

# STATES OF JERSEY

## Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Scrutiny

### Panel

## Quarterly Meeting with the Minister for Infrastructure

**THURSDAY, 10th NOVEMBER 2016**

**Panel:**

Deputy D. Johnson of St. Mary (Chairman)

Deputy T.A. Vallois of St. John (Vice-Chairman)

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

**Witnesses:**

The Minister for Infrastructure

Chief Officer

Director of Operations

Director of Transport

Director of Estates

[15:33]

**Deputy D. Johnson of St. Mary (Chairman):**

Welcome to this public hearing of the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel. To kick off can we, for the record, introduce ourselves, starting with myself and then left to right. I am David Johnson, Chair of the panel.

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

I am Sadie Le Sueur-Rennard, Constable of St. Saviour, and I am just one of the team.

**Deputy T.A. Vallois of St. John (Vice-Chairman):**

Tracey Vallois, Deputy of St. John, Vice-Chair of the panel.

**Director of Operations:**

Ellen Littlechild, Director of Operations, D.f.I. (Department for Infrastructure).

**Director of Transport:**

Tristen Dodd, Director of Transport, Department for Infrastructure.

**Chief Officer:**

John Rogers, Chief Officer, Department for Infrastructure.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Deputy Eddie Noel, Minister for Infrastructure.

**Director of Estates:**

Ray Foster, Director of Estates, Department for Infrastructure

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

I thank you all. We have a number of questions and we have, for our ease apart from anyone else's, divided them up. So can I ask Tracey Vallois to kick off with post M.T.F.P. (Medium Term Financial Plan) questions?

**The Deputy of St. John:**

Yes. So the first question is, Minister: what is the department's next steps following the approval of the M.T.F.P. in the States?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

There are a number of things we are going to bring forward. One that relates to a new project that I signed the M.D. (Ministerial Decision) for in the summer, which is the concessionary bus passes for disabled people who are not able to drive. We are working on that to be able to bring that in, in early 2017, now that the funding has been agreed in the M.T.F.P. Other workstreams obviously is the detailed work to be done between now and the spring of next year, concerning charging commercial entities for both their liquid and their solid waste. That is probably the biggest works unit that we have got. Really this is business as usual for all our other aspects. On the property side; we are working through the officer modernisation programme in its various lines that we are

following, the various entities, including the central hub building. On our traffic side we are again continuing with our Sustainable Transport Policies and initiatives and obviously one that was started this year, that has been tremendously successful, was the car-to-cycle scheme. So generally working on other matters with LibertyBus, which have had substantial success since they took over from the previous operator. A whole raft of items that we are working on.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

Okay, thank you. As you have probably seen recently, there has been a publication from the C. and A.G. (Comptroller and Auditor General) with regards to the use of consultants and your particular department was identified as the biggest spender between 2011 to 2015. Have you had sight of this and would you be able to provide the panel with some explanation as to how you are taking those findings and implementing them for future policy?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I have seen a report but we have not discussed it in detail yet within the department, but it is not surprising that over that 5-year period my department is the biggest user of consultants when you realise that we deal with some 80 per cent plus of the capital spend of the States, and therefore you would expect us to have a high usage of consultants when we are dealing with projects such as the new hospital. None of the recommendations and none of the findings I find are extraordinary from the C. and A.G. report. To my mind, my background, as you know, is a chartered accountancy background so the findings there I do not find unusual. We are doing all of the recommendations already ... certainly a substantial amount, if not all of them, already.

**Chief Officer:**

Can I just add, I think the issue with consultants is what the term actually means? One of things we do as a department in terms of managing and mitigating risk is if we have not got the expertise we buy it in from the people with the expertise. They then tend to work alongside our officers who then learn and improve their skillset. But we cannot know everything. We also are not really allowed to fail because we tend to be building more things and we are building it with public money in the public domain. So we have got to have the right expertise helping us. My background is a consultant engineer and I have been a consultant engineer for Jersey since 1989, so my first ever project straight out of university where I did the surge analysis on the firefighting main at La Collette. I then, as the Chief Officer, replaced that main, which shows you how old I am, a couple of years ago. So you would need to buy in the expertise as and when. I think the secret is to make sure that you document it, you do it for the right reasons, and you also get some learning out of that so you can improve the skillset of local people. The other thing that we have used consultants for predominantly is when we have got peaks and troughs in the amount of work we need to do. That is very challenging because our capital programme is on an annual basis. It is voted annually and it is not

a guarantee. So if you update your skills of professional ... we are talking about engineers but any sort of professional person advising us, and if you skill up to the capital demands of that year, the year after that disappears because of other budget needs or other priorities, then you have got to get rid of those staff. So you need a buffer. You need a float of people who are contracted in to do that work. But what we have tried to do and what we are trying to do, and certainly in the last few years we have done it, is develop local talent, get graduate engineers in, which we have done, and we got 4 in a few years go - we are just trying to get another one in now - so we can develop that local talent alongside some of the expertise we are bringing.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

You have answered a lot of the questions I was going to follow on with but I think there is a general recognition across the States that there are issues with skills or the actual capabilities that are expected to deliver certain things within the public sector. With having consultancy and having spent £10.5 million recognising that some things are specialised, how do you put in or how will you in future ensure that the transfer of skills from whatever consultancy specific types, whether it is project management, whatever it may be, is transferable to staff so that they get learning and improvement out of it.

**Chief Officer:**

I think the best example - we have an actual example at the moment - currently the new sewage treatment works is being developed. We have a consultant we buy in who has got 40 years' experience in sewage treatment works and civil engineering around that. He is currently ... as part of the team working alongside him is a local graduate engineer who has spent ... we have seconded him to the U.K. (United Kingdom) for 9 months to get some training off-Island and he is now working on that project underneath that older, mature gent, who is teaching him a massive amount. So that skill transfer is happening and it is happening on a daily basis. It is quite individual and it is something we are passionate about and it is something we are trying to do throughout the organisation. Because local engineers, local people delivering ... there is only one chance of doing one job when you are doing it in other places, then there is obviously lots of things. So it is getting that balance where they have got the confidence to do it. They have also got a supply chain and those contacts so they can ask other people and they have no other people in the U.K. or elsewhere who can help them and work with them. It is hard to do. It is very easy to not do it. It is very easy to just buy people in, keep a gap between them, and I think we have suffered in the past where we have had the local staff doing simple jobs and the consultants doing the really complex jobs. That is no good for anybody because the local people do not improve. So when it comes to programme management, project management, delivering complex projects, they have got to have this interaction and this working together in partnership.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

You are generally happy with the mix, are you, that you can get the young up and coming ones from local sources?

**Chief Officer:**

We are struggling. We have just been out for advertisement for civil engineers again and I think what ... the lessons learned, we have got an in-tech a couple of years ago. He said: "I think we have got to get almost into the schools at G.C.S.E. (General Certificate of Secondary Education) and at A level time so that we can ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It can be done at degree level. That is how the last lot came on board.

**Chief Officer:**

But we are mentoring and I am personally mentoring a mechanical engineer who has just graduated and has come back to the Island. My mentoring to him is: "Go away and do something else for 5 years, then come back." So it is quite personal but I think we have got to get a better link, certainly the Department for Infrastructure, into schools and into the choices for local people so they can think there is a potential career there and a very good one.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Certainly on the grassroots we still have apprentices. We have got 5 ...?

