



Children, Education and Home Affairs

Scrutiny Panel

Quarterly Hearing

Witness: The Minister for Home Affairs

Thursday, 23rd February 2023

Panel:

Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central (Chair)

Deputy B. Porée of St. Helier South (Vice-Chair)

Connétable M. Labey of Grouville

Witnesses:

Deputy H. Miles of St. Brelade, The Minister for Home Affairs

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour, Assistant Minister for Home Affairs 1

Deputy H. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity, Assistant Minister for Home Affairs 2

Ms. K. Briden, Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs

Mr. R. Smith, Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police

Mr. P. Gavey, Chief Ambulance Officer

[10:00]

Deputy C.D. Curtis of St. Helier Central (Chair):

Welcome to this quarterly meeting of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel. Today is 23rd February 2023. I would like to draw everyone's attention to the following. This hearing will be filmed and streamed live. The recording and transcript will be published afterwards on the States Assembly website. All electronic devices, including mobile phones, should be switched to silent. We do not have any members of the public, no. For the purpose of the recording and transcript, I would be grateful if everyone who speaks could ensure that you state your name and

role. If we begin with the introductions, the panel will introduce ourselves first, so I am Deputy Catherine Curtis, Chair of the panel.

Deputy B. Porée of St. Helier South (Vice-Chair):

I am Deputy Porée, the Vice-Chair of the panel.

Connétable M. Labey of Grouville:

My name is Mark Labey. I am the Connétable of Grouville and I am a member of that panel.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I am Helen Miles. I am Deputy of St. Brelade. I am the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs.

Assistant Minister for Home Affairs 1:

Deputy Louise Doublet, Assistant Minister for Home Affairs.

Assistant Minister for Home Affairs 2:

Deputy Hilary Jeune, Assistant Minister for Home Affairs.

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

Kate Briden, Chief Officer for Justice and Home Affairs.

Chief Ambulance Officer:

Peter Gavey, Chief Ambulance Officer.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

Good morning. Robin Smith, Chief of Police.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

All right. Thank you, that is fine. We have 1½ hours scheduled for this hearing. The first question is from me and it is about ministerial responsibilities. The panel has noted the published letter from the Chief Minister, which outlines the intention to transfer to you the responsibility for justice policy and policy relating to diversity and equality. What are your priorities for this new aspect of your role?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Okay, thank you. I think it is important to say that although the transfer of policy responsibility happens immediately, there is a few requirements to formalise the transfer because this is the first time that the powers around justice have been officially delegated. At the moment, policy and Law Officers are currently checking and ensuring that the appropriate legislative responsibilities for

justice are transferred, because there will be things that need to change in some of the Laws, but we are reasonable to expect that that work will be concluded by Easter and then the Chief Minister will make an Order and lay that before the States, which will formalise the responsibility. Clearly any responsibilities around equality and diversity and inclusion are not legislative in nature. What I have done is really delegated those responsibilities to both of my Assistant Ministers, who are taking the lead on diversity and equality. I can talk about justice and then I would invite Louise and Hilary to talk about the plans that we have to develop our diversity and equality agenda during the next term. So responsibility for justice is very much about throughout the Executive, so my role is to make sure that we have an overall justice system that is fit for purpose and that our systems and processes are doing the right things. I would have those that are not currently perceived as being included within the accountabilities of the elected Government, so overall criminal, civil, Family Court, administrative justice arrangements. That does not make me responsible for the administration of justice by the courts. There is a very clear delineation there ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes, absolutely.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

... no crossover into judicial decision-making - that is obviously very important - but it does transfer my responsibility for safeguarding human rights, data protection, legal services, constitutional reform and strengthening democracy. Now, when it was proposed back in 2013 that responsibility for justice sit in the Executive, it also included responsibility for the Legislation Advisory Panel, but that is not being kind of carried out by me. It has been decided that the Legislation Advisory Panel will continue to report to the Chief Minister, but I will be working closely with the panel on matters in relation to that. From a justice perspective, that is our priorities moving forward. I am quite happy to hand over to Hilary and Louise in turn.

Assistant Minister for Home Affairs 1:

So the area of equality, diversity and inclusion is a new area of government responsibility. I think it was there kind of notionally in responsibilities, but there has never really been anybody with political responsibility and accountability for that area, so I think as a team we are really, really excited to be able to have those responsibilities. All 3 of us are passionate about that area and we work well together. As it is, as I said, a new area in terms of government focus, at the moment we are at the stage of looking at what is already out there in terms of reports that have been done, like gender pay gap reports, and the Diversity Forum have published several reports. We will probably look beyond the States as well to other public bodies that might have made recommendations on various things. It is such a large area. I think once we have that background information, that will feed into an action plan. I think at that point we would probably have a discussion among the team about

specific strands within the piece of work that perhaps we have different strengths with, because I know Hilary has strengths in different areas to me, and perhaps you will want to talk about it maybe. I think nationality and ethnicity might be more of your strength from the work that you have done with the U.N. (United Nations). Yes, we are at the stage of getting towards an action plan.

Assistant Minister for Home Affairs 2:

Yes, and I think also it is continuing the previous work on the compliance as well, so looking at that and what we need to continue that as well, so looking at those international compliances, as well as from lots of the reports and recommendations because there has been so much work done already. I know Louise, from her previous work in the States Assembly ... there are so many reports with recommendations and we just want to make sure that we can put those all together and make sure what has been done, what is on track and what has not and then we can fill the action plan, because we are excited that we do have now ... this is such a big profile within the Government and having that responsibility. So we can come back to you later to talk over what our actions are and what we would like to do when we have put all that work together.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes, because I was going to ask how this would impact on the ministerial plans, but I can see that you are at the moment sort of working it all out, yes, okay, and then we will hear more later then.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, you will.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, thanks. The next question is from me again, so this is about the major incident at Haut du Mont. Thank you for the letter you sent to us giving us an update. Are you able to provide a further update and confirm what government resources are being used in relation to both the investigation and recovery?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Evidently colleagues in the police force remain committed to the major incident investigation and they are working jointly with the Health and Safety Inspectorate. Fire and Rescue and Ambulance Service provided an initial response and continued support through mutual aid assistance, but now that has fallen away. The Justice and Home Affairs Chief Officer, who is here, is involved in co-ordinating across government recovery activity with support from our Emergency Planning Team and also a recovery co-ordination group with cells that are focused on community, communications infrastructure and debriefing and learning from the incident. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there are significant costs in relation to the investigation, support to the bereaved families and the displaced,

and initial considerations in relation to the future of the site and also there is costs associated with the ongoing personal effects recovery at the site. As a Government, we are making available all the necessary resource to the relevant accountable officers who are committing this expenditure and they are regularly briefing me and the Political Oversight Group. The Political Oversight Group are also overseeing the incident at sea and also the Grands Vaux flooding and we are currently meeting on a weekly basis. The Political Oversight Group includes Deputy Porée, so we have not only the Deputy who represents that particular area, but also represents this panel, kept aware of what is going on. But I think the thing that I need to say is this is not going to be over any time soon. We are expecting the ramifications of this incident to last for years and there will be significant cost implications to making sure that everything is dealt with properly and appropriately. As a Government, we are committed to carefully controlling those costs, but also making sure that the appropriate funding is made available to do the best job possible.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes, that has been really difficult. The supplementary questions I have got on this are really about organisation a bit more. You may have mentioned this and I missed it perhaps: which government departments are involved in the cross-government recovery co-ordination groups?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Predominantly Justice and Home Affairs, but also Customer and Local Services, evidently Infrastructure is in there as well. I mean, it will touch every area of government, but again, the commitment from the Council of Ministers is that the necessary funding will be found to do the job that needs to be done.

