal with, which is housing, the hospital and infrastructure, and coastal management. Those are a number of issues and, of course, there are the effects of transport, too. We have to deal with those because the plan is really so out of date it needs to do that. Plus the fact we knew very well that the economy is going to be very different but we did not know what it was. So, therefore, the question came: can we still plan sensibly for the 10 years? We went back - having got, if you like, the decision of C.O.M. (Council of Ministers) that I have to do a plan - the team and I, with the assistance of our external advisers Arup, to work out a plan of how we would do this and came up with the notion of a transitional plan. We then had to scope how it would work, what the processes would be, and we took that in detail back to the Council of Ministers and the Council of Ministers gave it that support. So we did not commence that work until we had got that

green light. Of course, frankly, we have just had to carry on with it. I know you are reviewing this as if, if you like, there are choices. There is not. The position at the moment is that there is absolutely no contingency in the timescale. We had to start immediately early on. Work has been committed and in progress and we will be publishing the draft plan in March. That is the plan and we are going through a process between now and then to make sure that there is proper Member involvement, including the Scrutiny Panel. Obviously, I am very happy to release the documents to you in confidence as we go because of your key role, but there will be processes, some open, some closed, to make sure that we get a good degree and adequate degree of stakeholder and Member engagement before we get to the publishing of the draft plan. We have to do a sustainability review around about I think towards the end of February, beginning of March. Now, Kevin, who is online, is running that process with Steve Skelton and it is so time critical. So, frankly, I am in the position that I know we cannot stop. At the end of the day, it is a draft plan and what the Members do with it will be for them to say, but my job is to try and deliver that for people.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you, Minister. John Le Maistre wants to have a word.

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence:

Sorry, there is no hand button for me to use. I cannot put my hand up here. I apologise. I am just going to have to shout in.

Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville:

I put it in the chat, Kirsten. My question is originally the thought was that you would simply reissue the existing plan for possibly 2 years. It seems to me that would have been a much simpler thing to do because it would not have taken any work at all. It would have been a lot cheaper as well. Why did you decide against that option?

The Minister for the Environment:

Because there are so many things. The plan is 10 years old and certainly the advice I have had ... in fact, I heard Deputy Graham Truscott recently speak on the subject because he is deputy chair of the Planning Committee. There are issues the whole of the way throughout the plan that need review. Now, I think it is true to say that not all elements of the existing plan will be abandoned. There is bound to be a carry-forward of the elements of the existing plan which are still sustainable and do not require that change. I know that Kevin and Steve and the team are doing that very piece of work at the moment. So please do not get the impression that the whole thing is in the bin and we are not going to be able to have elements of continuity in any great benefit. For example, one of the big issues which I am taking forward at the moment to the Council of Ministers, tomorrow in fact, is the issues about the spatial strategy and the planning assumptions for the plan. Because I

wanted to get that in a situation where I felt I had got the robust buy-in of my ministerial colleagues. It is unfortunate we are having that discussion today before the Council of Ministers because I would be able to speak about the details, but I can talk generally about the process. So, it will not be a completely new one, but I think some of those elements I do not expect the degree of change in some of those areas to be that major. In others, there will be new things.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Minister, if we could just go back to the original question, which was what were your other options, when you briefed the panel before making the call on the bridging Island Plan, you said that you were going to go with the option to finish the plan in 2022 after the election, because I remember us having a very long discussion about that. You were quite firm in your belief that that was the best way forward. So what changed in that respect?

The Minister for the Environment:

Well, because we were living in a world of politics and what is possible. I was very concerned, and I still am, that the timescale is incredibly compressed and we have this process where we have discussed it in the in-committee debate. We had that discussion and the process will require a period whereby the draft plan is open to elected Members for their views at the same time as the public, in parallel. It is going to be a 12-week period but still I would have preferred them step by step by step. It was my view that I did not want to do a rushed process, but what I have done since that discussion when I was confronted, if you like, with the Council of Ministers' view, I sought advice from our partners Arup. I did ask for you to be provided with a copy of that advice they gave us. It is quite a long, detailed advice, which basically said to me it is possible to do it with these arrangements. So that is what I accepted it was my duty to do.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Can I ask 2 things? Why did the Council of Ministers ... what was their reasoning? Why did they come to their conclusion? Secondly, even if it is very speedy, what consultation did you get from key stakeholders such as Construction Council, Chamber of Commerce, business directors, National Trust, as to their views? Because one of the things that I am hearing is that businesses are very concerned that they are now being put into a period of uncertainty where they have a 3-year Island Plan which after 3 years is going to be changed again. So, from their perspective, there is a complete lack of certainty now going forward because what you publish next year will be irrelevant in 4 years' time and will be changed again by a different Minister, and so it could be hugely changed. So, 2 things: what consultation did you do and how did the Council of Ministers come to their decision? What was their rationale?

The Minister for the Environment:

Well, the first thing is the Council of Ministers believe that although I said the advice is if we do not do the Island Plan before the next election the existing plan will continue, but I think the priorities that I heard across the table ... as you know, Council of Ministers' agendas are very compressed, there is never ... very rarely is there the opportunity for in-depth discussions. What one does is get basic reactions from Ministers. The reaction was housing issues are ... we are in a serious, serious problem about housing issues. I think that is probably one of the biggest areas that probably the majority of States Members are really focusing on the new plan.

[11:45]

So the idea of being able to review what our numbers are, what is the current situation in housing, supply and demand, what we have been able to produce, what targets we should be aiming for, and how that translates into revisions to our Strategic Plan in terms of zoning areas and, indeed, what opportunities there are in the parishes, because there is a very strong head of steam built up in stakeholders in our parish communities to be able to bring forward those schemes to a planning process. Kirsten, the other thing I would point out is that we did a thing, what we called a call for sites. This has gone out to the Island as a whole, and I think all of those 700 are stakeholders. Over 700 proposals were put forward to us for consideration as part of the Island Plan. I think if I had made a decision to just park them and ignore them, I think that would not have been the right thing. I needed to go through a process where we can evaluate those and factor in new plans. Now, in terms of business, I think if business think that we are only going to have policies that are so sort of transient and temporary I think that would be a mistake. I would be very disappointed in that case. I think that we are looking at ... I think we are not just shutting our mind to the longer term because it is quite clear many of those policies for the initial period have to have a longer horizon as to where they may go after. Now, therefore, when the plan comes forward, you will start to see things said in the plan about the post 5 years. For example, I can say now that the advice I have on housing and housing numbers, what I just covered, really, we need to look at a 5-year period. So although the plan will be 3 years, the horizon we are taking to do that work is the first 5 years of a 10-year period. So the information that will come will show you where we think that goes. But I think in terms of business we know that we have a period of recovery hopefully when we get through this and there will need to be adjustment in the policies, which I think will assist business. That is my expectation. Now, where I am struggling with this, and I will be frank, I am not hearing yet that we have enough information on the economic framework for the recovery and that is something I am personally strongly looking for. I think at that point, if I may, Deputy, because I have spoken a lot about that and I would like ... could I ask Kevin Pilley to give you a little bit ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Before you do, sorry, before you do, could I just come in? I asked a really simple question: what consultation did you do with external parties? You have taken a long time to not answer that question. Can I take it that you did not undertake consultation?

The Minister for the Environment:

Not me personally, no. Obviously, I do not sit ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

But the department, what views did you take in to inform whether to do a bridging plan or to do one which went over to 2022 in 10-year terms?

The Minister for the Environment:

It is a while ago now, maybe I am getting too old, my memory is not that good now, but I clearly went to the Council of Ministers. The timescale was very compressed and I took advice on the subject and I took it through to an in-committee debate, which you took part in, on that subject. I do not recall at that time I did any formal consultation ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I am just asking what consultation you did, Minister. I am just asking. There is no right or wrong answer except to give the truth.

The Minister for the Environment:

Well, there is because to me ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

No, tell me the truth.

The Minister for the Environment:

Look, I always tell you the truth. I cannot recall a specific public consultation request during the time of that paper to go into the Council of Ministers to seek their views, but I can ask, please, if Kevin could assist me and tell me if he can point to any document or process that did that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, please, Kevin, come in on this, please. Thank you.