**Chief Officer:**

We have just currently recruited for the next ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes, so we do run through from those that do not necessarily want to have higher or further education. We try and provide a training ground for youngsters.

**Chief Officer:**

The skill started from technicians basically as being filled because with our apprentices staying on who have been through the process and now we are trying to recruit more. There is a big problem out there in terms of skilled staff and recruitment.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

I will move on to the next topic, which is waste, which you mentioned in your introduction. Perhaps if I say at the outset the panel, as a whole, was not adverse to the idea of introduction of commercial

waste. Our concerns were that ... okay with the principles but whether it was appropriate to bring the details in, in the M.T.F.P. But we have been through that. Moving on from that, first things first, I see that the Constable of St. Helier is appealing against the covenant decision. Is that going to affect your progress in any way?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I have said publicly in the past and I have said it to the panel, if the Constable is successful we will have to negotiate a settlement with the Parish. It is a big "if", if he is successful. If anyone reads the Royal Court judgment it is very clear, very black and white, in our favour. But if - and it is a big "if" as I said - the Constable is successful, the Parish is successful in their appeal, we will negotiate a settlement. The cost of that settlement will be passed on to those commercial operators that we dispose their waste for.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Okay. A more general one: I know you have been visiting all the Constables with a view to discussing the means of collecting. How is that going?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We have met all 12 Constables now on a one-to-one basis with their officers, et cetera.

[15:45]

That has been very enlightening. We have taken a significant amount of data but we have also managed to link officer-and-officer communication between the Parishes to drill down into that data to get a better understanding. We are working through that now. We will be sending out a "hold-the-date" note to States Members to run another workshop early in the new year, sometime in January, whereby we will share with States Members the information that we have gathered and to do another workshop, as we have done in the past, to build on that so we come back with robust and considered application to implement, and to be debated in the spring next year.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

We will want the workshop, which I find very useful, by the way, so thanks for those. But is there a pattern evolving among the Constables or do they have various systems?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Different Parishes have different systems. There is one Parish that does not collect any commercial waste, they leave it to ... they have private contractors to deal directly with the commercial bodies. There is another Parish that has a separate commercial round. The tricky one will be St. Helier

because the sheer number of commercial premises and the complexities there. But we had a good meeting with the Parish on Friday and we are working on that and we will be bringing back more data, more detailed proposals, for a workshop to analyse and to suggest new solutions. We have gone with it very much open-minded, asking the Parishes: "What are your problems? What do you perceive to be the problems?" so we can start work to solve those.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Going on to the question of charging for the commercial users. Obviously that has prompted quite a bit of comment from the likes of the Chamber of Commerce and the Hospitality Association. How are you progressing on that or are you doing it through Economic Development or how?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We have had meetings with the key stakeholders, be it Chamber, et cetera. Those meetings will be ongoing. One of the things that that has enabled us to clarify with the meetings with the Constables, for example, was that we will not be charging the Parishes to charge on. We will be charging directly to the commercial entities. The levels of charging will depend on the levels of cost because this is about cost recovery on the commercial side. But we are listening to, particularly Chamber, because they represent some of the smaller businesses as well as the medium and larger businesses. That may have difficulties.

**Chief Officer:**

One of the, again, realisation of the importance of the tourism sector and some of the attractions is to look at those specifically and we have drafted in Mike King, the Chief Officer at E.D.D. (Economic Development Department), to help us and to sit on our project board. So it would help with that liaison with those sectors. There is a minor element of solid waste input, which is from those areas. I think it is an opportunity in terms of promoting and recycling the environmental credentials of the Island in terms of working together with them so they can minimise their waste output and increase their recycling and have the financial benefit of doing it. So I think it is getting the message across, which has been done in other jurisdictions. It is quite a hard one but it is one that we are going to have to work with them on.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Wearing another hat, previously the Minister for Economic Development is going to fight the corner on this, to a certain extent, is he not?

**Chief Officer:**

He is.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

So you have a dialogue ongoing ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

The Minister for Economic Development does support what we are doing. He has raised concerns about the impact on smaller businesses and that is why we are working with Chamber and others to ensure that what we introduce is going to be fair.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Again, you mentioned workshops. How do you see the timetable evolving? I mean the figures were produced in the M.T.F.P., how soon do you see it being ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We are on target for lodging in time to have a States debate at the end of the spring.

**Chief Officer:**

One of the things we said to the Constables was until we get the Constables on board, and it is sometimes challenging.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

I am not saying a word.

**Chief Officer:**

We are not going to take this to the States so we have to work out what is rational and achievable because they are a key partner in doing this work. The bottom line is, is that the public of Jersey I do not believe should be paying for commercial businesses as waste and that is the fundamental thing.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

I think that is probably generally accepted, yes.

**Chief Officer:**

It is how we do that and how we do that fairly. Ellen and her team have been working on the proportions and get some figures all ready, which is probably worth talking about now.

**Director of Operations:**

Just to put it into context. We are hoping to have the detailed business case complete by January time next year. So we are ready with the more detailed information which will be at the point then



to start sharing before we complete the report and proposition and get it lodged to the States by the end of February, to hit the timescales that we need to take something back in March next year. Just to put things into context a little bit with solid waste, because we get lots of questions on this all the time. Only 13,000 tonnes of the overall waste that we receive comes from the Parishes through Parish collections of what the estimates would be for commercial waste. Obviously a big proportion of that is householders which Parishes collect and that is roughly half the waste that we receive at the Energy from Waste plant. So of that, 13,000 compared to roughly 20,000 tonnes is bin household waste. A lot of the work that we are doing at the moment on solid waste is working with the Parishes to firm up on the figures to work out roughly how much waste we get from commercial businesses and to look at a charging system that is going to be fair in the future, as John referred to. We are also doing a lot of work with Jersey Water at the moment because they have obviously got a database which holds information about a lot of commercial properties and how much water that they use. Again, if we have access to that database we will have very good information data about what the potential charges are going to look like and the impact on those businesses. We need to have all that data and all that information to understand what is a fair proposal to take back to the States in May next year.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

That is looking at the timeline. That sounds quite optimistic to me. You are going to have this data ready by the spring to go to the States in May, is that what you are saying?

**Director of Operations:**

Definitely. The reason why we have to go back to the States hopefully before the summer break next year, is because there is income that is targeted in the M.T.F.P. of £3.218 million. So if the States do not support that then the Treasury and Resources Department and the Council of Ministers are going to have to look at other options from that funding shortfall.

**Chief Officer:**

Of the 12 Parishes we have met, and we view them as our key stakeholder, we have had a fantastic response from all of them in terms of sharing data, understanding the issues and I think ... and also perhaps solving some of the problems the Parishes face, particularly St. Helier who raised issues of fly-tipping and issues of abuse of some of their municipal bins they have put out by some of the businesses. So there is an opportunity here to clean up the act for everybody and to clean up Jersey. We have had nothing but a positive response. So I think those timescales, although optimistic, with the team we have got in place we believe we can meet them.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Moving on to the same area generally. The report *Environment in Figures*, which we could discuss all day probably, but on the waste side reference is made to kerbside recycling in that only half of the Island's Parishes have intimated that it is in your plan to get on board for that too, are they?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Now with St. Brelade's coming onstream this year, there are 6 out of 12 Parishes doing kerbside recycling. Other Parishes are considering it. Some are not currently. It is not on their agenda yet. But we are working with all 12 Parishes to make sure that the recycling that is happening continues and encouraging those that do not currently do it to look at it. The process that St. Brelade's went through showed that it was only ... was it £6 per household?