The Connétable of Grouville:

That is crucial.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Clearly Treasury are clearly a key ... yes, I must not forget the Treasurer.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Just another point about this. Can you clarify where the political oversight and responsibility lies for this group?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

The group is chaired by the Deputy Chief Minister on behalf of the Chief Minister, so it is there at the highest level, and then there is attendance by the Minister for Social Security, the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs, the Minister for Infrastructure, the Minister for Treasury and the Minister

for Housing and Communities. Also we have had support from the Minister for External Relations in light of the foreign nationals that were involved in l'Ecume disaster.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. I know we have mentioned about the spending and so on, but can you confirm how much has been spent on the incident to date?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes. I am going to refer that one to my Chief Officer of Justice and Home Affairs.

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

We are tracking it very closely, as you would expect. There was expenditure in 2020, which will be covered in the annual report and accounts, which is due to be published fairly soon, both for Justice and Home Affairs and also the States of Jersey Police. Those figures will show we are running the expenditure, as you would expect, very tightly and controlling it very tightly. There is provision of a number of millions both for Justice and Home Affairs and States of Jersey Police, particularly around health and wellbeing and welfare support ongoing, and that will likely run into the millions as well. We can put you a detailed table of the costs so far and the expected costs in a follow-up letter, which I thought might be more appropriate than giving lots of figures today, but we do of course have that information available.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, thanks. That is for 2022?

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

There were costs in 2022 which will show in the annual report and accounts and then of course we have got ongoing costs, then future provision for 2023. As the Minister says, we are expecting that in a number of areas that will run into future years as well.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, right. I just maybe have one more question on this just about ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

That is covered, I think.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Well, did costs include support for people directly impacted by the incident and their families?

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

Do we have provision for those costs?

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Do the costs include support for people directly impacted?

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So it does. Yes, okay. All right, so I think that is that for now. Okay, now you have a question. Bea has a question.

Deputy B. Porée:

That is more to do with the Ambulance Services. I mean, it would be nice if you could answer, but obviously you have got an expert here, so could you please confirm whether the demand and capacity review for the Ambulance Service has been completed at this stage?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I mean, I can confirm that the operational side of the demand and capacity review has been completed and a draft paper on the management structure is near completion, if not completed, but really the best person to answer your questions about that would be the Chief Ambulance Officer because he can give you some detailed information.

Deputy B. Porée:

Yes, exactly. That would be good, if you could, please.

Chief Ambulance Officer:

Absolutely, thank you. Yes, so we have received the operational side of that report back now and we are working with the management team and H.R. (human resources) to look at how we then implement any changes from that plan. It is fair to say that the report advises that operational capacity does not meet the demands placed on the service. However, we had a business case that was accepted by the Government last year and so we have some funding towards that already this year. We are just pulling that together at the moment to ensure that we have got sufficient funding and staffing going forward, so we will be able to provide more detail in the future.

[10:15]

In terms of the management side of it, that report has just been received back, as I say, or as the Minister said, and we are working through at the moment, but obviously there is some areas in that that might require organisational change and therefore we need to approach that in the right way through H.R. with our staff representatives before putting something to the staff and releasing any parts of that report.

Deputy B. Porée:

Thank you. With regards to staff rest breaks, has anything come out of the demand and capacity review?

Chief Ambulance Officer:

Yes. Within that review they have modelled the staffing numbers, demand and capacity, around having set rest breaks, but as we know with emergency services, set rest breaks are not possible to fix in stone on a daily basis, so we are working through with employee relations at the moment. Staff get downtime most days. There will be days where they are very busy and it is hard to account for that, but then there is usually some provision made to cover that. U.K. (United Kingdom) Ambulance Services have a wide range of models in how they cover those breaks, whether they are allowed to take them later if they are interrupted, whether they are paid - there are a variety of models - so we want to make sure we get that right and in conjunction with our staff representatives before we go forward with a full plan on that, but yes, it has been taken into account.

Deputy B. Porée:

That will be good to hear down the line the details, thank you. As part of the Government Plan review, we learned that there would be 13 new front line staff recruitment for the Ambulance Service. Could you confirm if the recruitment has now started? Minister, would you like to answer that? Sorry, maybe ...

The Minister for Home Affairs:

No, I am fine. I think we have got 11 new roles from the Government Plan in 2023. I think we have 3 current vacancies, I am right in saying.

Chief Ambulance Officer:

We do, yes.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Paramedic, advanced paramedic, and work is underway with H.R. to recruit these as soon as practically possible, but it is not easy. Recruitment across all sectors here is not easy, so we are working as quickly as we can in order to be able to bring in these posts. The job descriptions are in

production for the new roles where they have been required and agreed through the demand and capacity review, but there is obviously a time lag between recruitment and getting people into post. I think we are still relying on some agency staff, are we not?

Chief Ambulance Officer:

We are at the moment, yes.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I know there is some concern about using U.K. agency staff, but at the same time you have got to balance that with the needs of local staff. You have already asked questions about rest breaks and staff well-being. We need to make sure that they are working reasonable hours, so we will continue to rely on agency staff until we can get permanent staff recruited.

Deputy B. Porée:

Thank you. Within this recruitment stage, are you prioritising any particular role or are you just setting out all the posts you are trying to fill?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I think we are going out for all the posts that we are trying to fill.

Deputy B. Porée:

Thank you. So the independent review of the Ambulance Service in 2022 highlighted that operational pressures had impacted in the health and well-being of front line staff. Until new staff are recruited, what is being done to support the staff presently in place?

Chief Ambulance Officer:

In terms of health and well-being we have a number of areas that we are looking at at the moment. We are looking at a wide variety of things in terms of what we can provide in terms of well-being, but also welfare, which for us is really important, and particularly on the back of the incidents last year. There is a significant piece of work being done post-incident to support the staff through our trauma risk management intervention training to ensure that all staff receive the support they require during that time. That welfare is obviously a bigger piece and directly associated to the service, whereas well-being is a wider offer from Government, so there are lots of offers in place where the staff can join in programmes to help with their own well-being. In the meantime we will continue to work with the staff and look for ways to support them, but those areas of welfare are on the table for the staff at all times and they have got access to managers 24/7.

Deputy B. Porée:

It would be good to have a process of monitoring those staff morale going forward.

Chief Ambulance Officer:

Sure.

Deputy B. Porée:

Thank you. Now a bit about the exit interviews undertaken with ambulance staff. Are they being done, some sort of monitoring of why is it staff are leaving, what are the main issues, so we can make sure that we ...