Head of Place and Spatial Planning:

Thank you, Chairman. I will perhaps go back to the point that Deputy Morel raised at the outset about why the initial recommendation to C.O.M. was that the Island Plan review be progressed into

the next term. I think one of the issues to bear in mind is that the Planning Law prescribes the Island Plan review process and, as a consequence of that, the amount of time available to do the sort of linear process of review of the plan that is set out in law would have been very challenging under that timeframe. So that was one of the considerations that was raised at the Council of Ministers. As the Minister said, C.O.M. were quite keen to ensure that the plan was reviewed in the current Government term and basically asked the Minister to look at how we might change the Island Plan review process to enable a review to happen within the current term of Government. As the Minister has already indicated, there are some legislative changes that need to be made to enable that to happen. So that was part of the consideration and part of the assessment. Picking up on the point raised by the Connétable of Grouville about the scope of the review, I think it is important to say that this review will be a comprehensive Island Plan review. So the current Island Plan will be replaced in its entirety by a new plan and if and when the States approve that document, that will become the new Island Plan. But as the Minister has said, there are elements of the current plan that are in clear need for review. A key issue in relation to that is around housing and, as you will recall, this plan, the current plan, was adopted in 2011. The housing element of it was reviewed in 2014 and Members will know that the Island Plan seeks to make provision for housing over the plan period. Obviously, as the plan gets longer in the tooth the extent of housing provision made in the plan becomes more limited, if you like. The opportunities to develop land become more limited under the current policy regime. Sites that are allocated for specific housing needs are developed out and, in terms of the plan responding to the current housing challenge that we have in the Island, the current plan is getting towards the end of its level of provision. So that is a key driver, I think, in terms of looking at why we need to review and refresh the plan. But there are elements in the current plan that might have legs in terms of this review and there might be elements of it that Members are familiar with and are taken forward into the subsequent review. In terms of the consultation that was undertaken in terms of the proposal to put forward a bridging plan, I can confirm that there was no stakeholder consultation undertaken at the time of going backwards and forwards to C.O.M. We were in quite a pressured environment to determine a way forward so that we had some clarity moving the plan forward, given that we have a limited amount of time. So nothing was undertaken pre those discussions with C.O.M. But what I would say is that once C.O.M. had made that decision and that the bridging plan as a proposal was accepted, which included some of the changes to the process by which the plan would be lodged and considered by Members, then we did run briefing sessions for stakeholders online and were able to elicit views from the industry and questions around the change to the process. We had good attendance on those calls. Representatives from the development industry, the architects in particular, planning agents who are clearly interested in the Island Plan as a product - it affects their business - they were very much engaged as part of that process and had an opportunity to comment on the process. My view of those calls was that certainly from an industry perspective - and I am talking about the development industry in particular - the choice for them is quite stark in the sense that we either continue with the current plan or we

review the Island Plan and we produce a new plan. I think that generally the view in the industry is that parts of the plan do require review. There is an opportunity to do that. Clearly, we find ourselves in unusual times and a short-term bridging plan is an appropriate response to the volatility that the Island finds itself in. Picking up on the point that was made about potential uncertainty created by a short-term plan, I think there are 2 issues to raise in relation to that. First of all, as the Minister said, this is a plan that will not just focus on the short term. It will be an opportunity to identify and acknowledge that there are longer-term challenges that lie ahead and start to explore some of the opportunities that the Island might pursue to address some of those longer-term challenges. So, definitely this plan will not be set in a limited, short-term context. I think as well there is an opportunity to explore with stakeholders who will be engaged through the process, through the consultation process on the plan, to look at the direction that new policy will be taking. So they will have an opportunity to have an input into that as well. Certainly, we have a number of work streams that are going ahead to inform the plan preparation and certainly a wide spectrum of stakeholders are engaged in those pieces of work. So ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you, Kevin. I am going to just interject with some particular questions that we have. Some concerns have been raised through submissions to the panel that the bridging Island Plan might be used to exploit land use and create detrimental development opportunities. What is your view on this, Minister, and how will the bridging Island Plan ensure sustainable development?

The Minister for the Environment:

I think fears of that are unjustified. There is no question the plan ... at the end of the day, under the current law, the Minister for the Environment is the Member required to stand in front of the States and present it and propose it and make the case. My personal position, because I got elected on having a sustainable plan, one part of that is my commitment to ensuring that our coasts and our countryside we maintain and protect them and conserve them, but at the same time we have to meet our community's needs. That particularly is about housing. That balance is about finding where that balance is and it is a difficult call but that is the job. So if I felt that balance was wrong in the draft plan, I would not personally politically be prepared to put that forward to the States. I think people know that. They know where I am coming from. It was a pre-election commitment. Possibly it may be part of the reason why I was elected. There are fears and I think there are fears there, but I think they are unwarranted. I think there are definite issues for business and industry that we need to ensure we cater for in the plan, but in terms of anybody fearing that is going to lead to a wholesale destruction, of inappropriate and wholesale development, absolutely not. Jersey has a fantastic special character and one of the things I really want to concentrate on ... and you will see this in the document that we have put together with the officers that is going to go to the Council of Ministers tomorrow, which talks about issues such as place making. It is well known that I want to make sure

that development reflects Jersey's character and its special place and that is vital to our community and to businesses here. Now, I would love to have been able to sit here today and talk you all through that document, but I cannot do it until I know where we are with C.O.M. at the meeting tomorrow. That will give all those key high-level indicators and we will be publishing it after that. Obviously, it will be part of the consultation process because what it is will be a high-level steer, if you like, on the big picture issues that we are seeking to deal with in the plan in more detail. I would be happy to release that to you now, Chairman, and if we were able to go into a confidential session today, I would be happy to talk about those in detail, but I cannot do that now in public in advance of C.O.M.'s discussion.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

No, of course not. Have you carried out a risk-benefit analysis of the option to proceed with this plan in order to ascertain what short or long-term implications - including, of course, financial - that this option might entail? Can you provide this to the panel?

The Minister for the Environment:

I wish I understood what you mean. Can you explain a bit more about risk-benefit? What are the risks that your people are concerned about? At the end of the day, this is a draft plan. It is going to go through extensive public processes, consultation as Kevin has ... it is going to go through formal processes which are defined in law. There is going to be a public inquiry where every single specific recommendation will be thoroughly examined, and at the end of the day it is subject to a States Members debate where they can put in amendments. So, frankly ...

[12:00]

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The financial implications of doing a short-term bridging plan is what I am trying to understand.

The Minister for the Environment:

Okay, so maybe what you are saying is that we are spending money for this particular plan period and then there will have to be another plan done at some time after the next elections. When, we do not know. New States Members, a new Government, may decide they are not going to do that plan straight away. It will be up to them. I do not know how long that is going to be, but there will be extra spend as a result, yes, on doing the job, yes, if that is what you mean. But in terms of ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

But we have no idea what that is?

The Minister for the Environment:

I think I would have to turn to Mr. Pilley. Our budget, I think it is a matter of public record, I think started off around £650,000 and there is another £300,000-odd in for the next year. I think in all the resource available is anything up to £1 million but, of course, there are a lot of external partners that we have engaged who are already working on numerous projects on this already, like one on the radio this morning, the St. Brelade's Bay character assessment. We have done urban assessments in town. We have done a coast and countryside assessment. We have done a biodiversity assessment. We have done coastal zone management. We have done study after study, infrastructure studies ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I appreciate that. Can you outline the prioritisation process of how these particular projects or policies were selected to be either included or excluded from the bridging plan?

The Minister for the Environment:

It is based on need. I rely on my team's judgment, including our external advisers. In a former life I used to run this sort of project. Obviously, I do not run this project, I take recommendations from the team. I meet with them regularly and we check things out. In terms of formal processes, I think we rely on the judgment. So, again, there is a long list. I have mentioned a few of those pieces. If you want me to rank them in order of importance, they are all important. I am struggling to understand what you really ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Well, we have seen emphasis being put on St. Brelade's Bay, which from my point of view is fine, but I am just wondering how these particular areas of the Island might be selected in the whole process which you are having to do. Clearly, there will have to be a limit on what can be done within the time available.

The Minister for the Environment:

Absolutely. Well, thank you for that clarification. I am grateful for that because it is a really important question. I think it is one of the examples where we had to change the scope of the plan because of the limited time. Originally, I wanted all urban areas of the Island to be subjected to a character assessment because I wanted to have a set of policies where we can be more confident that we are not applying a one-size-fits-all and that in areas where there are character differences we have place-making policies and so on that help us achieve that. But we had to be selective. There are a number of areas which one would loosely call conservation areas where we do not have that power, but those areas have had to be selected. St. Brelade's Bay is a key tourism area, there is no question about it. It is one of our prime assets. So we tried to do those and also the urban areas.

That has been a pragmatic decision and I have to be honest, my Assistant Minister, Deputy Tadier, did suggest that we include, for example, the Les Quennevais area, which I would have really loved to be able to do a comprehensive area study because I think that area would benefit from a structured forward plan.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think you are right, Minister, but can I just ask Kevin Pilley to come in? He has a contribution he would like to make, I believe.