**Chief Officer:**

£7 per household per year, additional costs.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Additional costs, so the costs are not as great as people may think they are to achieve kerbside recycling.

**Chief Officer:**

But it is a Parish decision. Parishes are the entity that collects the waste and it is completely their decision if they want to recycle or not. So we can help and assist but it is the Parishes who make that decision.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

So it is a completely separate dialogue from the commercial waste collection?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes, the 2 are not related.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

But are the 2 linked to the St. Helier problem with the covenant?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

No.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

They are not?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Well, St. Helier already do kerbside recycling.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

Yes, but the charges are going to have to come if the covenant ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

If the Parish is successful, and I do not think for one minute that they are going to be, but if ...

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

No, because you are very good at getting rid of covenants. Let us be honest.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We have not got rid of covenants. We look at ... they are a legal agreement and when they are no longer relevant then you need to address those situations. As I said, if the Parish is successful we will then enter negotiations with the Parish to buy ourselves out of those on a commercial basis and those additional costs will be passed on to the commercial users.

**Chief Officer:**

The decision on the covenant was a legal decision made in the court which was not the Minister's decision or anybody else's. The reason it was made in a court is because there was a big difference in what the Parish of St. Helier viewed as the value of the covenant and what our legal advice viewed as the value of the covenant. So to challenge it in court I think was the most appropriate way of avoiding the stalemate that we were at. As an accounting officer I could not sanction any deal unless there was a court ruling to say what that value of that covenant was. So our goal was not to extinguish the covenant. Our goal was to get clarity in terms of what the value of that covenant was.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

I do accept that. Equally, I accept the Constable of St. Helier used to go the whole way to justify his own Parish ...

**Chief Officer:**

And we understand that completely as well. If it comes out that the appeal is successful then we will ... we want closure, we want to find out what its value is, then we can move forward.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

I appreciate that.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

Do you pass that on Island-wide or just to the people of St. Helier?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

The costs will be passed on to the commercial businesses that we dispose their rubbish of.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

Island-wide, not just St. Helier?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It will be difficult to identify which rubbish comes from which Parish.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

Yes, so it is Island-wide. The whole Island would pay for it.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It would be all the commercial businesses that use our facility will pay for it.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

Thank you.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

You touched on already: introducing a charge for commercial waste hopefully will increase or may increase overall recycling targets. Do you have any more initiatives to promote that rather than just ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It will not increase the target because we can increase the target tomorrow. It will mean that we will increase the amount of the Island recycles. That is proven elsewhere. An example close to home is Guernsey. None of their commercial waste goes to their landfill. It all goes to private contractors who recycle it and the residue is shipped off-Island. So it happens elsewhere.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Do you have any other initiatives or are you hoping the charge alone will ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

To increase recycling rates?

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Yes.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We are in the process of constructing a new household recycling centre. That will also have a reuse, our facility there of significant proportion, for the first time. We are about to announce next week who is going to be running that for us, along with other initiatives that we have. We have our education programme in the schools, et cetera. So it is business as usual for those aspects but we are expanding elsewhere where we can.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Education in schools you mentioned. What about educating adults too? They need ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We find, from my own experience, the best way to educate the adults is through their children.

**Chief Officer:**

When you compare jurisdictions commercial waste is not in the comparisons because everywhere else commercial waste is dealt with completely separate to the municipalities generally. So recycling rates tend to be focused on when you are looking at benchmarking on domestic recycling rates, not commercial. Commercial rates can be ... Guernsey are currently quoting commercial recycling up to 85 per cent through their private sector operations over there. So it is a significant amount. But it is sometimes difficult with things like wood. Waste wood is a good example where if it is treated wood it is very difficult to recycle and to recycle acceptively on a small Island like ourselves because we have not got the areas to dispose of it.

[16:00]

In a lot of jurisdictions it is used as top dressing on landfill sites which is then classed as recycling. We do not have landfill sites so we would not have that use for top dressing. So there are lots of iterations and complexities which mean that for an Island you are never going to hit the recycling rates that you get perhaps in mainland and mainland Europe.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

The last question I have got on waste is the energy from waste. It is almost a throwaway comment. The Minister for Environment was over in Guernsey the other week and was saying that he had not lost hope of the fact that we could take Guernsey's waste at some stage in the future. Is that a realistic ...?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Our door is always open to our cousins in Guernsey. Whether or not they wish to walk through the door is up to them.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

You must have got some idea though. Do you think they want to or not? Or is it a negative?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

They have a preferred bidder for exporting their waste to Sweden. But as I have said publicly, we have communicated it to my counterparts in Guernsey that if for whatever reason they do not wish to do that or they wish to explore our alternative bids - we put in 2 bids - then we are happy to have that discussion.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

We are talking longer term so we will ... not saying I should be here in 5 years' time but we will look at it again in future.

**Chief Officer:**

We had the pleasure of visiting Guernsey yesterday, myself and my Director of Operations, and with the environment team, they are fairly well committed for the next 3 years with their export contract. But what happens after that our door, as the Minister said, is always open and we are happy to help them out whenever they ask us.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

That is all I have got on waste so I will move on to a not unrelated topic of sewage, which Tracey is going to ...

**The Deputy of St. John:**

It is quite a bridge from charge because the question that I am asking is regards to the sewage treatment works but in the quarterly hearing in June this year you stated that: "Extension of the public sewerage system to private dwellings would be dependent on the new waste charge." It has now been approved by the States Assembly.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

The "in principle" has been approved.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

Apparently in principle but the money has been taken out of your budget.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

The money has been taken out, yes.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

When will the programme get up and running again after 12 years of no funding?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It depends on what level the charge comes in at. If we try and soft land the charge just to cover the operational costs and contribution to the capital costs, then it will be the tail end of the process; we should be up to 10 years away. If we make the initial charge higher to cover the extension of the network, then it can be done sooner.

**Chief Officer:**

It is just worth bearing in mind that was under the assumption that domestic charges would be coming in as well. Now we have only got approval and we are only going to gain approval for commercial charges only.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

Was that the case in June this year? I do not remember that being mentioned.

**Chief Officer:**

Yes.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

Do you want to check that?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It is something we would like to do. It might be tricky using funding from commercial operators to cross-subsidise domestic.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

We use public taxpayers' money to cross-subsidise businesses, so what is the problem?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

The whole point is this is not a taxation. This is a charge coming into ...

**The Deputy of St. John:**

They are the same thing. You said it yourself.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

In this instance, they are effectively ring-fenced. The waste charge is staying within the waste element of it, and we just need to bottom out whether or not we can cross-subsidise.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

For clarification, are you saying that there will be no extension of the sewage system until domestic waste charge comes in?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

No, I am not saying that. I am saying that it depends on how we bring in the liquid waste charging and at what level, and if I can use monies collected from commercial operators to cross-subsidise the extension of the sewage network for private dwellings.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

How far is that being considered, that crossover?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It is something that we need to take advice on from our legal experts.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Okay. Sorry. Thank you.

