



Environment, Housing and Infrastructure

Scrutiny Panel

Quarterly Hearing

Witness: The Minister for Infrastructure

Tuesday, 7th July 2020

Panel:

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

Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville (Vice-Chairman)

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence

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

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier

Witnesses:

Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour, The Minister for Infrastructure

Mr. T. Daniels, Director of Estates, Jersey Property Holdings

Mr. J. Littlewood, Head of Finance Business Partnering, Growth, Housing and Environment

Ms. E. Littlechild, Group Director of Operations and Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment

Mr. T. Dodd, Head of Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment

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

Welcome to the Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel. We have prepared a list of questions which have been submitted to the department, which we hope you will be able to answer to a degree. If we cannot answer them, perhaps we will follow up with some written questions to develop thereon. I am going to just squeeze in a pre-number one question rather than put it on the end, and that is directed towards Property Holdings. You will recall that as a result of the foreshore discussions out east, if I may call it that, you were asking for a review on the arrangements which were taking place down there. I believe that was due in April. Clearly we have had interruptions. Where are we now with that, please?

Director of Estates, Jersey Property Holdings:

Yes, I will take this. Unfortunately, a member of the review team has recently been taken rather seriously ill, which meant that the timeline that we had originally proposed has fallen to the right. We are, however, in the process of preparing the final review for presentation to the Minister and that involves a re-look at the original policy. That review will be presented before the end of July and will be then available for implementation as discussed and briefed.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you. Is that policy going to apply throughout the Island? Because I gather that there are situations in other parts which may need consideration. Could you let the panel know where the hotspots are?

Director of Estates, Jersey Property Holdings:

Yes. The issue concerns encroachment on public land and so it is not just relating to the foreshore. The policy will be applicable to any encroachments on any public land.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Have any other panel members got questions on that before we move on to the next subject?

Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville (Vice-Chairman):

Yes, please, Mike. We do not appear to have a hand in this meeting, so I did put it in the chat, but one question I would like to ask, and I have asked the Attorney General, but did not understand his answer. Why are these transactions not put before the States? Because they are quite clearly land transactions because there are large amounts of money that change hands.

Director of Estates, Jersey Property Holdings:

Honestly, Constable, I cannot answer that question. I will, however, endeavour to go away and talk to the Attorney General and see if I can come back with his response.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Because I think there has been 3 transactions so far, is that right? I am just interested: there is a proposed development down near Le Hurel Slip and I am wondering whether negotiations are taking place about that particular development.

Director of Estates, Jersey Property Holdings:

I think transactions occur all the time. There are 2 that were the subject of some scrutiny a while ago and for particular reasons, but there are transactions that occur pretty much routinely. I cannot answer the question, but I will endeavour to go away and find the response.

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence:

It was just to ask, you said part of the review is you are re-looking at the original policy. I just wondered if you could explain that a bit further, why at this late date are you re-looking at the original policy? What is the purpose of that?

Director of Estates, Jersey Property Holdings:

I think the whole idea of the review of the foreshore was to consider if the policy was appropriate or not and to comment on that, given - as I just mentioned - a couple of the historical sort of cases that were raised, so it is nothing new. It is a part of the ongoing review of the policy which was to be considered in light of the foreshore and to see if there were any other issues that came up.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Just very quickly, can I ask, as part of this review, will the review establish the foreshore? That is something that has been asked in the past, so when this review is delivered at the end of the month, will it establish where the foreshore is?

Director of Estates, Jersey Property Holdings:

I believe that that is the outcome that is desired, but clearly there are ... because it is a historical issue, there will be a view, and the view that will be taken will be as a result of the historical evidence. That is not necessarily to say that it will not be challenged, so there will be a view of where the foreshore is and the policy that pertains to it, but it is clearly a subjective issue.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Tim, is that encapsulated in the terms of reference for the review?

Director of Estates, Jersey Property Holdings:

I am not sure, Chairman. I will need to go and check.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you very much, Tim, for that. That is very useful, so we look forward to the end of July and seeing the report. I do not think there is anything further on Property Holdings matters, apart from discussion with regard to the Island Plan a bit later. We are now going to move on to the Government Plan 2023. Minister, there was a funding request for the vehicle testing centre project for the 2023 period totalling £6.5 million without a completed options appraisal for the project. Given the request