Chief Ambulance Officer:

Yes, sure. So the process is undertaken and staff are offered the exit interview. It is down to staff whether they wish to do that, but they also have the opportunity to complete an online form that is submitted. I do not have all of the details with me today, but the understanding I have at the moment is there are a variety of reasons. Some have left the Island for personal reasons, some have moved on and I think as we had previously mentioned, some have moved into primary care to support G.P.s (general practitioners) and other colleagues in the primary care area and others have moved off for travelling. I am not aware of any significant issues that are specifically to one topic that is something that we can directly address with that at the moment. In terms of trying to recruit in, some of the issues we have had are around the cost on the Island of moving here, but that is something we are looking to work with Government on.

Deputy B. Porée:

Thank you for your answer. Minister, please could you update us on the work your officers are doing with Jersey Property Holdings to establish an appropriate programme of work for the current Ambulance Service, please?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Work is ongoing, as ever. Our colleagues in Infrastructure, Housing and Environment have been provided with the report. I mentioned it at the last hearing. We require some additional specialist surveys to give us the requirements for the next few years because obviously we are still going to be in Rouge Bouillon for a number of years yet. Properties owned and managed by Property Holdings, regularly meetings take place between ambulance management and Property Holdings, but there is a significant amount of investment needed to maintain the building. I think that the quote we have currently is something like £1.6 million. The universal power supply is currently being replaced. We are getting quotes to refurbish the clinical sluice and the cleaning areas, you know, all of these are vital to the good running of an ambulance service and clearly the delays in selecting

a suitable site for a new ambulance and fire headquarters have affected that, so there is going to be an ongoing cost for a number of years to maintain standards at the current building.

Deputy B. Porée:

Yes, you gave us an indication of the scale of time, how long it is going to take. When do you think you would be able to come back to the panel and give us some sort of dates moving forward?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I know. I would love to be able to. I would love to be able to give you a date. I mean, we have got the issues over the site selection at Rouge Bouillon for the school. Meetings are ongoing. It is a priority and we have had some re-scoping work done. Unfortunately, fire in particular needs to move to start the dominoes falling on to a range of other opportunities, but we do meet very, very regularly. I think I have got a meeting on 7th March with the Minister for Infrastructure and the Minister for Education to see whether we can make any further progress.

Deputy B. Porée:

Thank you. From the very beginning of the plans there was a conversation about amalgamating within the same building the fire services as well as the Ambulance Service. Is this still on the plan?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

That is still the ideal plan, that we will be able to share resources, but if we are not able to find a site that is of a sufficient size in an appropriate location, we might have to go back to the drawing board and look at 2 separate headquarters, one for ambulance and one for fire, but that certainly is not my preferred option. I would certainly prefer to amalgamate both of those services, but finding the right site at the right cost, at the right time, with all the competing perspectives that we have at the moment is proving really tricky.

Deputy B. Porée:

Thank you for that. As part of its Government Plan review, Minister, the panel learned that a recruitment campaign for firefighters would commence in early 2023. Would you be able to confirm to us if that has already started?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes. The recruitment campaign is in train. Our overall intention is to recruit 10 personnel in 2023 and we are weighted to securing more on-call firefighters, so if anybody knows anybody or anybody is listening to this hearing that would like to train as an on-call firefighter, we would be very delighted to hear from you, particularly if you live out west because we need to maintain the western fire station, which is closed far too often. So in the early part of the year we have got additional

resources. There will be a dedicated media campaign to encourage and attract sufficient numbers of applicants. I have asked that it particularly focuses on diversity as well so that we are looking for firefighters, not necessarily firemen, because clearly it is an opportunity for everybody. The second half of the year will be about testing and selection and the process does take about a year. As a result of the Haut du Mont incident, we have accelerated the timeline for recruiting a deputy chief fire officer. We just had permission earlier on in the week from the States Employment Board to do that because we do need further capacity within the management team straight away because of the exigencies of that disaster. So that has been endorsed and we have already undertaken an engagement exercise with the National Fire Chiefs Council to look at potential candidates for the role because we will be looking for somebody with significant experience. It will be a 12-month fixed-term contract and part of that will be to facilitate permanent recruitment, so the person that we will be bringing in will be for a temporary basis. We are hoping that we will have somebody in that post in very short order.

Deputy B. Porée:

That sounds promising. Many responses at the moment?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes. We have got some people who are interested in taking that role for 12 months, which is good.

Deputy B. Porée:

Thank you very much. Do you have any idea of costs so far for the recruitment?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Cost of the recruitment exercise?

Deputy B. Porée:

Yes.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

No, I do not. I mean, it goes through normal H.R. processes and the campaign will be part of that.

Deputy B. Porée:

Thank you. Again, one last question. Well, a few more questions about Jersey Ambulance Service. Could you please ... sorry, I am on the wrong page. I was thinking: "Oh, I am lost. I have not that many questions." Okay, so my last question for the moment is please could you confirm how the States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service is working to update fire safety regulations?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

We have got a fire safety officer who is dedicated to that, and in my ministerial plan there is a line about improving our safety regulations, so we will be getting on to that and that will involve providing drafting instructions and the like.

Deputy B. Porée:

Thank you. That is me for now.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Thank you, Chair. My questions relate primarily to the States of Jersey Police. Minister, at our last quarterly hearing in November we heard about the review of the police employment terms and conditions as part of the uniformed services review. Please can you provide an update on the status of that review?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

The first part of the review for police terms and conditions is due to commence in April, so we decided that we would conduct it in phases, so the first part of the review starts in April, so fairly quickly.

The Connétable of Grouville:

One of the items that we were concerned about was about the terms of notice, which were, we believed at the time, only one month. Is there an update of that?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

That will all be rolled into the terms.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Part of the review?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, part of the terms and conditions review, but as the Chief Officer has expressed, it is difficult. You have got senior officers that are only required to give one month's notice, where you might have police staff in administrative roles that are required to give 3 months' notice, so it seems to be one of those anomalies.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

As you know, and has already been indicated when we tried to particularly recruit 2 more senior posts, there is quite a lengthy glide path and, frankly, even 3 months is not long enough, but of course we need consistency between police officers and police staff.

The Connétable of Grouville:

With so many other problems about accommodation and so on, we were concerned about it.