**Chief Officer:**

Only a third of the liquid waste charge is commercial. Two-thirds of the cost of treating liquid waste comes from domestic households. With that door closed and that avenue closed to us, most likely the highest priority of the commercial waste element will be surface water separation, maintaining the existing assets and making sure we are compliant in terms of the law and the protection to the Island. Foul sewer extensions of the traditional type are unlikely for a significant period unless we get domestic waste charges, which, as we know, have been parked. There is innovation in terms of domestic waste collections through alternative means, and that is what has been happening over the last few years with small package company stations and areas collaborating together and using private sector land to get on to the drainage network. We need to try to find a way to facilitate that, which is slightly different to the traditional foul sewer extension, but that has proven to be quite challenging in terms of finding a fair mechanism to get over private sector land. We have some



examples where there have been ransom strips and people who were being prevented from going through private sector land because of financial gain.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

On the ransom strip side, presumably legislation could be introduced like with other supplier services.

**Chief Officer:**

If it is in the public interest, we can connect, but these will not be in the public interest. These will be for betterment of those properties. If it is a public sewer for the public interest, we have the right to C.P. (compulsory purchase) and we very rarely use those rights. C.P. is something that in Jersey is frowned upon, but we would have to use it in some small areas. If you have a house in the middle of the countryside and you want to connect by going through 3 other people's fields, that is going to have a significant increase in terms of the value of your property, and there is a fair compensatory element, but I do not think it is Government that are going to be doing compulsory purchase on those lands and allowing that to happen to extend our network. The network is then private ...

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

You do not need to purchase the lands. You need to purchase the right to dig under them, do you not?

**Chief Officer:**

That is right, yes.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Just wearing my environment hat for a moment, rather than just infrastructure, you could say there is a public interest for all private sewers to be connected to the mains.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

That is not the case, and a good example of that is St. John's down at Bonne Nuit, whereby a different solution was found. Their liquid waste is dealt with in a different way that does not connect to the main sewage system.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Okay, I understand, but where it goes into septic tanks and soakaways ... as you know, there is a plan in my Parish which would encompass 40 dwellings. At the moment all that goes into the land, which is not good for it.

**Chief Officer:**

Yes, and I think that is a great example of the scheme which, with some collaboration, I think would have huge benefit. The foul sewer extension programme, which went for about 30 years, was driven predominantly by environmental benefit and the fact that septic tanks and soakaways were failing and causing pollution, so that was one of the big priorities in terms of where the foul sewer extensions were provided and dealt with. The area you have suggested is probably one of the ones that would have been the next on the list, but I think we need to look at how you could innovate that and how you could perhaps do that by potentially a package treatment plant at the bottom of Mourier Valley. There are other solutions that you could do.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

May I just ask then, have you considered different types of schemes in terms of trying to encourage some of these properties to build in?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes. We have had meetings on that scheme with one of the residents who was championing that scheme. We have also had meetings with the Constable of St. Ouen about various parts of St. Ouen. There is a part of St. Helier that is landlocked that we are trying to unlock. There are schemes. We are working with different Constables on different areas.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

I recognised in the tone in the answers you are talking about the value of the property, it helped the value of the property, and so there is a reluctance in terms of the public purse towards that. There have been schemes, for example, the Minister for the Environment providing the environmental reasoning for insulation, helping people with their homes.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

There is a project I have been working on in St. Lawrence to connect up a group of houses. It is not going to go ahead because there is no financial benefit for some houses in doing so because they have low occupancy in their buildings and, therefore, their liquid waste system works perfectly well. You could have a row of houses that looks sensible to add to mains, but even working in partnership and maybe providing funding to future-proof it to keep the costs down, it still does not necessarily work. We are open to ideas and we are open to working with Parishes and groups of individuals to see if we can improve people's outcomes from this and have more liquid waste treated in our facility at Bellozanne.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

Are you planning to do any extension to the treatment of the sewage going into St. Aubin's Bay?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We are building a £53 million sewage treatment works. We have just completed the first phase of that, which is digesters, and that is ongoing now for the next 3 to 4 years. As I say, that is a £53 million project.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

That is 3 to 4 years.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

What about the actual flumes out into the bay? Are you looking at extending those?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Not currently, because we need to build the plant first to see how it runs, because it might not need to be extended. For example, the ball park cost of extending the pipe from the outflow from Bellozanne at First Tower out to where it needs to go, past the bay of St. Aubin's into the main channel, would be well in excess of £7.5 million, probably nearer £10 million, if not over, because we are working with old data. You do not spend that type of taxpayers' money unless you have to. We are building a brand new sewage treatment works, long overdue. The old one is 60 years old. It is just about coping currently. We will keep it running until the new one is up and running, and then we can see whether or not there is a need to do anything further.

**Chief Officer:**

There has been quite a lot of confusion about what a sewage treatment works does, particularly around the issue of nitrates. The main thing a sewage treatment works does is treat sewage. It cleanses the water. It allows the water then through a U.V. (ultra violet) plant to kill the pathogens and any possible bugs in there, and then the water flows back to sea. In doing that, we take all the solids out and we treat the water. Nitrogen removal is something which was an aspiration set in the 1990s, and that is an environmental element, not an element in terms of public safety and amenity. There has been a lot of confusion. The sewage treatment works works very well. It works very effectively. It treats the sewage. Our first full treatment is 600 litres per second, and it has worked and has passed in all the other parameters except nitrogen throughout its life as a sewage treatment works since the late 1950s. The nitrogen removal plant as put in in the 1990s has never worked. It was a solution that was brought about using technology that was not proven in western Europe, and it was done because it was a cost-effective solution. It was high in energy demand and it was a solution that was developed as a concept in Japan. When it was applied in Europe, it has never worked and has been a very unstable plan which has caused huge problems with the operation. One of the reasons we are building a brand new sewage works is because we have got to the limit

of how we can extend, change, modify and improve that plant. What we have done is we have gone for a new plant which treats far more sewage. It treats 1,000 litres per second, full treatment. We are obviously putting storm facilities in there as well for times of high rainfall. A significant amount of sewage at the moment goes through primary treatment, which is through the screens and through the primary tanks, and then it flows to sea via the U.V. plant. That happens I believe over 100 times a year now. It is small amounts but over 100 times a year. With the new plant, that will happen about once a year in a very adverse storm.

[16:15]

What we are trying to do is stop that happening so we treat significantly more sewage to a higher standard.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It is worth remembering that the glass of water that I just poured myself and the glass of water that the Chairman just poured himself probably have somewhere between 40 to 50 milligrams per litre of nitrogen in them. That is exactly the same level that we are emitting from the S.T.W. (sewage treatment works).

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

The old system you said was flawed, and that came from Japan.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

This new system has been tried and tested, has it? Where has this come from?

**Chief Officer:**

From about 100 years ago. We are going to a very traditional technology, a carbonaceous plant, and it has been tried all over the world. The subtlety of sewage treatment works is to try to feed them gently, so it is about our sewage network. Sewage treatment is a biological process. It is not a chemical process. It is sizing it and operating it so it is fit for purpose not just for now but for the next 60 years, so the design and the layout of it is the thing we are really focused on so that we can extend it, we can change it and we can make sure it copes with Jersey's population and challenges.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

This design we have coming now online was available before, when we brought this one, was it not?

**Chief Officer:**

It was, yes. As I say, the technology is over 100 years old.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

Okay. Thank you.