Head of Place and Spatial Planning:

Yes, just really to touch on some of the points that the Minister has raised about a number of work streams. Clearly, we embarked on a number of pieces of evidence base gathering in advance of the pandemic when we were looking to do a 10-year Island Plan. The decision about what is progressed in terms of what work needs to be undertaken is really a matter of looking at what the development pressures, what the Island's needs are and what pieces of work already exist. Clearly, where there is up-to-date evidence, then we can use that, particularly if that is already existing within government, and we are doing that, liaising with colleagues across government to draw on existing pieces of work to inform the Island Plan. But where studies and evidence is deficient, then we would seek to renew that. What I would say is that we would not necessarily do that each time we do an Island Plan review. A good example of that is the Minister has touched on the countryside character appraisal. That was last undertaken in 1999. It informed the 2002 Island Plan. It also informed the 2011 Island Plan. We feel it is now somewhat long in the tooth. Methodologies have changed, the Island has changed, and we have refreshed that. We have undertaken a broader piece of work now to look at both landscape and seascape character assessment. So that is one of the evidence bases that has been reviewed this time around. When we review the Island Plan again, I suspect we will not need to refresh that piece of work at that time. So, it is those sorts of decisions that are made. Another example is the mineral strategy. That was a 20-year mineral strategy that was produced last time around. That is coming to the end of its duration, if you like, so there is a need to refresh that piece of work. So, it is principally in response to the community's needs, the Island's needs, and development pressures in terms of what pieces of evidence we need to undertake to refresh the plan. One element that is required to be funded when an Island Plan review is undertaken is, as the Minister has indicated, the independent planning inspection of the plan. So that is something that will be a cost that will need to be borne whenever the plan is reviewed in terms of the engagement of a planning inspector resourced to undertake that critical element of the plan process.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

In terms of, Minister, the future housing needs report published in March - and this is going back to what you alluded to earlier on - that suggested that there was an anticipated shortfall of 2,750

dwelling units between 2019 and 2021. What is your response to that? You alluded to the fact that we have a housing need. Do you feel this bridging plan will go some way to assuaging that need?

The Minister for the Environment:

Yes, Chairman, I absolutely do. I think the work that was done on the housing need assessment is one element of the ingredients, if you like, of the draft policy. The other one is the supply and demand situation, the updated position on the delivery of housing compared with the existing plan. The other is to take stock of what sites are known and what opportunities there are and the numbers potentially in the pipeline. There are a number of ingredients. Tomorrow in the document that goes to the Council of Ministers that I would have been very happy to release to you in private session would have shown you the makeup. I think the housing numbers are likely ... the housing numbers that are being suggested to the Council of Ministers are, I think, greater than that number you have quoted there, but the details of it I think I should be in a position to release that to you after tomorrow's meeting.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Are you in conversations with statistics to see if the future housing needs report of 2022-24 could be timed to feed into and inform the bridging plan?

The Minister for the Environment:

There is absolutely no question that our Statistics Unit and our economics team, all of those teams of civil servants, are engaged as part of this work. I think what needs to be recognised is that I think I am confident now that the planning processes that we are adopting are much more joined up so that all parts of government we are able to draw on their expertise and produce a much more integrated plan than has previously been the case. Of course, that can be because Kevin and Steve are accountable under a different part of the Government. They are not my direct responsibilities, but they work with me and I have seen huge evidence of that integration. So, yes, absolutely, I am advised that those numbers and those projections are all based on best evidence from all those people and others.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So projecting further ahead again, the objective assessment of the housing need report identified the need for over 7,000 dwelling units between 2021 and 2030, which is the span that the Island Plan would have originally delivered. Is that incorporated within your thoughts?

The Minister for the Environment:

Well, certainly we are not asking the Council of Ministers to pick on a figure for the 10 years but, as I said earlier, the paper that we have taken forward, after a lot of work with the officers and numerous

meetings that I have had, will certainly deal with the 5 years and I think at the moment there is likely to be pretty broad equivalence. I do not think you are going to find any major, significant issue. We know that we have housing to meet for a backlog. We know we have to take account of natural growth in our population, and I think an assumption on the future level of migration into the Island also needs to be made. The paper sets out an assumption. My expectation is that number will not reflect the historic rate of that migration happening because I think it is an inevitability of our COVID situation and the recession, as it were, and the changes in Brexit, we will see that change.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

One of the options set out in the Government Plan 2023 is to enhance the St. Helier urban environment. Will this be an important focus of the bridging plan and, if so, how do you envisage this to be balanced with other competing priorities in the shorter timeframe?

The Minister for the Environment:

Well, I think the first thing is it is a plan and, as I have always made known in planning processes, they remain plans unless they are also matched with having in place a structure to implement them and deliver them. There is no question in my mind that delivery means having planning policies to help us do that, but also resources, resources, and money priority. Of course, part of my role as Minister is to try and bring about a situation where the policy aspirations that are being reflected in the Island Plan are matched with the ability to deliver it. Of course, here I have to work with other Ministers because delivery of those things falls outside my responsibility. We have the Minister for Infrastructure who has that prime responsibility. But again I am pleased to say there is very good co-operation going on in working out these plans. The elements are, for example, there is an urban character study which I think is going to be a really important part about the policies within the town. We have town centre issues being raised and policies, but a big issue, of course, is housing and open space. I am very clear. The issue of open space and the issue of facilities for play areas and recreational areas and access to those sort of community facilities is essential if we are to accommodate further numbers of residents in town. The other issue is transport. I am very pleased to say there is work going on now to see how we can do things about the impacts of traffic and transport in the urban areas. So, it is a big call. I am certainly not pulling that ambition out, it is a really vital thing. I cannot recall the exact population but a huge percentage of our population lives in our built area, and I want to make sure the plan for that ... and it is not just St. Helier, it includes the parts of other parishes that are within the urban area and right out to First Tower and to Georgetown and so on. I know that some Members do not like me talking about it, but to me it is what I call greater St. Helier or the town of St. Helier. I think that does cause some reaction at times, but nonetheless that is what we will be planning for, our conurbation, our central built area. It is a big challenge and I think the team are up to it.

[12:15]

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What implications are there likely to be from decoupling the shorter bridging Island Plan from longer-term policies such as migration and population policy? There is quite a lot of concern been expressed about that.

The Minister for the Environment:

Well, I think the implications are that that is what I meant when I am saying the paper we are taking to the Council of Ministers today proposes a planning assumption, and the planning assumption will be based including the element of migration and natural population growth in there and, if you like, the demographic needs. In the previous process, I think we would have been able to tie it in with the migration policy specifically, but what I have been clearly advised by the officers handling the migration policy is that there will not be numbers coming out of it, there will be some set of recommendations. We have already seen what came forward from when we had the previous chairman. We now have a new chairman. We have not had a meeting yet. I am of that body but I understood he did promise that we are going to see that report by November. So there will be, if you like, the separation. I think we have had to ask C.O.M. to go with an assumption which will be the basis on which we do the draft plan. So if we get that too high, we will over-provide. If we get it too low, that will under-provide. So that is a clear consequence, but at least in terms of infrastructure and that sort of public facility, the assumption is that we will apply it for a greater number of population.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you. Steve has a word to say.

Director, Strategy, and Innovation:

It is just a brief comment just to echo what the Minister said and clarify the language. I think when we talk in the in-committee debate report about a bridging Island Plan being decoupled from the migration policy, just to reinforce that that is decoupled from the sequential development of the migration policy. It is not at all to suggest that the Island Plan or the bridging Island Plan will not still give significant regard to migration and population numbers. That is clearly a fundamental part of the evidence base that informs the plan, but it just means that because the bridging Island Plan is a response in its shorter period, in more uncertainty we can make progress with the process without having to meet the previous commitment to have a migration policy in place and agreed before bringing forward a draft plan. So it is just about a sequential kind of decision, but migration is still very important to the plan.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you very much. I am going to just quickly ask you, Minister, how the future hospital will feature in the bridging plan.

The Minister for the Environment:

Right. Well, I will repeat what I said in the States the other day for the record. I have had absolutely zero part in any of the processes to do with site selection and I have said that I do not want to see any papers that come to the Council of Ministers and I do not attend them when it is discussed. I have to take that view because my ministry is responsible for the regulatory decisions once that decision is made and a site is selected. At the moment, there is huge uncertainty. I do not know when and where that process is going to deliver us a preferred site. What I have set down, of course, in ... I have to deal with 2 situations. First of all, one is that we will get that decision from the States before the Island Plan is published. If it is, then that site will be written into and part of the Island Plan and the Island Plan policies, but I cannot rely on that because obviously timescales are more urgent. So that is why I published the supplementary planning guidance which sets out very, very detailed, specific advice that if an application comes forward before the new Island Plan, then that will enable us to deal with it. I am conscious, but I would have to take advice on this, I know in other places that it is always possible to take into account emerging planning policy. Of course, once we publish a draft Island Plan, it will be out there and, of course, there will be uncertainty because it will not yet be approved by the States, but nonetheless people will know pretty soon - we are talking about March here, end of March - the direction of travel and what is in the plan and not. Members can bring amendments and so on. So what I am saying to you is I am absolutely confident that we will be able to provide in the planning process for a decision to be made on whatever site the States come up with for the hospital. But one last statement: I do not believe there is a perfect site and those judgments are going to have to be made on what comes forward.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

There will be much more discussion on that yet, I am sure. Moving on, how and to what extent will the natural and historic environment feature in the 3-year plan?