for full funding of the £6.5 million in 2019 for all years, will this funding provision now be reviewed and funded differently?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Good morning, Chairman and team. Yes, this funding request was made prior to the completion of the options appraisal, because it was felt to be important to have the funding in place should it be required and agreed. If the agreed option was to deliver it ourselves, we did not want the absence of funding to sway the decision. The creation of a vehicle testing centre is the option that is likely to require the most capital funding, so it was regarded as prudent to include the estimated cost of this with the Government Plan in case it was required in the future. The requirements for this funding will be reviewed once the options appraisal study has identified a preferred delivery option and this has been agreed.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So the outcome of the study in the 2023 plan was cited for the centre, so at what stage are we at now with regard to the business case and the delivery model, if at all?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Obviously the options appraisal study was postponed in March 2020, having barely started, due to COVID-19. Early in January 2020, D.V.S. (Driver and Vehicle Standards) began the appointment and evaluation process for an independent external organisation to undertake the options appraisal study and make recommendations as to the most appropriate inspections arrangement for Jersey. In March, a preferred organisation was selected and a scoping exercise was begun in order to refine the key tasks programme and resources requirements. Then it was halted after the first scoping meeting was the chosen local consultants. April 2020 was clearly not the time to begin this process, which required early and extensive consultation and engagement with both the industry and the public. In addition, a range of other factors had to be considered, including the impact on Government resources and an unwillingness to place an additional burden on the industry in this time of crisis.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you think that that situation still prevails, that it is placing a burden on the industry in the continuing time of crisis?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think so, yes. D.V.S. remains committed to implement the inspection regime, which must be progressed as part of the commitment made by the Island's Government to comply with the Vienna Convention.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Would you agree that in the light of the COVID problems that the whole world is having that it would not be unreasonable to defer that implementation until we can reasonably do it at a respectable cost?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, I would agree with that, but I think lots of things have been put on hold due to COVID, but I am sure you would agree with me, Chairman, we are not out of the woods yet. I wish that we were, but it is a wait and see, I think, approach to that one at the moment.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I am going to ask with regard to light motorcycles, mopeds and suchlike, they were being tested, I gather, in-house. In terms of numbers, how far have we got with that testing programme? Are we up to speed with the projected numbers to be tested and have we still got the capability to progress in the correct direction?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think we were up to speed prior to COVID and I believe inspections have carried on with all vehicles being left outside of the D.V.S. centre and brought in by an engineer and tested. Certainly all P.S.V.s (passenger service vehicles) are continuing to be tested and I believe heavy goods. I am not sure; I do not think we have any of my team online at the moment.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I am told there were some 3,000 light motorcycles initially to be tested and we have only done a significantly small proportion. I think the figure mentioned was something like 600, but once again, that may be wrong. It seems that we are well behind on that. Do we have the displaced staff in the department back in their own offices at this stage or are they still displaced within the States or within the Government in other places?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think we have got most of them back now. They have been displaced to other offices, but I think most of them have now returned and I think we do have the odd vacancy, but things are progressing well. It was the 125 motorcycles I think you are referring to, also minibuses as well were being tested at that time.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

In terms of the Government Plan, once again the vehicle testing centre was allocated £250,000 of funding for 2020. How much of this funding allocation has been spent to date?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think very little because of the onset of COVID. I do not appear to have any of my team with me at the moment.

Head of Finance Business Partnering, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Do you want me to come in on that, Minister? I can do, if you wish.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

John Littlewood. Lovely, if you would, please.

Head of Finance Business Partnering, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes. So the £250,000 that was allocated in the Government Plan in the capital was for the initial and outline planning applications and design work. We are not at that stage yet, so it is possible that that funding will fall back into 2021. It is unlikely to be required this year. The money for the options appraisal was part of the Brexit funding in relation to Vienna, so that is still available to us. As soon as that kicks off, I think we are looking at restarting that in quarter 3, then that will fund that, but the actual £250,000 which was outline planning and so on, I do not think we will need that this year and we have not spent any of that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thanks, John. Do we have an idea of where it might be going yet, this testing centre?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

As in location? Obviously it depends whether we do that in-house or not. If we do that in-house then I would imagine that would be very close to the existing test centre, if space allows.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

There is a good site that may become available at Millbrook Park, possibly.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think that has a few covenants on board and that would be tricky. Good luck with that one.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Have the panel got any other questions on the vehicle testing subject?