**Chief Officer:**

The difference, just to bear in mind, is that the benefit of the technology that was chosen in the 1990s was a very compact solution, and you could put it on the existing footprint in the existing tanks. That meant it was significantly cheaper in terms of capital value, but that cost has been eroded ...

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

It did not work.

**Chief Officer:**

... because it has never worked and it has cost us a significant amount in terms of operational expenditure throughout the years.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

Right. Okay. Thank you.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

You touched on the nitrogen types of things. You have a permit for your nitrogen output. What is ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Which we have never met.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

What is the actual ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

The permit is, I believe, 10 milligrams per litre.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

What is the permit for Jersey Water?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I am not sure.

**Chief Officer:**

In terms of total nitrogen, it is about the same because it is measured slightly differently, but their 50 on their nitrogen standard is equivalent to about 11 in terms of our total nitrogen that we monitor. It is about the same.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

Okay, so you are running before you are even ...

**Chief Officer:**

Exactly, yes.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

Okay. To understand it in terms of the water management plan that has just come out, from what I have heard so far, it appears on paper or from what you hear that it is a wish list. It is a "let's hope we get there" type of thing. In terms of treating nitrogen - because nitrogen is a big part of this water management plan - and the anomalies around how to treat it, is there any commitment?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

This is a question for the Minister for the Environment because it is his initiative.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

You have to treat it.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

What they are trying to do is to keep it out of the watercourse, how they apply the fertiliser, et cetera, to the field to keep it away from it, from edges that could get into the watercourse, the timing of it, et cetera. The Environment Department are working closely with the industry to try to reduce that. They are working closely with Jersey Water, and similarly, like ourselves, we do work closely with both Environment and Jersey Water to come with a Team Jersey stance on this to reduce the amount of nitrogen in all our water.

**Chief Officer:**

Jersey has intensive farming, and potatoes particularly require a significant amount of nitrogen. Unfortunately, sometimes, if you put the nitrogen on, then you get a huge deluge of rain, which we have just had, and a lot of that potentially can flush out and into the streams and into the bay. The

issue of lettuce and seaweed is one which is very complex. It is about sea temperatures. It is about nitrates, not just from the bay. For instance, from deeper water, around St. Malo, it is nitrates from the sewage treatment works, which is between 7 and 14 per cent, depending on if it is summer or winter. It is some nitrogen from agricultural practice. You have to play every single tune, and then, when you have done it, you may not solve the problem. You can treat it as much as you can but you may not solve the problem. We went to France in the summer to look at the problems they have there on the west coast. We went to a bay which had a small hotel on the bay and nothing else, and they had more seaweed than you can shake a stick at, so that was not driven by a sewage treatment process or driven by other things. There is a myriad of complexity in terms of how and where seaweed develops. I think the hydrodynamics of the bay in St. Aubin's mean that whatever gets in there tends to get trapped, but the water in there also changes twice a day because of our big tidal variation. What we can do is we can minimise the effect of the sewage treatment works and of the streams, and the water strategy the Environment team are developing is absolutely right. Whether that can eliminate and solve the problem, I very much doubt. I think that is more of a global issue of global warming and of intensive farming in mainland Europe.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

Going on from there, how many complaints have been made against you regarding the beaches?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It depends, because we do not necessarily keep a record of them.

**Chief Officer:**

Not many.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Not many.

**Chief Officer:**

It has been strange. We have had some vociferous complainants and we have had a lot of dialogue with Save Our Shoreline. Again, one of our consultants and people is Dr. Kieran Conlan, who is one of the European advisers on eutrophication of bays and these issues in terms of the development of sea lettuce, and he met with Save Our Shoreline for 2 hours the week before they went into the press to say that what we are doing is wrong. We have great expertise helping us with this, but the bottom line is that it is a very difficult problem to solve. If we put a full denitrification in on the sewage treatment works, which we could do for an extra £30 million and an extra 2 megawatts of power every day, it still would not solve the problem or guarantee solving the problem.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

Yes, but my question was how many complaints.

**Chief Officer:**

Not many.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Not many.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

You have not had many complaints?

**Chief Officer:**

No. We have had lots of press coverage and we have had lots of Facebook coverage and we have had lots of public opinion, but we have had very few complaints. Some strange things have happened this year. First, the machine we were going to trial on the Battle of Britain Week set on fire 2 weeks before in France, while the Minister was on holiday there. It was a coincidence. We also had in that same period of time a big storm which took all the seaweed off the beach, and I think that was very fortunate because it has been a tough year for seaweed, but when the seaweed came off the beach it had to be rotted and it became problematic. The seaweed tends to cause problems when it gets into rocks and we cannot clear it with our conventional methods.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

There is something that needs to be aired, in that if we did collect all the seaweed off the beach throughout the summer, we would not have anywhere to put it. We have to learn lessons from the past, and we had a similar issue in the early 1980s with potatoes, where we dumped them at Beauport, and we are still pumping out the leachate from that to this day. We had a similar incident with composting at Crabbé. We need to learn these lessons because we do not have anywhere to put the seaweed if we did take it off the bay. One of the reasons to go to France this summer was to see what the French are doing, because they process it. They use it as a product to turn into animal supplements, but they quite clearly told us that it would not be cost-effective for us to do that on an island. They would take our seaweed if we could get it to them in time, but there is a very, very narrow 36 hours from taking it out of the water to it being processed, and we have looked at the logistics of meeting that and we are not able to get it from here, taking it out of the water to the plant in France, within the 36 hours currently. Part of our dialogue with them is to explore if we could partially treat it in some way, but the logistics of getting it from here to their plant are tricky.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**



You cannot tow it? Sorry, that was not ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

If you could, we would. If we could come up with the best way to try it ... We will not solve the problem of seaweed, but what we can do is try to reduce its impact, and that is what we are working on. It is going to take a number of measures. There is no one silver bullet. There is no magic solution. It will take a number of measures to reduce the impact of it, but we will still get blooms.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Okay. We are on a different subject now.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

It is you.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Oh, right. My notes are wrong. I have your name here. There has been talk in the States last week about a review on speed limits across the Island, and there was some question as to whether there was a comprehensive report or strategy from your department as opposed to individual ones by the Parishes. Can you enlighten us?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We are working on it. We have had 2 workshops over the last 18 months or so with the other 12 Parish authorities and the 13 police authorities. The outcomes from those we are actioning now. We are producing an action plan, not a strategy. I am not a great believer in producing a strategy for it to sit on the shelf and collect dust, but I am a great believer that actions speak louder than words. We are working with the Parishes to implement a series of road safety measures over and above what we do ourselves as a department.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Forgive me if I have got it wrong, but that would involve the Parishes having to agree what you might recommend within their boundaries.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Very much the other way around. Parishes are coming forward now with Parish solutions. Particularly one that we are working on at the moment is with St. Brelade. They are looking at the road systems within the Parish to see how they can be improved in terms of what are their proposed speed limits for various parts of the Parish, so we are working with them on that. We do have a whole raft of schemes which we can give the panel of what we are physically doing for road safety,

because road safety is effectively the 3 Es. There is the environment: that is how we physically change the roads to make it safer. There is enforcement, and that is very much not in our remit, hence organising the workshops with the 13 roads authorities and the 13 police forces. Then there is education, which we are partly involved in, but again that is partly our friends in the police forces that are involved in that as well. Those 3 Es are what we are working on, and we are trying to co-ordinate that to make sure that we start carrying out actions.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Yes. I am glad you used the word “co-ordinate”. Is that what your role is, when the Parishes come to you to say: “We want this within our boundaries” and you try to co-ordinate it?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Under the current legislation that we have, Parishes have to get permission for certain things, like changing the speed limits, for example.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

By November, is it? Is it something like that?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It is consistent. It is continual. The Law Officers’ Departments effectively allow each Parish, through ourselves, one law change a year to change speed limits, to change yellow lines and road layouts, et cetera. We are working with those. That is an ongoing process. That does not stop.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

Have you considered a change to the legislative process with that, so instead of regulations, bringing orders?