The Minister for the Environment:

Strongly. Historic buildings, I am really disappointed that for years now we have not had any means of being able to look after our heritage in terms of grants to help owners of historic buildings and so on. I think that is pretty unsatisfactory and I have an aspiration to do something about that. But in the meantime, we need to help upgrade ourselves in that area because I know that in terms of the urban character studies heritage is an important part, and we have lost a lot of it. But on the biodiversity side, biodiversity the same. That is why we have done the biodiversity study and, of course, you know there is a strong interaction between landscapes, biodiversity, trees and so on,

and there are a number of threads to that: new planning policies, new Planning Law changes and work to upgrade our works. So I feel strongly that the plan will include elements of that. I particularly want to make sure that our special countryside areas, woodlands and so on are given really good attention. I have asked the team to look at the boundaries of some of those areas, which is part of the planning work in process.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Given the time constraints, Minister, a submission from Jersey's Chamber of Commerce Retail and Supply Committee highlighted that among other factors a full and thorough consultation is required to understand the public, business community and resident views. How do you propose to successfully achieve a thorough public consultation while running this alongside consultation with States Members and other interest groups such as is currently proposed? What implications could arise from running both consultations at the same time?

The Minister for the Environment:

Well, obviously I think myself it is not ideal. It puts a lot of pressure on everybody. My expectation is that those 2 processes will interact and I think there is no question that States Members will not walk around with their eyes closed for 13 weeks, or their ears closed. They will listen acutely to what comes out of various stakeholder discussions and so on. That is the challenge I have set the team because I absolutely would not be party to a process that does not include a decent level of stakeholder engagement because it will all fall apart anyway if it got to a planning ... so it is essential we do that. The details of that are going to be dealt with by Steve, Kevin, and the team, and if you want to have a little bit more detail perhaps you might invite them to speak now. But I have certainly set that challenge for them to do that. I would like to feel I can make sure that we deliver the Chamber of Commerce consultation but, of course, they are just one stakeholder. There are lots of other stakeholders. So the process at the end has to balance the competing interests.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So in terms of balance, we have had a submission in relation to the review highlighting land use as a significant area of importance. Considering that agricultural land is reasonably protected under the current plan, concerns may exist around rezoning of land for housing purposes. What is your view regarding the potential use of agricultural land for the purpose of housing developments in light of the shortage of first-time buyer homes?

The Minister for the Environment:

Well, as I said, for a Minister for Planning or a Minister for the Environment to propose the loss of open land for housing, the case has to be absolutely watertight as far as I am concerned, but that is based on housing needs and the Island's community needs. That has to be recognised. I think that

should be no more than to the extent that is necessary, but I think we also have to look at keeping our rural communities sustainable. There is not any question the pattern of development and the demographics of communities in the villages, I think we do need to refresh that. So I think those are all elements that come into the pieces. Ideally, I would like to see that if we are required to rezone any agricultural land that the land quality would be one of the significant issues which would be identified in those evaluation decisions. They are all going to be difficult decisions and they are going to have to be made very much with the input of the community.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It seems that there is an overlap across Housing and Environment responsibilities to ensure housing developments meet the needs of the community as well as the environment. Looking ahead, what is your view regarding sustainable housing developments being incorporated into this bridging plan?

The Minister for the Environment:

If you mean homes that can adapt and change to demographics, yes. First of all, we have to look at the housing mix. My personal view, as I think I voiced in previous discussions, is that I want to see us ensure that we can provide the right type of housing for the different community groups. Within the figures that are going to the Council tomorrow, there is a mix there that has been suggested as the sort of information that helps us do that. But I have also made sure and I have asked ... well, I cannot make sure because I am only a member of the housing policy group, but I am looking for some steer, some direction, of new policies to help us get to that point that our mix of housing, types of housing, what groups it is for and so on is better matched to our needs going forward and more sustainable for the future. I am told that the housing policy group is working on bringing that forward very ... so I think this discussion I would have loved to have if we had had a more comfortable process where all these pieces of work could all happen step by step by step. But at the moment they are happening all in parallel and it is a complex task to bring them together. It is a bit like trying to build a jigsaw on the fly. That is the challenge of the new timetable but we are all committed to doing it.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What about the repurposing of old agricultural buildings that are no longer fit for purpose? What is your view on that?

The Minister for the Environment:

I think there are various types of agricultural buildings. Certainly, we have the modern tin shed types of things where personally those, I would expect, would be subject to the current policies which talk about if agricultural use ceases that they would be removed. But where we have historic structures, releasing them for homes within the current policy I think is a pretty successful arrangement. What

I want to see are the new ... and I have not got down to that level of detail, but I shall be listening to the work that the team come up with of whether they see any modification of that. One of the things that again ... and this is me as an aspiration. I think it is possible that some of the larger homes could be used for multiple homes, as it were, multi generation homes and so on. That might make a small contribution to our housing numbers. So those are the issues that I have asked the team to look at and what I am trying not to do at the moment, at this early stage, is say as Minister: "This is what it will be." I am giving my thoughts and asking the team to follow them up so that then I can make those judgments later on when I have the evidence.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you feel that with regard to housing trusts that the Island Plan is important for the identification of potential sites to understand the demand in the long term and determine the future use of property in the public estate so that affordable housing can be planned and developed for people in need?

The Minister for the Environment:

Absolutely essential. On the housing board, we have met with the housing trusts, we have met with Andium, and they say clearly: "States, tell us what you want. Give us the sites or make arrangements to have those sites and we will deliver." That I think has not been achieved so far. The Island Plan is going to be crucial to our doing that. But I make the point: the plan on its own cannot deliver without the resources and the policies coming from other parts of government, which I do not have responsibility for, to do that.

[12:30]

So that is the challenge. They are absolutely right in what they are saying. I am expecting the Island Plan will identify those sites in the spatial plan and make it plain what our priorities are for their use.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Clearly, one of the roles of the plan is to help facilitate long-term planning for these affordable developments, so what is your view regarding any potential impacts that this shortened plan might have on this planning for and development of affordable housing going forward? Do you think it will have an effect on that?

The Minister for the Environment:

No, I do not think it will affect it. I think fears on there, if there are, are unwarranted. My job is to make sure they demonstrate they are unwarranted. Look, I think I have already said we are certainly looking in the plan that comes forward ... it is going to look at housing over the 5-year period and beyond. It is going to have to do that because it takes several years from a plan to produce, to get

them on site. So I think it is inevitable that that part of the plan is going to have to have a long-term focus, albeit that the targets and the numbers are based on the shorter period. But I do not think it is going to have an adverse effect. No, I believe it will set the longer-term direction of travel.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It is the view from Andium Homes that demand for new houses often results in the consideration of rezoning green land and that any large-scale rezoning could take considerable time due to all the processes involved prior to approval and this, of course, could result in the delays of development for housing. A proposed solution highlighted was to prioritise certain land for redevelopment in order to speed up the delivery of homes; for example, sites in parishes which have already been through extensive planning consultation and public consultation, but because they fall outside the current Island Plan policies they have not been approved. I suppose that is probably looking towards the St. Peter proposals. What are your thoughts on that?

The Minister for the Environment:

Obviously, I have not seen the Andium statement in detail. If they are saying that we can forget the Island Plan process and just go ahead with what we know about historically has come forward, I do not think we can do that. I think we need to subject these things to proper process. That letter makes the case for what I am saying, that we have to do this plan. We have to. Now, at any time if people come forward with applications they have to be dealt with due process; it is all a question of timing. What tends to happen is once a draft plan is published and sites get identified as being proposed for development, then pretty well the development industry switches into action. You get a huge amount of effort and work taking place and I would expect that to be no different.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Evidence suggests that land rezoned by the States in previous Island Plans is not always developed in a timely manner and can therefore fail to meet the needs of those that the States had in mind when the decision to rezone the land was made. How can this be prevented? As a preventative measure, could rezoning of land potentially carry with it an expectation on when the site must be developed? Currently, rezoning places no obligation on the landowner to release the land for development within a timescale.

The Minister for the Environment:

Unfortunately, under the current Planning Law, I would love to do that; that question arises in pretty well every planning system around including the U.K. (United Kingdom) because we know developers have a tendency to do land banking, get consents, and then sit and wait until they can maximise their market, which is a very damaging situation. I am certainly taking advice about whether or not we can put something in the Planning Law to enable us to do that. But I think the

key thing is the tools we have are the policies themselves and then we have the issue of the planning obligation agreements that we would put in place. But the key thing I believe, and I have expressed this view to my colleagues on the Housing Policy Board, in terms of affordable housing sites we need a greater element of intervention by the States, potentially acquiring and buying those sites and making them available to Andium. That is a way that completely removes that uncertainty and gives the States control over delivery. But it is important with affordable housing, whatever methods we do, it is maintained in perpetuity and that today's affordable home does not become tomorrow's unaffordable home.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Minister, I thank you for all those answers. I am going to conclude this element of the hearing and suggest that we have a short break before regrouping at 12.45 p.m., if that is all right with you, so we will reconvene then.