[10:30]

Well, there was a supplementary about what else can you tell us about the uniformed review, but we have already covered that. Again, at the last quarterly hearing we heard from Robin about the significant increase in mental health-related incidents that the police were responding to in 2022. Can you provide us with an update on the number of mental health incidents responded to so far this year?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

Yes. Thank you, Connétable, and thank you for your interest. So far this year we have had 139 incidents. That is recorded on our command and control system. That is a reduction, a very welcome reduction, of 2.8 per cent compared to the same period, i.e. the first couple of months of last year, but to put that all into context, as you have already alluded to, Connétable, States of Jersey Police dealt with almost 1,500 mental health-related incidents in 2022. Often the police service is described itself as the service of last resort. Last year it was around 4 incidents a day; 32 incidents a week. A number of those are repeat incidents. Between 2019 and 2021, the States of Jersey Police saw a 43 per cent increase in mental health-related incidents and His Majesty's Inspectorate has already talked about grave concerns, particularly - obviously not directed at the States of Jersey Police - of course it is what I might describe as U.K. policing, because Jersey is no different. We are not an outlier in this. In fact, some of our numbers are slightly down. Indeed, I think in our very first meeting when the Minister was appointed, she asked me questions about mental health-related incidents because what it is doing is taking the police service away from what I would say is our core function, but completely understand why people who are feeling vulnerable and in crisis will call the service. I am grateful to the Minister for arranging a meeting later on today with the Minister for Health and Social Services, Deputy Wilson - the meeting is almost immediately after this - to share some of these numbers. The final point I would say is the more recent trend line is down, which I am delighted about and some of those figures I will share with the Minister later on today.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Our concerns as a panel, Chief, is about the resource that is implicated by this. We were wondering if there were any updates about the mental health suite, which you have mentioned in the past, which I believe is under development at Clinique Pinel. Is that what you will be talking about this afternoon?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

That is number one on the list, both for the Minister for Health and Social Services, but I also think it is top of the list for the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs. That will assist us greatly, but it has a history of delay and indeed there is a further delay, I am advised, until June of this year. Last week I met with Deputy Binet to discuss that. He gave me assurances, and he too is very keen to ensure that there is a proper place for people who are in mental health crisis, who are sick, who need medical attention, that we have a suitable place to take them to.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes, absolutely. I think that is something the panel were very concerned about when you intimated your issues, so thank you very much. Would you like me to continue to question 12, Chair?

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes. This relates to firearms legislation, which I am sure you are more than aware concerns all Connétables around the Island and our responsibilities thereto. It is one of the most alarming parts of my new job is about firearms. Minister, you have committed to reviewing firearms legislation in 2024 and advised the Assembly that any review would focus on risk and safety issues. Could you expand on that, please? What will the review consider?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Okay. I think it is important to say that the current firearms Law was passed by the Assembly in 2000, but it was developed in about 1995, and there has been considerable changes in the public's expectations since then, and not only the public expectation, but also the variety of weapons that are available to the public. I am grateful to both the police and the Connétable of St. Martin in particular for significantly raising the profile of this issue. Another area that has really raised the profile is the recent inquest this year of the Jake Davison shootings in Plymouth in 2021 ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes, absolutely.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

... where the Devon and Cornwall police had been severely criticised for a lack of care and a lack of process for a person that really should never have had his shotgun returned to him. So although my ministerial plan kind of predates this focus, it schedules the review for 2024, I just need to say that ideally I would like to do that sooner, but the timing and the limited resources that are available

to us for developing and revising legislation have meant that we have kept other projects in train at the expense of this. So it will focus on risk and safety issues and I have asked that both ... well, the Connétable of St. Martin, the Connétable of St. Ouen and the Connétable of St. Lawrence, all 3 of whom have got a special interest in firearms, are involved in a panel. So we will be meeting, I think, in the next couple of weeks just to scope what we can do quickly in terms of quick wins. But when I say there is going to be a risk and safety focus, I think that is particularly important. This review of the firearms legislation is not designed to prevent bona fide shooters, bona fide people who exercise that as a sport and a hobby from exercising that sport and the hobby, but we need to be assured that we are minimising the risk to the public from people who hold firearms. Evidently it is not the firearms per se, it is the people that hold firearms, so we need to be sure that people are fit and proper people to hold firearms. So that means that we will be looking for more robust requirements around medical assessments over the vetting and particular vetting and security screening of people that are holding firearms, also the storage of firearms and also ammunition and things like black powder and other components within domestic dwellings. So we will be looking at this again with the purpose of public safety in mind and it may well be that there is a tightening of some of the rules and requirements in law around those issues.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I am very comforted by that, as I do have to issue these licences myself. We have just said that. Is there any chance of that review going up the priority list? Because that is my next question.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Practically, we would have to drop other areas of legislation in order to do that. What I have said as well is that this is not a root and branch review of our firearms legislation, we are not throwing the baby out with the bathwater. What we have got at the moment is adequate and with the help of the States of Jersey Police and the Central Firearms Index, maintaining a very, very close eye and supporting the parishes and the Connétable in their decision-making ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

Absolutely.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

... it gives me some comfort that the systems and processes that we have in place at the moment for registration are adequate, but I do wish to tighten up some of these procedures in short order.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Excellent. Just to give you an idea, I had 3 applications on my desk this morning. Do you think that the ... sorry, which jurisdictions would you look to for best practice comparisons? Are you looking at any other jurisdictions?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

We will look at other ... we will not necessarily be looking at the U.K., although they are our closest neighbours and clearly the Home Office have got significant experience of this, but we will be asking the policy officer to look more broadly and look at other islands and see what other islands do. I can give you an example from our nearest neighbours, Guernsey. It is the States of Guernsey Police that centrally manage firearms licensing. They also have an absolute ban on keeping ammunition at home, so you can basically have as ... I would not say as many guns as you want. You may keep your weapons, but ammunition has to be held at a registered shooting club, so there are different ways of approaching this and those are the sorts of things that we will be looking at. In the U.K., for example, handguns are banned. We do not have a ban on handguns. We do have, per capita of population, a high number of weapons here, but again we have adequate controls on the people that hold them.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Do you think that the legislation is the best way to prevent the misuse of firearms?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

You are asking a person who would rather use informal methods to get people to comply, and as the Connétable will know, I am a very staunch supporter of the honorary system, but when it comes to weapons I have the view that we do need legislation and we do need very robust legislation and robust enforcement where weapons are concerned.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes, and as I said ...

The Minister for Home Affairs:

So I do think the answer to that is quite clear. I do think revised legislation is necessary.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I am very glad to hear it.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

That is not to say if you are a bona fide ... and we have many bona fide firearms holders here who are very, very conscientious and take the risk and security very seriously, but we need to make sure that we have processes and procedures for dealing with people who do not.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I mean, from my own experience, Minister, the rough shooters now are very few, which is very comforting to know that there is not people wandering around with these weapons in the public domain. May I move on to the next topic, which is search warrants? How many search warrants have been granted in Jersey in the last 5 years? Are you able to give us statistics?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I am not able to give you that statistic, I am afraid, no. I mean, we can try and find out and provide it for you.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I am sure you are aware of where we are going with this line of questioning. Have there been any deficiencies identified through an internal audit process or by legal challenge over that period?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Can you define what you mean by “deficiency”?