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

But the main roads are yours anyway, so you could bring in any speed limits you wanted on the main roads.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes, we can, but we prefer to work in partnership with the 13 police authorities and 13 road authorities to make sure that what we implement either on behalf of a particular Parish or on the Island as a whole is suitable. We prefer to work collaboratively with the other stakeholders.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

You could still do that with an order.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Parts of the Road Traffic Law require us to bring legislation.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

But you are in a position to change primary legislation. That is what I am asking.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We could, but, as you will know, there is a resistance to take power away from the States Assembly.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

There does not seem to be. You seem to be the only Minister that recognises that.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I am quite comfortable to keep with the existing process whereby we do have to get changes through the Law Officers' Department.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

Is that really an efficient use of time?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It could be streamlined, but for what we are trying to do, if you go back to the actions, the 3 Es, it is only a small element of that that requires legislation.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

I think that answers my next question, which is about speed cameras. You are saying that that is outside your remit, but surely the possibility of enforcement would influence you in your decision, would it not?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Speed cameras did not get much favour when we had the workshops, but what has had favour and we are working on again, being led by my department, is a points system on driving licences, as you have in the U.K. and elsewhere, that you lose so many points for infringements.

[16:30]

We are working on that. That was supported by the workshops, but speed cameras were not supported by workshops.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Sorry, I am going outside my brief here, but you talk about a points system. That is within your remit, is it, the additional points system for driver licences?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

To bring it into force, it needs to come from my department through the States to implement that, and that is something that we are working on.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

If we had a points system, that could be extended usefully to use of mobile phones, of course.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It certainly could.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Of course, the U.K. have brought something in which could require someone to be ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I believe they are in the process of moving it from a 3-point penalty to a 6-point penalty.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

That would mean that someone who has only been qualified, driving a limited time, could be excluded, is bound to be.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes. That is a valid new road safety concern, people using mobile devices while they are driving.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

It was not my thinking before, but now you have tempted me. How far down the line are we in that process about introducing a points system?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It is quite early days. The officer concerned with it is not here. Tristen might know.

**Director of Transport:**

At the moment we are in the process of drafting the action plan and putting some detail to the various actions, and that will then move into the list programme. My understanding is we have started initial

discussions with the stakeholders in that, which is the police, and once those have been captured, the law drafting instructions will be taken to the Law Officers to be drafted up.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

Can I just ask, at what point will people be aware of what your intentions are? You are drafting up an action plan and legislation ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We are hoping to by the end of the year publish the action plan.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

By the end of the year?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

By the end of this year. We are not delaying carrying out actions, particularly in the environment side of it, i.e. changing road layouts, et cetera. We are working on those currently, but we hope to publish the action plan from the outcomes from the 2 workshops by the end of this year.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

That is useful, and again I do not want to speculate how those workshops might go, but will that affect the actual means of penalising? At the moment, Parishes will mete out a punishment. Do you envisage that Parishes would be entitled to dock you 3 points?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

The way it will work is yet to be decided. That is a legal matter. There is no intention, for example, to bypass the Parish inquiry system.

**Director of Transport:**

When we met with the Parishes and the police force, they were very clear that they wanted to have continued involvement in that, and we are supportive of that. We are very supportive of the parochial system and the honorary system.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

Good.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Okay. Right. That is useful to know. Thank you. Yes, move on - not unrelated - to Sustainable Transport Policy. Again, the *Environment in Figures* report refers to a few items there. It more or

less says that passive measures are not really bringing about the reductions required and that punitive measures might be required.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I have been very clear since I took office that the targets set out in the Sustainable Transport Policy were targets that were not amended when the policy was amended. Therefore, the tools that we have available to us are not there anymore. They have been taken out of our toolbox, and that was the punitive measures that you mention. To make those targets realistic, there needs to be a cost differential between using your private mode of transport, your car, and using public transport or more sustainable forms of transport. But what we can do, although we will not meet those targets because we do not have those tools in our toolbox, we have worked with LibertyBus and we have introduced schemes like the car-to-cycle scheme and we continue to improve the infrastructure around the bus network in terms of bus shelters, et cetera. So we are doing everything that we can without using ... so we are using as many carrots as we can without using any sticks, because last time I used that phrase there was an interesting cartoon in the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* about that. What we can give the panel is the success that my small team on the traffic side, on the sustainable transport side, along with LibertyBus have managed to achieve this year. LibertyBus has won a national award quite recently in terms of recognising that they have improved the bus service substantially. They won a national award for that against very stiff competition throughout the U.K. We can pass that information on to the panel.

**Director of Transport:**

Included in the pack here there are some interesting little bits, and in particular Jersey being the subject of much discussion in the U.K. Houses of Parliament, particularly in the House of Lords, around the U.K. Bus Bill. It has been put up as an exemplar of how you can run a bus franchising contract at least 4 times during the debate in the House of Lords and also has received coverage in national press, some of it quite good. I quite like this one here, which is: "Jersey franchising body is a guy called Craig." What they are particularly impressed with is how we have managed to achieve so much with so little resource and with such a small team and how efficient it is.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

Will they be asking you to be consultants then?

**Director of Transport:**

Well, we have been contacted by various think tanks and we have provided advice to at least 2 think tanks now in the U.K. who are interested in that, particularly for how they move to managing their rural services in the U.K. Because the rural services are much diminished because they have this ... the system they use at the moment is basically free enterprise and there is no money in running

rural services, whereas the Jersey system of letting a franchise ensures that you can set service levels across the entire network. Do you want to add anything to that, John?