The Minister for the Environment:

Thank you, I appreciate that chance for a break. Thank you, Chairman, and thank you for your questions. They are really good questions; I really appreciate them.

[12:35]

ADJOURNMENT

[12:43]

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Is everybody back in? Anybody who is not here please shout, as the old saying goes. Going on to the second part with the Minister for the Environment regarding general matters, can I go straight to the result of P.106, Minister, the Draft Public Health and Safety (Rented Dwellings) (Licensing) (Jersey) Regulations? Given the recent States vote to reject the principles of the licensing of rented dwellings, what are your next steps on this, please?

[12:45]

The Minister for the Environment:

My first steps are to take stock because we are left in a situation where we have a law that requires minimum standards to be enforced and yet the proposals to have a systematic way of dealing with that have been rejected. So I am still clear in my mind that we need to have that process of effective enforcement of those standards and that it does need to be efficient and so I have tasked my officers

to look at what alternative ways we can do that. When I say “alternatives”, I mean alternatives to a biennial licensing system. I am quite clear at the moment in my mind that we still, despite all of the various alternative proposals that have been agreed by the States, at the present time we do not have a register. We do not have a register of dwellings that are rented out, and without that register in place it makes our ability to do that enforcement much less effective than it needs to be to deliver the commitment to the public that the States have agreed previously. So, at the moment, I am holding back until I receive that advice from my officers and the principal officer, there is a bit of a procedural complication that the officer that was leading that work, of course, is still leading the contact tracing team, and therefore it is inevitable, until I can get that environmental team up fully effective, there will be a delay. But I am not going to make that delay any more than it needs to be.

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier:

I would like to ask the Minister, from our previous conversation, would he consider to amend primary legislation to include, from my perspective, most vulnerable on this market, which are lodgers at private houses, which are not covered by primary and will not be covered by the secondary legislation?

The Minister for the Environment:

The advice that I have had is that the view taken is that, where you have lodgers in a house, all of the people in that house, whether they are lodgers or the tenant or the owner of it, all enjoy or endure the living conditions and the qualities of that house. So, in terms of the law that applies minimum standards of that property, there is no distinction in that aspect between the individual lodger and the householder, no distinction at all. Therefore, what it would do, if we were to amend the law, put those arrangements in, it would be a really high bureaucratic overload and would certainly take us into the kind of involving in people’s personal affairs, which is something that I thought would be a step too far. Because the test is, we set down minimum standards for homes, and unless I am wrong in the logic, I think they are right that the same standards and conditions, the lodger will have the same. So, if the house does not comply, the whole house does not comply, not just the lodger. I think, listening to the Deputy when this conversation has taken place before ...

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Definitely, but does the Minister agree there is a difference that do allow for if you are a tenant of the full flight of the house, you can approach the department and complain. If you are renting a room within somebody’s house, the option is not really there and nobody in their right mind will go to complain about the landlord that he is living with, especially during the COVID, the amount of evictions that at least happens there.

The Minister for the Environment:

I do understand that. I can see that problem because I suppose it is open for the lodger to make a complaint to Public Health and of course that runs the risk that then when the Public Health officers turn up on the door and start to investigate, which they are entitled to under the law with due notice, and then that will be linked to the lodger and there could be repercussions. I think that probably takes us to the security of tenure issue, which I think is the Deputy's main concern. In discussions I have had, I believe that is a matter that falls under another law, which is not mine, which is the Housing Tenancies Law, which the Minister for Children and Housing deals with. Probably that is an example where we end up with lots of different laws all trying to do different things. The law that I took to the States was about standards and nothing else. But I will take that away and have discussions with the officers, but that is where we are at the moment on that issue.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Could the Minister confirm that, although the standards law did not go through, and I know he was disappointed with that, but nonetheless the law does allow his officers to improve standards when poor standards are reported to them by doctors, social workers, and police. So, in that respect, the law is working.

The Minister for the Environment:

Yes, it is. There is no question they do that, as I said, all of those agencies, social workers, children's officers, schools and so on, refer issues of bad housing that are affecting the health of people to the Environmental Health and they go and they will follow them all up. What obviously we were seeking to do was to make it more systematic and being able to have a programme where, over a longer period, we could cover the whole. Of course, at the moment we have a good idea where some of the problem properties are, but we wanted to know what the whole big picture was. But, nonetheless, I do not want to go over the debate again, the States rejected that. But for me the issue of registration is really important. We had a readymade register; it cannot happen now. We have 2 propositions agreed by the States, both of which talk about registers. My personal view is that we are talking about very long lead times and a great deal of cost to do them, but I have asked the officers to check out what the options are. I do not know I can go further, Chairman, at the moment.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you, Minister, and we look forward to contributing towards a satisfactory resolution. Going on to the impact of COVID-19, we are aware that the Environmental Health staff, as you mentioned just now, have been redeployed to work on the contact tracing team. What continued impact does this have on Environmental Health operations? You mentioned just now you were much reduced in your inspections.

The Minister for the Environment:

Yes, I have been very troubled about this. For example, I am just going to do a brief introduction and then see if the Director of Regulation, which is Mr. William Peggie, who is online, could fill in some of the gaps for me. But obviously Environmental Health was taken on by the previous Minister and I have had the pleasure of being able to expand that role as best I could, because it is so important. The issues of health and environment are intrinsically related. Now, the big issue was we lost the key officer, as I said, to the work stream, but I am told by the end of October the other officers will be back to the Environmental Health team. At its worst, I am told that we had a team of 13 that was down to 3. The lead officer on the housing side has been leading the contact tracing and obviously is an expert in it and doing a fantastic job and so I want to praise her for that effort. She needs to continue doing it, as I understand it, and I fully endorse that. In the meantime, Mr. Stewart Petrie, who you know, who retired, who has been engaged to help us on food health and preparing for Brexit in terms of the new health standards for goods and so on, has had to take a role in picking up some of this, so that has an immediate effect. The other effects I notice, and I will be frank, is that we are seeing a higher level of complaints from people now I think on things like noise nuisance, fumes, and some of those tones of those emails show that people's mental health is really being affected by the stress of living close to some of those nuisances. I think it has made it more difficult for us to be able to respond as effectively and as early as we needed to. So, as far as I am concerned, I am absolutely looking, and I have told the Director General and Mr. Peggie, that I really want the resources for that team looked at. Because the one thing we have learned in COVID is that health of people, it is affected by the environment and it links into well-being, people being locked down and people who are vulnerable spending all their time in their homes, the stresses where things are not right are very troubling. Could I ask Mr. Peggie to fill in the gaps for me please, Chairman?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just before Willie comes in, could I just ask whether you consider there is a reasonable case for recruiting additional specialist staff? Because I gather that a lot of the tracking and tracing team are just on zero hours, so should the department not bring further staff in on a permanent basis? Maybe, Willie, you can answer that?

Director, Natural Environment:

Perhaps I could add to that. I would tend to agree with you, Chairman, we have a position where our Environmental Health staff, and indeed the Health and Safety Inspectorate, which does not fall under our remit, are being asked to police many of the issues around COVID, for example parties, funerals, wakes, line-dancing competitions, people being imported in from the Isle of Wight, et cetera. It is taking away from our day job quite significantly even still. I would therefore advocate that more resources are allocated to the central agency dealing with COVID's behaviour change,

thereby allowing some of our teams to fall back into their B.A.U. (business as usual). The Minister highlighted that we have indeed gone through a bit of a scourge. We are now back, as he rightly said, to having all but 2 essentially in our midst and we are getting slowly back on top of things, which is in my mind not necessarily quick enough, but we just need to keep pressing on there. But, in terms of extra resources, I would agree with you.

The Minister for the Environment:

Just to add, I also think that those teams have worked above and beyond, extra hours, they are all owed leave, rather like we have heard with people in the Health Service, people are tired. We have been at this for 6 months and yet what we have is a backlog of issues on health, environmental health, nuisance stuff, and also on the planning side. Those pressures have increased and so we desperately need that breathing space of having a bit of extra resource plugged into there and that has been my message. I wrote to one of the scrutiny panel Chairs to that effect the other day, the one that is looking at staff efficiencies and so on, because I am really worried that, at the moment, within the part of I.H.E. that I am politically responsible for, I am not seeing an issue of reducing staff at all. I am talking about increasing pressures that are pushing people much too hard and I want to do something about it.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think that is understood, Minister. I am just going to lead on to disposable face masks and I will not get into the medical discussion, which we received earlier on, but I would simply ask what measures might you take to ensure that there is not an increase in masks being littered around the town or countryside? What are your views on that, because they are going to end up on the pavements and on the ground, how will you manage that situation?