The Connétable of Grouville:

We were primarily worried and anxious about obviously the very high-profile case of somebody being searched and we were just wanting to know if this is not a common practice, but if other deficiencies have been seen in recent years about that search warrant process.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I suppose it is to make sure that any possible things that could go wrong have been reviewed to help assure us of that.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I mean, the process for search warrants is defined in law. An application for a search warrant begins with the receipt of information or intelligence that is collated and then it will be a police or customs decision as to whether the search warrant is required, and that could be for possession of drugs, it could be suspected indecent images of children, it could be for unlawful firearms and there is many reasons why the police or an appropriate agency might make an application for a search warrant. The process is then that the officer will draft an affidavit, which is a court document, outlining the information that the requested warrant is based on, under what Law, what is being sought and what

the address is. That affidavit has to be signed by the officer of the rank of inspector or senior officer, if it comes to customs, and then that affidavit is considered by either the Bailiff, the Deputy Bailiff or a jurat and they can ask the officer questions about that information, and they do. If the warrant is authorised, an officer swears the warrant in their presence, so any search warrant is authorised by the court. It is not done on the back of just the police force or J.C.I.S. (Jersey Customs and Immigration Service). The warrant has to be executed at the stated address and it can be executed twice, so if you get there and there is nobody there, if you do not want to make a forced entry, you have an opportunity to go back ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

You return.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

... but it has to be within 3 days, and that kind of provision is usually used for Customs and Immigration, who might be trying to assess postal importation. Then after the warrant is executed, it is then returned to the Bailiff's office, so it is possible that the court may have some information about the warrant issue. When it comes to deficient search warrants, I suppose a search warrant could be called deficient if you enter an address and you do not find what you think you were looking for, but I am not sure that we keep statistics about those. I do not think you keep them routinely in the States of Jersey Police.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

As the Minister said, we do not keep that information routinely. We could trawl that information. Roughly, we think we do around about 80 warrants in a given year, based on intelligence at the States of Jersey Police, so quite a number.

[10:45]

The Connétable of Grouville:

I mean, I think you have already answered some of the supplementaries about risk assessment of those applications. The other thing we were concerned about is the average timescale for the issue of such a warrant so that the powers to enter, search and seize property, is it an overly lengthy process is what I am asking.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

It can depend if it is an intelligence-led operation, whereby you are gathering that information before you have got sufficient information to give to an inspector to authorise, as the Minister has described, and then of course the scrutiny that will be given by the Bailiff, Deputy Bailiff or jurat. There are

some that we do very quickly, particularly if there was risk, and the Minister has already referenced indecent images of children, so there are some where we have to move very, very quickly indeed and the policy and indeed the Law allows us to do that. Some are slower time, but some of them are very quick.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Do you think it is time for perhaps a review of this Law or a review of the procedures?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

I am aware of the matter that you were alluding to earlier. Of course the panel will understand this is a live investigation, which has been mentioned a number of times. It is being carried out by the Law Officers' Department. I am very satisfied that we have the right checks and balances in place to ensure that there are not any further errors and I am not aware of any error previously to that.

The Connétable of Grouville:

My next question would have been about the protection of the owners and occupiers, but if you feel that process is correct and does not need a review, then I think that question has been answered. How much money has the Government and States of Jersey Police spent on damages relating to the unlawful or deficient search warrants?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Once again, we do not keep that information per se because it happens very, very rarely and usually there might be occasions where relatively small amounts of money are paid to fix damaged doors, if, for example, somebody has knocked it in, but we do not specifically collect the data.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Our question was about in the last 5 years, was it not, as well?

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Is there any way we could have any of that information or see it later?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I am not sure we absolutely collect it. I mean, it would be money potentially to locksmiths, I guess, but again, that could be for concern for welfare, not necessarily exercise of warrants.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

I am certainly happy to look at that, though it is not something that ordinarily we collate. As the Minister has said, if we go to an address and without anyone's knowledge - certainly police knowledge - that the person that we think is occupying has moved and of course if we go in there using force, which we do not always need to do, then of course the States of Jersey Police will pay for the door. Indeed, it is the door that we go through. These are very rare, very rare indeed, so to just try and contextualise your question, it is not something that I see on a monthly basis. In fact, I do not think I recall ever seeing anything in the last 3 years other than the case that you have mentioned. So we can look, but we do not gather that data ordinarily. If I thought it was a problem, I would.

The Connétable of Grouville:

That is very much the question we were trying to allude to, I think. Thank you very much. May I move on to the C.O.C.F. (Criminal Offences Confiscation Fund)? In the response to the panel's Government Plan review, you advised that the discrepancy noted by the panel in relation to the C.O.C.F. was due to the re-profiling of the various projects and accounting differences. Please can you provide more information about that process?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I have got a note about that here. The amounts for the projects included in the Government Plan for 2023 are the monies required to complete the projects on a cash flow basis, so the reason for the discrepancies is the full amount is not drawn down from the C.O.C.F., it is just drawn down as it is needed. As our projects have developed, they have been subject to re-profiling across the years to better reflect the pattern of planned spend, so monies that have been transferred in previous years were according to previous profiling, so the transfer from the C.O.C.F. that is detailed is required to provide additional monies in accordance with that re-profiling. So it remains the intention that the projects will be funded from the C.O.C.F. in their entirety, so the money is there for them, but it just will not be drawn down. We have not built bits of the prison yet. That will be coming out of C.O.C.F. Once those costs are incurred, then it will come down, so that is the reason for the discrepancy.

The Connétable of Grouville:

That is, I think, the thrust of the question, that we have heard a lot about the C.O.C.F. in recent months with relation to the firearms range, for example, with relation to Dewberry House and now the prison. We just wanted to get an update.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes. The money that has been allocated from C.O.C.F. is still there, but it will just be drawn down as it is needed.

The Connétable of Grouville:

As it is needed.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Of course we have had some ... in the Government Plan, we had to go back and ask for some increases because of inflationary costs and extra building costs and everything as a result of Brexit and COVID, but they will be funded from the C.O.C.F. but it will just show in the lines when it is drawn down, that is hence the discrepancy in the 2. Does that make sense?

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes. No, as I said, the panel were just concerned that we are hearing that name a lot and the money is coming from that source, so is there any details about the cash flow to and from that fund that we could ...

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, there will be, and we can provide that to you.

The Connétable of Grouville:

We would be grateful.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

We will ask our finance business partner to provide that to you because obviously a close eye is kept on that, the comings and goings of that.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I think that would be quite valuable. Thank you very much. Thank you, Chair.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. I have questions now which are about sexual offences. My first one, the C.P.S. (Crown Prosecution Service) in the U.K. has published legal guidance in relation to pre-trial therapy, which is used for victims, particularly in cases of sexual violence. Are there any plans to create local guidance for pre-trial therapy?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes. In the current Sexual Offences (Jersey) Law 2018, there are provisions for particularly children and vulnerable victims to be interviewed in advance of the trial, so the evidence is gathered and done and dusted and then that will then permit pre-trial therapy to take place. We are continuing to monitor how the pre-trial therapy works in the U.K. At the moment in the U.K. they do not have that provision within their laws, which is why there has been specific guidelines around it.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

All right, okay. One of our concerns about this was about where these notes, the therapy notes, could be used in trials and so on and what safeguards are in place to stop this happening?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

The safeguards in place at the moment under our Sexual Offences (Jersey) Law, and certainly with our Criminal Procedure (Jersey) Law, was that those notes would be only entered into evidence with the permission of the court, so there would have to be an application on behalf of the defence to enter those notes. They will not be seized as evidence in a regular way and that is very, very important, to protect the integrity of the counselling process and certainly already any case notes that are made by Victim Support during their conversations with victims are not entered into evidence.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes, because I thought that what was happening in the U.K. was a move to prevent any of this being used in a trial, but you are saying that it can be done?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