**Chief Officer:**

No. The Bus Bill is going through the Parliament in the next couple of months and we have been used as one of the exemplars and examples of how you can do it differently. We did not realise we were doing it differently. We were just trying to get a better service than we had before and we were very lucky in that. "Lucky" I do not think feels like the right term, but all the mistakes with the previous contract and the previous relationship we managed to resolve and in doing so we have produced a way of commissioning buses which I think now stands out. So ourselves and Singapore have been used as the exemplars and the way to move forward for the whole of the U.K. At the moment, the U.K. bus industry is broken because it is driven by a very small number of private sector operators making profits up to 27 per cent out of the people who are desperately in need of a communication system. So hopefully the Bus Bill will go through in the U.K. and the U.K. will start having a better service based on the principles that we have adopted.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Well, our congratulations to LibertyBus on their efforts and yours for your negotiation. Apart from that, you talk about lack of tools, et cetera. The only tool then is what: increase of duty on petrol and on V.E.D. (vehicle emissions duty) maybe?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Both of those do not come under my remit; both of those are Treasury items. But the tool that we would have would be to increase the differential between the cost of using your car to come into St. Helier to work, for example, and using the bus. We already subsidise the bus service to the tune of just over £4 million a year and we do not really have any money to subsidise it further to bring bus fares down. But those canny Islanders - and there are many of them - have opted to use the Avanchi Card system whereby they are paying less now for their buses than they were 5 or 6 years ago compared to using cash. So it is not really the cost of the bus service that needs to come down. It will be the cost of parking that would need to go up and I do not think Jersey currently has the stomach for that.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

Bearing in mind that Guernsey are thinking of charging cyclists and we are on this **[Laughter]** ... no, seriously, and we are on this user pays, we have just contributed over £1 million for cycle routes. Are you thinking of asking cyclists to contribute towards that? Because you have been using taxpayers' money to do that.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

My understanding is that Guernsey are not doing that. That was a bit of a red herring.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

Yes, but what about us?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

No, but I understand that Guernsey are not going to be bringing in a tax on their cyclists. We would not consider that either because it is the opposite of what we want to do. We want to get people fitter. We want them not to use their cars. We want them to use other forms of transport such as their bicycles, such as their electric bikes, and public transport.

**Director of Transport:**

Can I just add a little to that? It seems to be a misconception in Jersey that when the car tax was removed and fuel duty was introduced that that was in some way hypothecated for the roads. That was never the case, so the maintenance of the main roads is paid for out of general taxation, as are the walking and cycling facilities. So it is only right that it is considered as one. Also, in particular with cycling, depending on whose numbers you look at, there is a benefit to the community of round about between £12,000 and £17,000 to the community for every new cyclist you create. The community accrues that benefit in terms of better health outcomes, less time off work, less health costs, and there are also environmental advantages in terms of reductions in pollution and the like. So encouraging people to cycle and take up active means of transport is really a win/win for the Island and it is something that should be invested in.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

But in some of the larger estates and things that have been built, have the builders not been asked to contribute towards the cycling?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes, we have managed to get ...

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

Dandara was asked to ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We have managed to get planning gains out of them, which is exactly what we want to do.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**



Because I know with my Parish they were asked to, but I do not have a cycle track. The estates I have had built and the housing that has been built in my Parish have contributed to cycle tracks, which my Parish does not have the benefit of having.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

At the moment, but the scheme you are talking about ...

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

I do not have a crossing so you are not going to give me a cycle track.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

The scheme that you are probably referring to is the eastern cycle track scheme, whereby I think it is developments over 5 units had to contribute £1,000 per unit towards the eastern cycle track. It is quite a wide corridor that is covered by that planning obligation and those funds are technically accruing. I do not think we have had any physical cash yet.

**Director of Transport:**

I think there is some cash.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Okay, and we are looking at schemes to implement an eastern cycle track. We have completed recently the track that links up the Grouville Primary School to Gorey. We are currently in a consultation period with linking up ... a scheme to link Le Rocquier School with Le Hocq and we are looking at other schemes in the east. We are looking at trying to join the final section joining the route around the harbour and La Collette. I hope that we will be doing that in the next 18 months or so. So we are working to improve those elements as well.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

I congratulate you on that, too. I am all for cyclists, but going back to the central problem, there are too many cars on our road. Are you saying you are not going to contemplate car-parking fees increased by way of discouraging them, or is there some other method, a congestion charge?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

There is an unfairness in the system because some people have no choice but to use our public car parks and, therefore, if we increased the cost of our public car parks without addressing the cost ... without raising a levy on private car parks in St. Helier, then it would be an unfairness. Because, for example, your executive from a bank or from a law firm or an accountancy firm who has basement car parking in their building would not contribute to that and there would be no incentive then. Other

places such as Nottingham have introduced levies. It is something that may be considered in the future but that is a substantial piece of work. We are not looking currently to do that or to increase above the already agreed level, which is 2.5 per cent or cost of living, whichever is higher, in the States currently.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

So by saying that, are you not accepting that transport will not go down?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It was a States decision to remove that aspect of the Sustainable Transport Policy.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Congestion charges of some kind are not in your ...?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Again, I do not think the Island has the appetite for congestion charges. If you look at our congestion, it is very narrow peaks. It is the school run in the mornings, concentrated unfortunately around St. Saviour for the Parish, and that is really the only time of the day that we get significant congestion. You only have to take a trip to the U.K. to understand what congestion really is and we are nowhere near that sort of level yet.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

So basically we are prepared to live with it as it is?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I have no choice. It was a States decision to not have that in the Sustainable Transport Policy. That was as amended.

[16:45]

**The Deputy of St. John:**

That is not true you do not have any choice. You could bring a new Sustainable Transport Policy to the States.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We could revise it but ...

**The Deputy of St. John:**

If the current one's targets are not realistic, then what are you working to?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We have to work to those targets. I am just being realistic so as the public understand that we will not reach a reduction of 15 per cent of peak hour traffic first thing in the morning.

**The Deputy of St. John:**

If you know that realistically, if you know you are not going to meet those targets, then you are telling the public a false dichotomy about what you are trying to achieve. So you are on the back foot before you have even started again. Why not, if you know that, bring an appropriately realistic policy forward?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I could bring a proposition to change the targets. I do not think it is necessarily a good use of the time for the States Assembly at this moment. What is a better use of time is to communicate to the public what we can and cannot do. In terms of what we have achieved so far, it is a 1.6 per cent to 1.7 per cent reduction, which does not sound very much but when you benchmark it against the fact that the targets again did not allow for population growth, I think we are doing a reasonable level given the tools that we have available. I do not think the public at this time would stomach significant increases in car park charging that would be required to improve those targets.

**Chief Officer:**

The Sustainable Transport Policy was agreed in autumn 2009 and that was the first Sustainable Transport Policy this Island has ever sanctioned. There was a tennis match of Sustainable Transport Policies before that, which were either not ambitious enough, too ambitious, not ambitious enough, too ambitious, and never got to debate at the States. So the one in 2009 was quite conservative. It did set targets which required fiscal mechanisms within car parks, which was taken away, but if you take a step back and look at what the Minister and previous Ministers, but particularly this Minister, has achieved in his time, sustainable transport has been a big focus. The infrastructure we have had, we have put in place the e-bike scheme, the promotion of cycling and walking and the other strategies, and the incredible achievement of the bus company is down to the fact that the Minister has been brave enough to do that. There is a point when it comes to charging of car parks at which it becomes very emotive and one which becomes a political poisoned chalice, and what we have to do is either be strong enough to do that but we have to have all the other things in place so that ... I think one of the amendments was you have to have a bus service which is adequate so there is an alternative and you have to have other alternative provisions in place, which we are getting close to. So I think the debate on car-parking charges probably will need to happen at some point, but you do need the infrastructure in place first and I think we have achieved a great deal compared to where

we were in 2009. This Island has been car-centric for 50 years where in rural Parishes there are no footpaths and you put your life in your hands walking your dog around some places because there are no footpaths. We know this and we have to change that behaviour, but it takes a lot of bravery to do that because then you get criticised for spending on these things which is not making the road wider so people can drive faster. So it is a real balance and I think it is a balance which we are trying to get reset so that people have a better life and they can use other forms of transport instead of a car. No one has a long journey here. No one has to travel on a motorway. We have dodgy weather and some steep hills.