The Minister for the Environment:

You have taken me aback with that question, Chairman. It was not one I prepared for but it did occur to me the other day now, as you said, that a lot of people will be using disposable masks and I have some of those myself and of course they are different layers. There seems to be an impermeable layer inside layers and I looked to officer colleagues to advise me about what advice and guidance we can put on their proper disposal. One of the jobs of course that does not fall to me, it falls to one of my colleagues, the Minister for Infrastructure, is a waste strategy. That is a piece of work that at the moment I am told that the SP3 team; that is the team that does not report to me as a Minister but sits under the Chief Minister, do not have the resources in place to take that forward. But I think the best person who might be able to help us on this is my colleague Louise Magris in the SP3 team. Could you hear from her, Chairman?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Indeed, if she is present. Louise, please chip in.

[13:00]

Head of Sustainability and Foresight:

Hello, Chairman. So a very good point there, Chair, about littering in general, but obviously masks are an issue because people put them in their pockets and they fall out and all sorts of things like that. So, as the Minister said, we are suffering from a bit of a resource deficit, but we are still very keen to address the reduction in single-use plastic of items, of course there is plastic in masks. One of the things that we are able to do with our limited resources is we are working with the Eco-Active programme and the Plastic-Free Jersey initiative to bring forward 4 information films, which are going to be talking about a number of different matters, one of which is talking about the ultimate destination of items that are littered. So thinking particularly about cigarette butts, but your point about masks is really well made and I think we could add in some information there about masks and reminding people to dispose of masks very carefully once they are used or to use much better reusable cloth masks. So that is something we could pick up and take forward in some of the outreach work that we are looking to do this year.

The Minister for the Environment:

Jane Burns, of course, since our last meeting, she is now full time and I am pleased to say that is really a good move, Jane Burns, our outreach officer.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Indeed, I concur with that. Maybe this is one for Dr. Magris once again, the carbon-neutral strategy, could you give us an update on ...

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Chair, I am sorry, I put that I have a question on impact of COVID-19 before we move into the carbon-neutral strategy. A very quick one on different matters. Would the Minister advise how big is the delay on planning permissions and how can it affect our construction industry from January 2021? Because I have heard anecdotal evidence that we might not have enough work for them because of the planning delays.

The Minister for the Environment:

Yes, there are planning delays, I recently answered a question, I think it was from Deputy Higgins. I gave figures that I was given on the percentage that we are able to deal with of planning applications. The target that is the normal target is 8 weeks to deal with a planning application for minor and household routine applications and 13 weeks for larger applications. Unfortunately, the

current figures show quite a strong decline in that, in fact during the period when we lost 50 per cent of the planning officers and the building control officers to the COVID team, the performance went down much lower. It has recovered to an extent, but unfortunately there is a backlog. What I have been advised is that efforts to recruit specialist staff are not being successful and of course the pressures are building up. The matter is compounded as well by the fact that we have not been able to deal properly with planning appeals since December last year. So we have now 9 months backlog of major planning appeals. One or 2 minor ones have been dealt with but there are some significant applications in that list. The problem is that the law requires us to bring planning inspectors to hear a public hearing and of course on public hearings you can have quite large numbers of people turn up and present their voice. But we managed to get back to some degree of achievement, but unfortunately the deterioration in the U.K. means that planning inspectors are now going to be required to isolate. I have suggested some ideas, which I have put forward, to try to effectively overcome that and I will go into those if you want, but I do not want to get too bogged down in detail, which will help. But there is a problem there, it is an example of how COVID has disrupted a lot of our routine work.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

9 months of delay is really worrying because we are talking about knock-down effect on construction industry, which would be great to have work, especially in the recovery. So if the Minister can share some of the ideas or at least tell the panel to follow up with the panel.

The Minister for the Environment:

I will share the ideas. One of the ideas is I think we have not been bold enough and broad thinking enough and I have said I think we should be renting apartments, properly serviced apartments, self-contained units, for probably several months, maybe a year. We should be making those units available to planning inspectors or specialists to come into the Island for say a month or 6 weeks, a period to do a run of appeals. That has a cost to it and we should offer those facilities to the inspectors rather than expect them to come in and then isolate in Jersey when they are here and then isolate when they go back or whatever they have to do. I have asked for those ideas to be investigated. What I do not want to do is to move to a situation of hearing appeals on the papers, which means you get an expert somewhere else who just looks at the papers and makes a decision. I think that idea would undermine the whole basis of having planning appeals.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can I ask Andy Scate to say a few words on this?

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just going to put a bit of colour around the planning process really in terms of the applications. A lot of work that gets to market in the next sort of 6 to 12 months, we cannot forget, has already been permitted. So there is a significant number of schemes that are already permitted, have been through planning, and are awaiting a start on site. So in terms of immediate work for construction, clearly, they will rely on planning permissions already out there. The other point just to highlight, any major schemes in the pipeline now will probably take at least 12 to 24 months really to come to market once you go through the design, the contracting, to get out on to site itself. So, in terms of the immediate spend in the construction market, smaller schemes are very important in this mix, smaller household schemes, the smaller projects, because very often they are permitted and they will start fairly quickly once a householder is ready to go. So I think the pleasing statistic that we are seeing is about 75 per cent of those minor applications are currently being turned around in time. So, as the Minister said, we have, in this area of service, had a knock back due to targets. COVID and recruitment I think is a double whammy in this area. But I am hoping the statistics I have just given you do provide a bit more comfort.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

That is helpful. Dr. Magris, carbon-neutral strategy, where are we?

Head of Sustainability and Foresight:

So this is good news in terms of getting the programme back on schedule after the COVID pause and the difficulties that COVID has given us in having a physically gathered Assembly, which obviously we could not do in the height of the pandemic. So we have been working very hard with our independent advisers and are reprogramming all the phases of the project and have just had agreement from Council of Ministers and confirmation that the Council of Ministers remains as committed as before to the importance of this work stream and is very keen for us to restart. Of course, it is very important to kick start this programme so that we can deliver the outcome to the Citizens Assembly and a long-term climate action plan in this term of Government. That does absolutely remain our priority. So we are in a position where we are expecting to hold our Citizens Assembly, which will be a hybrid process, face to face, but with some online sessions, and a backup in case we have to move to a fully online programme, although that would not be our preference. That will happen after Christmas, so we will be looking at mid-February to mid-May for the Citizens Assembly. But it is important to remember, and it all seems such a long time ago now, does it not, that there is quite a long lead-in to the Citizens Assembly with a community engagement programme and an input phase where we rekindle the discussion around the Climate Assembly with the citizens of the Island and talk to them broadly about the position and get their ideas and thoughts around tackling the climate emergency. That work is programmed to begin in October and take us all the way to Christmas. What is important is rekindling this debate. People have quite understandably been thinking about a lot of other things during the height of the COVID pandemic and it will of

course remain important to people. But we have seen a glimpse in changes of lifestyle over COVID, particularly things around sustainable travel, and we hope to take that interest in that area into the wider discussion around tackling the climate emergency. It is important for us to share with you our timetable as soon as we possibly can, recognising that the amendments to the carbon-neutral strategy gave scrutiny the position to observe the meetings of the Citizens Assembly and of course that will be coming next year. But we will be sharing our new timetable with you so that you have as much time to prepare as we do. So it is important that we are getting that work back on schedule. There is the strong start work, which continues, so there are some initiatives, no regrets initiatives, that are underway. We are also looking at opportunities to align the economic recovery and potential fiscal stimulus activity with the carbon-neutral agenda. It is quite possible for those things to work in the same space and have a joint beneficial outcome. So, again, working quite hard behind the scenes to make all of that line up so that we can kick start as soon as possible. Does that help you with understanding where we are at, at the moment, or would you like me to elaborate on anything in particular?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

No, that is good from my point of view, unless any other panel members have anything to submit. I am going to ...

The Minister for the Environment:

Before you do that, I must say that I was really pleased that the Council of Ministers were 100 per cent behind this. Because there is no question, this climate change is the biggest emergency around. Obviously, in recent months we have had to concentrate on COVID, but I think there is now a real readiness and an appetite for this. I am particularly pleased that in the new Government Plan that is in jurisdiction the Climate Emergency Fund is seen as one of the key mechanisms for delivering this and so I am really pleased about that. So this is one area we have some really good news, a positive story to tell.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Indeed, I am pleased to hear that. Minister, I am going to ask you for a high-level opinion, I know you do not want to get too involved, future hospital sites. Given the short listing of sites has been reduced to 2 possibilities, Overdale and People's Park, what are your views on building the hospital on open green space at People's Park or indeed on the skyline at Overdale?