It can be used, but only on application. The defence would have to make an application to the court and the court would have to adjudicate on whether that material was admissible at all.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Do you see any possibility of that changing so that it could not be used?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I think we just have to keep a weather eye on how that works in the U.K. There might be circumstances, unforeseen circumstances, where it would be relevant to use those notes, in very limited circumstances, and that is why you always have the jurisdiction of the court there controlling that.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, thanks. Right, my next question: at the panel's Government Plan review hearing we heard that the service level agreement between the police and Jersey Action Against Rape for counselling services provided at Dewberry House was under negotiation. Please could you confirm whether this has been renewed?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Okay. I understand that the previous contract has lapsed and that there currently is not a service level agreement in place with Jersey Action Against Rape. The Sexual Assault Referral Centre continues to access J.A.A.R. (Jersey Action Against Rape) on a case-by-case basis and they fund those on an ad hoc basis as they arise. In the meantime, mental health services at Health and Community Services have recruited a counsellor to work exclusively with the Sexual Assault Referral Centre, which is a positive development, to support that service. There is a good relationship between the S.A.R.C. (Sexual Assault Referral Centre) team and States of Jersey Police and they meet regularly with the C.E.O. (Chief Executive Officer) of J.A.A.R. and all of those organisations work closely together, including as members of the Violence Against Women and Girls taskforce.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Right, so there is a plan still to get a service level agreement?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

That will entirely depend on whether J.A.A.R. are prepared to be commissioned to provide the service.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

All right, okay. Do you know if Dewberry House has any other service level agreements in place or under negotiation with other organisations?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Off the top of my head, no, I do not. I would presume that there would be. I presume that if services are being provided to Dewberry House, there would be service level agreements. I do not know if ...

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Would you be able to let us know?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, of course.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Thanks. Okay, please could you provide an update on the Government's recent public consultation relating to Violence Against Women and Girls?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I am going to let Louise answer that.

Assistant Minister for Home Affairs 1:

Yes, so the survey to the members of the public has now closed and obviously the work of the taskforce itself is independent from the Home Affairs ministerial team, but we do receive some updates on how the work is progressing and it is progressing well. There was an extension to the deadline for the survey to allow more people to respond to it and at the moment there is work being done in our schools with girls and boys to collect their views and experiences, along similar lines to what was in the survey, but of course tailored for that specific age group.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. Do you know when the report might be published?

Assistant Minister for Home Affairs 1:

I think we are expecting to receive it around March time, so we will consider it and consider the recommendations, to which ones we are going to take forward.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Great, okay. I have a question now about the Domestic Abuse (Jersey) Law. Please can you provide an update in relation to the implementation of the Domestic Abuse (Jersey) Law?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

The Domestic Abuse (Jersey) Law, as you know, was passed in 2022 and we had to have rules of court in place prior to the commencement of the Law, which would require an (Appointed Day) Act. The rules set out the way that the court will operate the Law, to kind of consider the impact and demand upon the various services and so on. The Law Officers' Department are the agency that need to develop the necessary rules in co-operation with the courts in the criminal division, so really as soon as that is done, I will bring an (Appointed Day) Act to the Assembly to bring the Law into force, but at this time I am not able to offer a timeline for the completion of the rules. They are not within the scope of the Executive. I have expressed my concern at the level of time that this is taking because for the protection of victims, we do need to implement this Law as soon as possible. So the last response to an inquiry made at my direction last week was that work was still ongoing and

also we need to convene a meeting of the Criminal Procedural Rules Committee as well to approve those rules and that meeting has not been scheduled.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Right, okay, because I was going to ask more about timescale, but you are saying you cannot really give that.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Until the Criminal Procedural Rules ... once the Criminal Procedural Rules have been completed and approved, we can bring an (Appointed Day) Act straight away, but it is out of the scope of the Executive, although I have evidently expressed concern at the time that is taking.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. Now I just have a question about the draft Crimes of Prejudice and Public Disorder (Jersey) Law. What further work is required before this draft Law is lodged?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I think I am right in thinking that we have completed the consultation phase, but that we were waiting to see what was happening as a result of some of the elements of Scottish law before we brought that forward because I think the Scottish law had changed in some particular areas. So as drafted it is ready to go, but there is further work. Again, the timing and resources is a particular issue around that. I think we are doing the police complaints legislation ... as soon as the Police Complaints and Discipline Regulations have been completed, the very next thing is to focus on the Crimes of Prejudice and Public Disorder (Jersey) Law.

[11:00]

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, thanks. There is a lot to do, is there not?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

There is a lot to do, and again, the Crimes of Prejudice and Public Disorder (Jersey) Law also incorporates some public order, which is really critical to policing because that will incorporate threats to kill. It includes things that we need in order to be able to work effectively, so it is one of my priorities.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, thanks.

Deputy B. Porée:

So I am going to ask some questions about the Substance Misuse Strategy. Last year, in November, Minister, you did say that the strategy was in its final stages. Can you confirm the status of it at the moment?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I will ask Deputy Doublet to answer that.

Assistant Minister for Home Affairs 1:

Yes, sure. So the strategy is in its draft form and has been presented to the Executive Leadership Team, who endorsed the strategy. It has also been endorsed by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, so it is progressing well. The next stage with this strategy is presenting it as a report to the Council of Ministers and that is happening next month, in mid-March. The strategy of course uses a health and social approach and it is evidence-based strategy, focuses on prevention, early intervention and reducing health risks. As well as being endorsed by our Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs locally, the development of the strategy has been aligned with several internationally respected bodies, including the U.N., the Global Commission on Drugs Policy, so we are feeling positive about this strategy.

Deputy B. Porée:

Thank you. When do you think the strategy will be published? Any timeline on that?

Assistant Minister for Home Affairs 1:

So presenting to Council of Ministers is the 14th ...

Deputy B. Porée:

14th March, yes.

Assistant Minister for Home Affairs 1:

... so after that the next steps would be ... I am not sure what the next steps would be after that. I think it would be with us if the Council of Ministers support it.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

The Substance Misuse Strategy belongs to the Minister for Health because it has been developed through the Public Health Team, but obviously Justice and Home Affairs have a key role in that when it comes to enforcement, so there will be a joint approach. Whether that will be an in-committee

debate specifically around the Substance Misuse Strategy or whether that will take some other form of consultation is yet to be decided.

Deputy B. Porée:

Thank you. Could you please clarify whether the Substance Misuse Strategy is included within the building a safer community strategy or is it a separate strategy?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

The building a safer community strategy kind of is more about a framework into which the Substance Misuse Strategy will fit, because clearly the focus on the Substance Misuse Strategy is about prevention, disruption, all of those sorts of things and that is clearly within the continuum of the building a safer community framework.