**Director of Transport:**

I bet you would like to take away the hills.

**Chief Officer:**

Yes. We just need to change the weather and I think global warming is doing that very successfully.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It gives us other problems.

**Chief Officer:**

Yes.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

I am conscious of the time just ticking away. Moving on from there, Fort Regent.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Before I was elected I attended a presentation at Fort Regent with your good self, Minister, when you were Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources, with an ambitious franchise certainly, which has come to naught. First and foremost, who is "running" Fort Regent? Is it yourselves or ...? Sport and Leisure obviously have a myriad of activities carried out. What is the relationship between the 2?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

The operation of Fort Regent comes under Sport, so the steering group for Fort Regent is now chaired by Constable Pallett. We are responsible for the fabric of the building.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Given that Sport use your facilities, as it were, do they pay towards this?

**Director of Estates:**

They do not pay a rent as such. We work in partnership with Sport. Effectively, there is a service level agreement. We have a landlord responsibility for the wind and watertight and some of the service areas around the Fort, and the Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture Department operate the Fort. But we work in partnership with them, so they offset some of the running costs partly through initiatives that are income generating like the Active Card, partly through some commercial lets within the Fort. So, for example, the areas within the Fort that are let to businesses, the rental income from the businesses goes back into the Fort. The D.f.I., the property arm of that, undertakes the estate management functions. So it is very much a partnership with a clear distinction in terms of operating responsibility is with Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture Department. We have landlord responsibilities and we meet regularly to discuss issues of mutual interest.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

In general terms, though, the costs of maintaining are covered by someone, effectively?

**Director of Estates:**

Yes, we have budgets within our area to deal with infrastructure issues. So for example, this year we are spending money on some ... we have had a lot of water ingress around the Fort, so we are spending money out of the Property Holdings/D.f.I. budget to try and address some of those problems of water ingress at the Fort. It is a bit like the Forth Bridge because the roof on the Fort is at the point where it needs to be replaced in the not too distant future, so every time we maintain and repair it is a sticking plaster. We are doing some work on the external staircasing, we do work on the rock faces, and those are 3 projects. We have spent about £250,000, £300,000 of our maintenance budget on the Fort this year and probably spend that sort of money every year on the external maintenance.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

How do you see the future of the Fort?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

That is something that is being considered by the steering group, and I believe they are taking some proposals to the Council of Ministers in the next month.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Okay, that is good to hear. Because what you say is the expense is ongoing and likely to increase. You are not getting revenue on it, but you also have the liability there, have you not?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

The Fort is effectively a financial liability. It takes more money in from Government to keep it running than is generated there, yes.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

While it stays like that and unbuilt upon, that increases pressure, does it not, on other parts of the Island to produce attractions, et cetera, which might otherwise be held in the Fort?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

There is effectively a burning bridge. It is actually a burning roof, effectively. We know that in 5 to 10 years' time the roof will need replacing. The membrane on the roof will need replacing and that will be a substantial cost, so we need to finalise what we are going to do with Fort Regent in short order.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

The point I was making is that given that this was pointed out in a consultant's report 2 years ago, there was the prospect of creating sport activities there, which are not happening. They are happening elsewhere on the Island to the detriment of the Island generally.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

The Rediscovering Fort Regent programme was a high-level look at the art of the possible. That was not funded in this M.T.F.P., has not been funded in this M.T.F.P., is unlikely to be funded to anywhere near the levels that are required. We came up with costs of around £80 million that would be needed to be invested in the Fort to implement Rediscovering Fort Regent. In the current climate and with the size of our population and our tourism industry, et cetera, I think that £80 million could be better spent on other assets for the Island, such as hospitals.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Was there not within the report the idea of getting private finance for part of the things?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

That is what the steering group have been exploring and they will be reporting back to the Council of Ministers in the next month, I believe. But it is going to be difficult to get private funding into the Fort.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

So we are just going to let it go to wrack and ruin, basically? Because it is not being run at this moment in time, is it? It is not being put out to its full potential and you could not ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It does not generate enough income to cover its costs.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

No, but we are not encouraging people to come and do something, are we? We are just saying: "Well, it is there and we are not really interested."

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

There is a lot of work going on behind the scenes and the steering group will be reporting to the Council of Ministers I believe next month.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Okay. On that one hopefully we will see that report and we can be better qualified to comment. The final question I have is we had originally got a topic of office modernisation, which you are going to kindly present us with something ...?

**Director of Estates:**

We will give you ... we are taking some updates and proposals to the Council of Ministers on the 23rd and we have a date in your diary for the 24th for a presentation.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Yes, I am aware of that. I know that in the office modernisation project, as revealed in the M.T.F.P., there are ... you identify certain properties which might be ... the proceeds of which will be used to finance that modernisation. Apart from that attributed to the modernisation project itself, is there a strategy which perhaps requires you to reduce the portfolio of properties you have?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We can give you a paper on how we come to dispose of properties and the processes that we go through to get to that. But our main aim is to provide property for the provision of services to Islanders, be they education, health, libraries, et cetera. Our principal role is to provide property to provide services to Islanders and when those properties are no longer needed for a service is effectively when we have a disposal choice.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

So those properties presumably are used to ... yes, the Island as a whole generally but more to accommodate certain departments of Government?

**Director of Estates:**

The property portfolio is very service delivery orientated. So in terms of the portfolio, about three-quarters of it ... about half of it relates to education in terms of size, volume of properties, in schools and Highlands and the like. Then about another quarter is health-related services, the hospital plus mental health services and other health provision. Then the remaining quarter is a mix of specialist buildings like the prison and courts and the like, and then office buildings and then some specialist buildings like this building right down to the A.A. (Automobile Association) box in Trinity. They are part of the property portfolio. We look to try and rationalise that portfolio wherever possible. The Government does not need to own buildings to make sure that the buildings are maintained and their use is preserved and their historic future use is preserved. The Planning Department is there to determine what you can do with a building, not necessarily the owner, and in some respects the public owning buildings where we have limited finances and limited resources available ... if we have a building that does not have an operational need, then the tendency is that it will become less well maintained going forward. So we focus the maintenance and management on our operational buildings. What we do try and do is where we create a sea change - and the new police station is the example - when we back out of the old buildings, that those old buildings have usage which supports either the States' Strategic Plan ... so the Summerland site, which has recently been transferred over to the ownership of Andium, will be built out for affordable accommodation and social housing on that site, which supports the Island's Strategic Plan. We try and recycle those sites. We have a small, a relatively small, amount of commercially-let properties and we try and achieve an appropriate market rent on the commercially-let properties. The income from property generated from our portfolio of properties, third party income, supports the operation and running costs of the department. If we sell a property, our friends and colleagues at the Treasury make sure that money is banked and allocated to the Consolidated Fund to support future capital programmes.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Okay. Well, again, I think, as I say, time is running out. We look forward to your presentation on the modernisation project, which will be useful.

**Director of Estates:**

Indeed.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Okay. Anything else, anyone? No. Well, thank you, ladies and gentlemen ...



[17:00]

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

If I can just ... I have a couple of other pieces of documents I can hand the panel. One just gives a list of our road safety works that we are planning over the rest of the M.T.F.P. and exactly what we have done in the last couple of years. So I will pass those to you as well just for information.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

That will be good, thank you. All right, I will declare the meeting closed. Thank you.

[17:00]