The Minister for the Environment:

I am going to have to dip out of that question because I have spent the last year, and more than that, since I got elected, avoiding expressing opinions on individual sites. Because, in the end, whatever site you choose, there is going to have to be a judgment made about the for and against.

There will be some factors for and against and that is why we have a planning process and everybody has their right to be heard. At the end of the day, under the law as it stands, it will be my job to decide. I would be really in difficulty if I openly expressed views early on, on individual sites. I do not want to duck it out entirely, so I am going to say this, I have always said to you in the Island Plan session that there is no question in my mind that the issue of open space for the public in our urban area is a vital issue of importance, particularly if we are to have more people being housed in town, we need to ensure that situation is adequate. That is a general comment and not related to any site. But if you want to talk more, could I ask perhaps Mr. Scate, because I think he is in a position to be able to deal with that, recognising my difficult situation I have with a conflict of interest.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I appreciate that, Minister, but you will understand why I am asking. The Constable of Grouville wanted to say a word.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I am interested in the Minister's views on Deputy Pointon's proposition to add Warwick Farm and St. Saviour's Hospital. He does not need to comment on the sites specifically, but does he think that having more options is a good thing or not?

The Minister for the Environment:

I really am struggling with this. In my supplementary guidance, I set down some guidance for the factors that might come into the site selection process. What it does look to me is I have been surprised at the degree of contention that has gone on and what has happened. But I have avoided expressing a specific opinion on either the ones that have come out, the ones that have been already dropped out, and the new ones coming in. I am going to say it, it is disappointing to me that has happened, but nonetheless the States are the States and they are going to have to resolve what their view is about the preferred site.

[13:15]

I have explained earlier in the Island Plan discussion that I believe the planning system can deal with the 2 situations. If the States come up with a preferred site, it can then be evaluated, the application, a decision can be made. If they do not, the Island Plan will provide a clearer basis for it. But, please, can I ask that Mr. Scate adds to that, because I do not want to just duck out of your questions.

Acting Director General for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What I can say is that there is no easy site to put the hospital proposal on and I think the Island has seen that. So this is the third variation now of the hospital scheme that we have seen, 2 on the existing hospital site and now looking for a new hospital site after the Assembly chose to remove the existing site. So I think what we can say at this stage is that we have had a very wide public engagement process in terms of site ideas that have come through the system. So there have been dozens of sites that have been suggested by the community. They have been through a site selection process. We have had a citizens panel looking at that, applying various tests against whether the sites would fit, whether they would sit with our sustainable transport strategy, et cetera. Of the sites that we have left, the 2 sites that we have left, both have issues to overcome in the planning sense and at this stage I think, once we have a States decision on which is the preferred site, then obviously those issues will need to be addressed in any planning submission, which will be subject to an inquiry, and then before the Minister in due course. So I think all I can say at this point is it is just not an easy equation to solve. We know there is an overriding need for the facility and for improved hospital building and everything that goes on within it, but trying to find somewhere where everybody is happy is probably unlikely.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you. If it was easy, we would have done it, I think we can probably agree on that.

The Minister for the Environment:

Just to say, Chairman, it gives me no pleasure to have to take that tack. If I was not in the ministerial role, I would have plenty to say about it, but I am and that is an overriding public responsibility that I have to honour.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Indeed, thank you, Minister. The President of the National Trust for Jersey called for Government to purchase the Sand Quarry in St. Ouen, Simon's, as it is one of Jersey's most important sites of natural beauty. What is your view on that?

The Minister for the Environment:

Well, there is a whole series of things. Obviously, it has been a major issue for a while and it has certainly come to the fore even more lately with what I understand the aspirations of the current owner to stand down and to pass that site on. So, unfortunately, we have a legacy of issues there. We have a longstanding planning matter in terms of the original consent that was given and extended for sand extraction many, many years ago. It was a condition of those consents that we had a restoration plan and arrangements were set aside to provide money for that restoration to be done. The planning applications, the planning permissions in place, required those submissions to be made, to be subject to approval by a certain timescale. I am not aware that those timescales

have been made, Mr. Scate can advise on that in a moment. But unfortunately there are a lot of complications arising. Not only do we have a hole in the ground full of water, it also is an area that is an important area of water resource with the St. Ouen's Bay aquifer, where historically Jersey Water have bored holes and extracted water for mains use after treatment. Unfortunately, the incident with the P.F.O.S. (perfluoro octane sulfonate) contamination at the airport has effectively stopped that and, as I understand it now, if there is any water extraction is really minimal. We know, tests that we have done, that there is a high level, if not a very high level, of P.F.O.S. contamination in that water and so we have real issues there. Therefore, there is a project underway indeed to establish what are the potential issues, the implications for our water supply, on restoration. Because there are risks, which anybody proposing any future use of that site would have to be able to answer, and that requires extensive hydrological investigation to ensure that we do not end up changing the water gradient and spreading the P.F.O.S. contamination into domestic water. That is a risk and all those present know that. So the other issue is mineral, there is a part of the Island Plan is the mineral strategy, where obviously we will run out of that sand and there is no possibility of future extensions, the owner knows that. We need to provide for means of bringing in construction industry aggregate into the Island, sand, and that strategy is part of the work in the Island Plan. So there are all these sorts of threads. My personal view, the issue about whether the States were to buy it, what they would be doing in my view is taking on all those tasks on to their own responsibility if they then became the owner. There is quite a steep potential price tag on that. Now that is not a decision for me, it is a matter for the Minister for Infrastructure. But there is no question we do need to see that restoration. If I may, Chairman, ask Mr. Scate to add to that, because I think he can fill in any gaps and correct me if I am wrong.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, before he comes in, I just want to align your comments with the management plan for St. Ouen's Bay. I think that is being led by the Minister for Infrastructure, but I just wonder if you had consultation or if there was any progress in that project.

The Minister for the Environment:

The management plan, it would be helpful if you could refer me to what document you are looking at. Is this an old strategy or a new one?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

We are looking for a management plan for St. Brelade's Bay and what you have said has really indicated there is a desperate need for a global management plan for St. Ouen's Bay. So I just wondered if, in terms of the National Park, or the other agencies involved, whether there had been any consultation or discussions to achieve a way forward for the whole bay?

The Minister for the Environment:

There has been certainly lots of ideas floated and discussions, but I do not think we have reached a point of clarity yet. From my point of view environmentally we have this issue in the Island Plan that we have a planning policy, which is the Coastal National Park. That is a policy that provides planning rules and restrictions for management of developments; management of developments and use in the bay. But of course others are much more focused in on recreational uses and things like camping and so on. Those are issues that at the moment sit within the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture. I think what we are trying to do in the Island Plan is to get clarity in terms of the planning side of things and of course the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture has in place money and funding to be able to pick up issues about the kind of recreational uses within the bay. But I am afraid this is a very complex business. Your starting point was about Simon Sand, which is a key site. I wonder if we can just clear up from Mr. Scate so I do not misadvise.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I do not want to exclude Andy but I am very conscious of the shortness of time and we have one or 2 other issues I just want to quickly pick up on if I may. Asian hornets, what progress is being made on mitigation methods to reduce the numbers of this species? Are numbers increasing?

The Minister for the Environment:

My expert is Mr. Peggie on here, could he please speak on that item?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Indeed. Do we still have Willie Peggie?

The Minister for the Environment:

He is muted unfortunately.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Let us move on to the ban of single-use carrier bags. The consultation with local retailers on single-use bags ended in September. While we understand that overall political oversight of the drafting of this legislation rests with the Minister for Infrastructure, we would like to know what discussions or involvement you have had in the drafting of the proposed legislation, if any.

The Minister for the Environment:

My discussions worked the way I always work, Chairman, I try to work with colleagues, other Members and Ministers, to try to shape something until we can get an inference or decision of the States and then obviously it then becomes part of the work stream of our outstanding professional

team to translate that into doable answers. Of course, this particular one is being led by Louise Magris, who is working on this, so I wonder if we can have an update from Louise as to where we are with that one.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Indeed, thank you, Louise.

Head of Sustainability and Foresight:

Thank you, Minister and Chair. So you are absolutely right, the results of the consultation are currently being analysed and looked at. We had reasonably good feedback on that and then that needs to be analysed successfully to give us the evidence base for helping us with our drafting. As you rightly say, this is a piece of legislation led by the Minister for Infrastructure, but of course the Minister for the Environment retains a strong interest in it. The way that we will work with this is, as soon as we have the consultation responses ready, we will report them to both Ministers in order to keep them up to date on how that process went. Then, as we feed those responses into the law drafting process, again we will be briefing Ministers on progress with that. So, like I say, at the moment we have not been talking to the Ministers directly because we have not analysed the responses, but we will be doing that quite soon. So the Minister has that coming. We are on schedule as requested to bring forward legislation to be lodged ready for consideration by the States by next February. That timetable does remain intact despite the resource issues that we have had because we do have an outstanding officer working directly on this and keeping momentum going on this important piece of legislation.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you very much. I am going to just revert back to Willie Peggie about the Asian hornets now. Willie is online, I believe.