Deputy B. Porée:

Thank you, Minister. Just to follow up that one, could you please update the panel on the status of the consultation on the youth justice strategy?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Youth justice strategy is ... where is it? Here we go. The youth justice strategy is coming together nicely, I should say. We have got a workshop on 9th March, to which I think all panel members have been invited, which will kind of revisit the youth justice review that was provided in 2019. We have 3 professors coming over, the 2 professors that wrote the strategy and another one who is an expert in child first justice to undertake workshops with professionals and provide other information about the youth justice strategy, but I am optimistic that by the middle of the year we will have something to present.

Deputy B. Porée:

Thank you. When do you anticipate that the consultation will take place?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

That will be after the workshop on 9th March.

Deputy B. Porée:

Thank you. Okay, Minister, could you please provide an update on the revised remand arrangements for children that is listed as part of our legislative programme for 2023?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Again, work is ongoing to improve the remand arrangements for children and what we are aiming to provide is an option for children who have been arrested but cannot, for whatever reason, be bailed to their home address and they need to be accommodated in a residential children's home rather than in Greenfields for the period before they appear in court. So that is usually overnight, but if that happens on a Friday, it could take over the weekend, so it could be technically up to 48 hours. We have got an initial draft of the legislation, currently working on the final points of detail and structure and also we are involving the Children's Commissioner as well into that. I hope to be able to lodge the necessary amendments within the next 2 months, so hopefully at our next quarterly meeting we will have been able to lodge that piece of legislation.

Deputy B. Porée:

Thank you.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I have got a question I will come back to later, just bearing in mind the time.

Deputy B. Porée:

It is just slightly ... yes, concerned with time. Okay, this question will be related to the States of Jersey Prison Service. The panel has received the following question from a member of the public: "Are prisoners routinely screened or tested for mental health conditions?"

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Any prisoner received into the prison is subject to health screening as per the prison healthcare policy and I am happy to share the prison healthcare policy with the panel. That includes a physical health assessment and a mental health assessment, so in addition to that, based on identified needs and issues, prisoners may be placed on what we call a risk concern assessment and that is when they would have a specific care plan created especially for them, so that is where the mental health issues would come in, and not only mental health, it might be neurodiverse conditions such as autism or a specific learning disability. Prisoners with those complex needs are then automatically allocated a specific case manager who is responsible for them, ensuring that they receive adequate support, special support, while they are in custody.

Deputy B. Porée:

Thank you. I think I should follow up with that last one with the member of the public just in case we do not have the time for other things.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes.

Deputy B. Porée:

I have got another question regarding a member of the public and this is to the Minister: “Can you confirm whether a person convicted of rape or sexual assault would ever be housed with female prisoners?” Somebody convicted of rape would be put in the same cell as females.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

So is this question referring to transsexual prisoners?

Deputy B. Porée:

Yes.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Okay. The policy at La Moye regarding transgender prisoners, including where a person convicted of a sexual offence would be housed with female prisoners, is in writing. Once again, I can share that with the panel. The policy is that the prison will permit prisoners who consider themselves transsexual and wish to begin gender reassessment to live permanently in their acquired gender, but the policy also requires a management plan to be created to provide for how an individual would be managed safely and decently and advice on that management plan would need to be sought from the Diversity and Equalities Action Team at the prison. So any risks to and from a transsexual prisoner would be identified and managed appropriately, as would be the case with any other prisoner. The Prison Service would put in place measures to manage the risk of transphobic harassment and transphobic hate crime. The difficulty accommodating someone living in their acquired gender will not normally, and on its own, constitute grounds for transferring a prisoner to another establishment, so they would be managed at La Moye, but they would be managed according to a risk management plan to themselves and to other prisoners.

Deputy B. Porée:

Thank you.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

All right. Moving on to ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

Twenty-nine, yes.

Deputy B. Porée:

I am feeling brave today. So I do have another question, please. Could you update the panel on the outcome of the visit by the Jersey Prison Service to the Norwegian Correctional Services?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Apart from the fact they got very cold.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, significant pieces of work in visits conducted through 2022 and into 2023 to see best practice in other jurisdictions. As you know, we employed a new prison governor in April 2021 whose focus is on rehabilitation. Again, I am in complete alignment with that view and we are looking at a desecuritisation of the prison and more of a focus on rehabilitation and reintegration. The strapline about releasing better neighbours I think encompasses that very, very well. So in April 2022 we had 6 probation and prison staff visit Bergen Prison in Normandy ... in Normandy? In Norway, and obviously the Scandinavian model is very different to the kind of command and control model that we have in British prisons. So the prison governor has also attended prison governors' conferences and there has been a very big focus on understanding evidence and best practice from alternative jurisdictions. So we have an awful lot going on at the prison, with a focus on improving rehabilitative options, with a view to reducing reconviction across the board. Further opportunities in place: the U.K. Prison Service have provided packages of offers for Jersey, which include accreditation for senior managers, governors, deputy governors and we are also looking at some Master's degree qualifications, which will significantly upskill some of those prison leaders. As you will know, because you came to the meeting, we had Dame Anne Owers to open the new Len Norman Wing of the prison and she had an opportunity to share her long experience in independent scrutiny in prisons and closed institutions and we invited our colleagues from Guernsey as well. So there is a lot going on. She did do a brief health check and fed back to myself and the prison governor and she was certainly happier with what she saw now in our prison than what she saw when she visited in 2014, so I am happy to say that we are moving in the right direction at changing the focus of our prison regime.

Deputy B. Porée:

Thank you. Do you feel the conversations will carry on between the Jersey prison and the Norwegian ...

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, absolutely. We are forming a strong partnership there and learning what we can from the Norwegian system.

Deputy B. Porée:

So would you say that currently Jersey prison is happy to be guided or take views from the Norwegian prison or is looking elsewhere for other jurisdictions - sorry, I can never say that word - in order to gain more knowledge and bring in better practices?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes. Once again, we look at the evidence base from other jurisdictions, but we have to say that the Scandinavian prison system is by far the most progressive. It has always had a focus on rehabilitation. Prison officers are rehabilitation officers, they perform social work tasks, the regimes are far more liberal and it is about matching what is right for our regime, and again balancing that with the risk and safety, given the special nature of our prison.

Deputy B. Porée:

Okay. Thank you, Minister.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, please could you update the panel on the status of the draft post-custodial supervision legislation?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

We have got a draft of the new legislation and the associated new prison rules back from the Law Drafting Office and the policy officers are currently working on developing the necessary systems. My intention is to lodge that by the end of 2023.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Go on to the Sea Cadets, Chair?

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Thank you. The panel went on an absolutely, I would say, inspirational visit to the Sea Cadet headquarters, I believe it was last week or the week before.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes, it was great.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Absolutely tremendous. Are you able to provide the panel with an update of the location of the new - shall we just put in inverted commas - “Army and Sea Cadet headquarters”?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I think the answer to that is no. It is not yet in the public domain.

[11:15]

If I am wrong, please correct me.