Director, Natural Environment:

Thank you, Chairman, I am sorry. I have slow technology, sorry, Minister. Yes, so this year we are operating, we have a paid co-ordinator who people will be familiar with from having been recruited last year and we have 16 volunteers operating for and with him. I would say the cost of the service for this year is going to be around £65,000 including all the materials that we use. We are finding fewer hornets this season compared with previous years and we think that is attributable to a mild damp winter and a damp spring and that induces losses due to pathogens and fungi. We have been involved in strategic early trapping of queen hornets, mainly on the east coast. We are seeing improvements in modern technology that is underpinning our tracking techniques, which again have improved the speed and efficacy of trapping and tracking. So we are finding that some of the work that we would have done last year, for example in spotting a hornet and then tracking it back to its

nest, may have taken somewhere in the region of 3 days, but with the new technology working in conjunction with the University of Exeter that we have been developing that can sometimes take us 3 hours now. So there are really quite significant improvements there. We are continuing to work with Exeter Uni and we are also working with other officers from I.H.E., the climbing team for example, again which is leading to quicker destruction of nests compared with what we historically did, which was hiring in cherry pickers to dispose of those nests. So there is a lot of work ongoing and it is improving and it will probably continue to improve year on year, which is helpful because, if we do not, as we know from previous conversations, the exponential rise of hornets in the Island will be significant. It is not linear, it is an explosion year on year, so the more we can do to deal with them the better.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you very much. Minister, there are plans to introduce odour monitoring in densely populated residential areas where biosolid spreading takes place on fields. We were wondering if there are any plans to introduce this monitoring. Do you have any information that you could give us on that?

[13:30]

The Minister for the Environment:

I think we do know there was an incident this year where, on a field surrounded by housing, was used to spread this material to land. Of course, what I was advised is that was not a good decision at that time because the field was in bulbs and therefore the material laid on the top. That is not unusual but obviously in a normal situation one would be able to incorporate that material in the topsoil and resolve it. It was unfortunately done at a time of very warm weather and so it was not wise. There is a work in progress to try to provide some guidance to those that are doing this selection for spreading on the various fields and giving advice and guidance to mean that we do not have that sort of incident. But there is no question in my mind, I spoke earlier about environmental health and nuisance complaints, excessive smells do annoy people in the same way that noise does and different people have different thresholds of the nuisance. But people generally are now a lot more sensitive to these things going on in their local environment, all those things, and we are therefore getting a higher level of complaint. I am very conscious of the fact we have an issue with higher levels, I do not know, I have not smelled them myself, but a high level of smells from the food catering unit at St. Peter, which is the hospital. Obviously, it was intended to install plant and so on that mitigates against that. So there is a general issue about that and of course in other cases we have had, not fumes necessarily, but cooking smells as well from restaurants and what have you.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Minister, I am just going to ask Deputy Gardiner to come in here, she has a question.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

A couple of quick questions, the first question, Minister, would you advise if another investigation by Environmental Health on that particular incident, has the investigation finished and if there is a report following that investigation? I am talking about Pet Cabin on 27th July.

The Minister for the Environment:

This is the one about the spreading on the fields; that is the one that you are referring to, yes?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I am talking about 27th July, it might be 28th, Pet Cabin area, Haute Vallee School.

The Minister for the Environment:

Could I ask Mr. Peggie please to answer that?

Director, Natural Environment:

Yes. The investigation has been concluded and that has resulted in advice and discussion with the spreading party. The issue being is that in the countryside, in the farming community, we do not quite know what the longevity of spreading on land is going to be. Agricultural practices are changing and the requirements from the multiples are changing as well. So whether it is going to be acceptable to continue spreading that material to land into the future is something that needs to be taken into question. We have been in discussions with colleagues, admittedly in the same department, who are responsible for that spreading, suggesting that they might also look to alternative methods of disposal, being the potential to export off-Island, the potential to incinerate. But of course those are all expensive and we have also obviously had the potential, historically, to incentivise our farming community to take that material on to land. If that is not going to be something that is acceptable from an agricultural perspective in the future then that is something that has to be considered. In the meantime, though, we do need to ensure that the public are not hindered or troubled by the continued spread of that material, particularly bearing in mind, as we know, that, because of COVID, we have so many more people who are operating out of their houses and their homes now. That is not to say that agricultural practices should not have evolved over the years, but it just they may be noticing it more. So, yes, I think the question being should we be changing, should we be deciding that it is not a good thing to do? It still can be done but it should be done with better advice and the Environmental Health officers that were out and investigating that, begin discussions with the parties who were spreading it to try to advise.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Can you please share in writing the outcome of this investigation and the recommendation that you make, following our discussion?

Director, Natural Environment:

Yes, of course.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

There are W.H.O. (World Health Organisation) standards for the smell, so I know that we do not have it in Jersey and it is again coming to the nuisance, is it something that you are looking at the area, what are World Health Organisation standards and how we can introduce it in Jersey?

Director, Natural Environment:

I think we would be mindful of those World Health Organisation standards. It would be preferable to ensure that the agricultural practices, in terms of incorporation, are improved to make sure that we do not have an arising of the smell in the first instance. The reason I say that is because the ability to engage smell is notoriously subjective and you can use what are called olfactometers or noseometers or we have all manner of means of trying to register and measure smell, but one person can read them differently to somebody else. So, yes, of course the World Health Organisation's limits and guidelines will of course guide our practice. Trying to put that in place from a practical perspective may be better dealt with at source, would be my suggestion.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

Could I just come in here because you cannot blame the agricultural population for all the smells that are operating on this Island and Bellozanne throws out some wonderful perfume and there are old fish, there are all sorts of things that do it. So to blame the agricultural workers and farmers for this I think is slightly out of order. Sorry, being a farmer myself, I do not have this problem because of the way I farm. But I do not think I am to blame for most of the smells that happen on this Island, I am sorry.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Minister, time is not on our side, but one final question regarding Brexit and Jersey's territorial waters. Given recent media coverage regarding the alleged possibility that Jersey's territorial waters might be surrendered in a possible Brexit deal, as well as your recent statement to States Members assuring that Jersey's territorial waters will not be ceded, what further assurances can you give to members of the public who might be watching?

The Minister for the Environment:

It is very difficult to go further than the statement I made last week because the situation at the moment is in the balance with the U.K. and the E.U. (European Union) free trade agreement talks going through their final crisis 2 weeks leading up to the now Council of Ministers of the E.U. meeting on 14th and 15th. I am working hard with the External Affairs team, particularly the Minister and the officers, and I have said and I will say again, the officers have been outstanding, the amount of work daily, hourly, all hours of the day. That team are in constant dialogue with the U.K. because we are not at the table. We are having to put our views remotely and have our interests represented remotely. Mr. Peggie, Mr. Peggie's colleague Greg Morel is part of that team, and Gregory Guida and I, we take stock of this it seems almost every day. What the statement said is we have had to provide information on what Jersey's ideal position might be, along with the other Crown Dependencies. Those views have gone to the U.K. We do not yet know the extent to which those views will be taken on board by the U.K. or what the outcome will be. But the Minister for External Relations has made it plain that, whatever the outcome, we will be in control of our own destiny because we will make our decisions as Ministers once we know where we are with that process. I do not think we will have to wait very long; we will know in a couple of weeks. In the meantime, we are trying to keep all stakeholders and interested parties as updated as best I can, because obviously there talks are, by their very nature, because we are being made privy to the close goings-on, if you like, within this highly sophisticated diplomatic process, and they are negotiations. So we have to respect those confidentiality in the meantime. But I am meeting the fishing industry on Friday, there are constant talks going on, we will try to keep them abreast as best we can. But this is a very troubling time and I am afraid the situation is for the Island; I personally do not believe that any outcome from the Brexit talks is going to be better than what we have now. It almost certainly will be worse. The question is, how much so?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

We will keep monitoring that, as I am sure you will, Minister. Minister and your team, I thank you for attending upon us this morning and we look forward to ...

The Minister for the Environment:

Sorry, Chairman, I did wonder if there was anything Mr. Scate wanted to correct or add to what I said about Simon Sand, because that is an important matter that we should have correct, if I have made any inaccuracies. Could we just briefly do that before closing?

Director, Natural Environment:

Minister, I do not think you made any inaccuracies. I am happy, though, for the department to give the panel a more detailed briefing note on just where we are with the planning permission status and discussions with Simon Sand.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

That would be helpful, thank you.

The Minister for the Environment:

Thank you, Chairman, if that is us done, I will sign off.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

We will talk in due course, thank you very much.

[13:41]