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

We are working for it to be in the public domain within the next couple of weeks, so what we will be very happy to commit to is obviously that we tell the panel first, but we will just fix a time for that with your officers and let you know afterwards, if that is okay.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Fabulous. I mean, we learnt, for example, that there are 170 cadets with 40 voluntary tutors. We think the whole service is absolutely outstanding and we were just a little bit concerned, as they were, that they have been told they might be combined with the Army Cadet Force. Is there any update that that may be happening? Because obviously with that many cadets and with that much instructional facility going on and the space that that requires, they were concerned that they may be a little bit squeezed on any potential new site.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I do not think there is any intention to combine the forces. I think they will share facilities and why would you not share a brand-new facility with all of those things? It is not going to be a combined Sea Cadet and Cadet Force. It will be 2 distinct organisations, but they will share the same premises.

The Connétable of Grouville:

They will be on the same premises?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

We were just concerned obviously about the numbers, the statistics involved and their concerns were rightly expressed to us. Is there still ongoing consultation with the Sea Cadets to facilitate this new service?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, close co-operation.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes. As I said, we were incredibly impressed. There was one area of concern which we can deal with as a panel, that they were being charged by C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills) for properties to use, for example, St Aubin's Fort. Would the Minister be looking at helping with those costs for them? Because they are currently charged to utilise facilities in the Island by C.Y.P.E.S. and we were hoping perhaps our interaction with C.Y.P.E.S. to ask that question, but whether there would be any ...

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes. Well, maybe they should not have to pay. They are all volunteers, they are all working as volunteers.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I think we would have to look at that in the context of other groups that are also run by volunteers and perhaps have similar aims and outcomes and judge those on a case-by-case basis to be fair to all organisations who are providing services to children.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Okay, thank you.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, I have a question to do with Customs and Immigration. Recent news reports have referenced problems with French citizens undertaking day trips to Jersey post-Brexit. Please can you provide any update on the work to address this issue for the public interest?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Okay. Securing a mechanism whereby French nationals can come to Jersey for the day using identity cards is a priority for me, but also a priority for other Ministers as well, including the Minister for Economic Development. We have lost a great deal of passengers and a great deal of people coming into Jersey for the day and this is having an obvious effect on the 2 ferries, but Manche Iles

Express in particular. All of this has come about through no fault of our own. It is as a result of policy coming around Brexit, so what officers have been doing is trying to come up with a pilot scheme which will allow passengers, just French nationals on a French carte d'identité, to come to Jersey for the day and that is predominantly on Manche Iles Express and obviously Condor. I am going to the U.K. next Tuesday to speak to the Minister for Immigration about the terms and conditions of our pilot scheme and I am optimistic that we will have a good solution in time for the summer season.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Will future sea links with France be required to come through St. Helier Harbour or could customs points be established elsewhere, for example, at Gorey Harbour? This was something raised with us by a member of the public as well.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes, a member of the public.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes. I mean, there is a customs point at Gorey. Again, in the old days we had the boats going to Lessay Fair, going to Brick Fair 2 or 3 times a day, you know, we had significant traffic between Normandy and Gorey. Yes, it would be great to get that sort of inter-island travel back again, but one of the issues we have to get over is the carte d'identité and the cost. So at the moment most of the boats come into St. Helier, but from a resourcing perspective, there always was a customs post at Gorey. It has always been there.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So that could happen again ...

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, absolutely. Yes.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

... once things have progressed?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, absolutely. I mean, theoretically you could set up a customs point anywhere, you could do it Bonne Nuit if that is what you wanted. There is resource implications there before the Chief Immigration Officer, but yes, technically we could do it anywhere.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes, great.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Because we had figures yesterday from a Visit Jersey presentation saying that our French visitors are down to 29 per cent of what they used to be, so it is a significant figure. Gorey is obviously in my backyard, so I used to listen to those lovely rumbling engines as they came in 3 or 4 times a day and it is an enormous shame that that is no longer.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Also you get the return traffic as well, people that have got houses in Carteret would go off one day and maybe come back a week later. I know improving sea links is a key priority for the Minister for Economic Affairs and the role that Jersey Customs and Immigration play in that is critical and we would seek to make that happen.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

It looks quite positive.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Very selfishly, my twinning association used to be very happy as well.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, and twinning, it is not just for economic reasons that we want this to happen. We have got long heritage and cultural ties with Normandy in particular and we know that a very small proportion of French nationals have passports and to be unable to come and visit your family for the day, and we have heard that some of the twinning associations might consider not continuing. I know Hilary has raised that with me.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes, I believe so.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Because they come early in the morning, have a fantastic day with the parish twinning association and go back of an evening, so that is what we are hoping to achieve.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Also I believe Manche Iles is also subsidised by the Normandy Government to a certain degree and we would hate to lose that link because there is a lessening of the traffic.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes. I mean, what I would say is that the carte d'identité issue is only one issue around the future of Manche Iles Express. There are other issues over funding, it is an ageing vessel, there are other issues over port fees, there are other issues over docking, so my role in this is to try and smooth the water - excuse the pun - with the carte d'identité. I am optimistic that we can achieve that, but clearly there are some complexities to this.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes. It would be great if you could smooth the water as well, Minister. I am a lousy sailor.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

That is a lot to expect, is it not, really? Okay, thanks. I will go back to a question I had on educational programmes. Please could you provide an overview of the planning and work on the Prison! Me! No Way!!! replacement programme? Minister.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes. So we have appointed an officer to run the programme, which is great news. It is a really competent officer and we are excited to have him running that, but he has been trying to communicate with the schools and get some pilot sessions in place and that has not been confirmed yet, so I am going to go back to my other Minister and try to help with arranging that. Also obviously Operation Spire has affected the availability of some of the staff that would be delivering those sessions in the schools, so the initial pilots would be to students in year 7 and we are still hoping that could happen before Easter, the initial pilot sessions.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, so everything is sort of done, it is just those final arrangements to get it into the school?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, thanks for that. I think there was one question we missed that we were coming back to.

Deputy B. Porée:

Yes, I have kind of pencilled it in just in case there was a bit of time. Okay, thank you. That is again regarding the Jersey Prison Service. Could you please update the panel on the status of the draft post-custodial supervision legislation, please?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes. The purpose of this work is to provide a system of supervision and support for individuals who leave prison. We have a voluntary system at the moment, but not a statutory system for any people other than youths for the third duration of their sentence that is currently remitted. Again, we have the draft legislation and the associated rules have been returned from the drafting officers and the policy officers are currently working on developing the necessary systems. I am hoping to lodge this by the end of 2023. It is going to be known as end of custody licensing.

Deputy B. Porée:

Thank you. I think that is it, yes.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

All right. I think we have gone through all our questions ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

Well done.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

... and that is really good timing.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

It is great timing, yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Without having to say the word “deinstitutionalisation”.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Oh yes.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I was just about to say, you have got time for another joke, but you beat me to it.

The Connétable of Grouville:

There it is.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

There is always time for a joke, is there not?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Deinstitutionalisation, yes. In what context?

The Connétable of Grouville:

I have no idea.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. Thank you, Minister, Assistant Ministers, officers, and thank you, Robin, as well. Thank you for coming and attending the hearing. I think we did ask for a few things back in writing, did we not?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes. We will make sure that that is done for you.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes, thank you to any members of the public who were watching today. All right, thanks very much.

[11:26]