The Connétable of Grouville:

Can I just ask, what interest does there seem to be from the industry about carrying out the tests themselves rather than having the States doing it?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not believe there has been tremendous interest at the moment, but it is early days yet and the appraisal is yet to be carried out, but first indications I think are sporadic. There has been talk in the past of small garages not wishing to be dominated by the larger garages, though, as I say, there is a possibility it could be done in-house. It depends on the arrangements and the recommendations yet to come.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Minister, is there any deadline for this in the sense of obviously this work is in order to comply with the Vienna Convention because of Brexit? The transitional period ends at the end of this year, so from your perspective, does this put any ... I do not know if there is a deadline, but does this put any deadline in jeopardy?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, not in my opinion. I think the Vienna Convention satisfied our European colleagues, as long as we made a start on the project, which we clearly have with testing motorbikes up to 125 and minibuses. We have clearly made a start on the whole programme, with invitations being sent out to owners of vehicles, of the 125s, to come in for testing. We have clearly made a start and obviously it goes without saying the whole world has been turned upside down by COVID, so I am not anticipating any rhetoric from my colleagues.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Is there any formal assessment done by the officials who oversee the Vienna Convention? Is there any kind of outside assessment of that or by the U.K. (United Kingdom) or whoever?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think we are ... answerable is not quite the right word. We obviously liaise with our U.K. colleagues in the first instance as we come under part of that umbrella, but I think everyone is aware that we are compliant. We are quite fortunate that we had our existing testing centre up and running prior to the Vienna Convention coming into force, so we already had the test centre there because we previously tested obviously all P.S.V. vehicles, be it buses, coaches, heavy goods vehicles we have been testing. We had the P30 regime and in fact we have coped with that quite well. It has given us a head start, so I think we have more than proven that we have made the initial start in the process.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Minister, is it your department that liaises with our European or U.K. counterparts or is that dealt with by the Brexit team?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think that is more of a cross-department approach. I think it is part of both, I believe.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Moving on to further matters in the Government Plan, it was stated in the original 2023 plan that the vehicle fleet within the Government consists of a small number of electric vehicles. What percentage of the new fleet cars purchased will be electric vehicles and what is the additional cost of purchasing electric vehicles over standard petrol and diesel versions?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The allocation of the £1 million funding in the Government Plan was from the Jersey Fleet Management trading operating balance and is not the main programme. I do not have a percentage of vehicles at the moment. They are extremely expensive, unfortunately. I am not sure if any of my other team are on board can help me with that one, but I think sometimes you are talking 3 times the price. Obviously commercial vehicles, it is early days yet with electrification, but it is happening. I am in favour of electrification from an environmental point of view, but as I say, it is early days and very expensive.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Given that private vehicles are becoming more affordable now and compatible in price, would you agree that the fleet management department should be increasing that percentage and getting rid of the petrol and diesel models?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Sorry, are you there, Ellen?

Group Director of Operations and Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes, Minister. Do you mind if I could answer some of that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Absolutely.

Group Director of Operations and Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment:

At the moment, 5 per cent of Jersey fleet vehicles are electric. Again, if we want to be carbon neutral by 2030 and change over our fleet, then we are going to have to start looking at replacing more of our fleet certainly from now and looking over the next 10 years. When we are looking at prices, we are saying generally for cars the cost is roughly 25 per cent to 40 per cent higher for electric vehicles. For our light vans, it is roughly about 40 to 60 per cent. I think at the moment, certainly for large vans, L.G.V.s (large goods vehicles), for an example, a gully emptier, which would normally cost us £150,000, we were quoted for an electric vehicle as £300,000. At the moment we are working up a strategy to look at how we could replace the Government in Jersey's fleet to more electric vehicles or low carbon and we will be working through with the S.T.P. (Sustainable Transport Policy) to look at the best funding route to be able to do that. Jersey Fleet Management, it is trading vehicles, it is a rechargeable account and those costs are then incurred by the departments, so we have got to find a way to make this financially achievable for those departments to be able to take up that offer.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you, Ellen. I think it is probably an area where one does not want to be in too much of a rush from the commercial side, I am suggesting, in that you say ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am happy for other countries to lead the way on that one so we can learn by their mistakes, but obviously we are very keen to promote electric vehicles. In our multi-storey car parks, we have between 2 and 10 charging points in all the multi-storeys and that is something I am very keen to promote. Also private companies are now putting them in, the Hotel L'Horizon has them and people can charge from home if they are available by way of a 13 amp socket if they so wish. The challenge arises where people have to park on-street and recharge, but that is going to be a challenge as well for our colleagues at Jersey Electricity to help out with that one, but as I say, electricity appears to be the way to go or some other kind of low carbon hydrogens being investigated. It is all out there at the moment.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

In terms of the cost-effectiveness from the department's point of view, the light vans and cars will be depreciated. What is the period of depreciation of an electric car versus a fossil-fuelled one?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It does help a lot because obviously maintenance-wise we do not have engines, gearboxes and exhausts to worry about, but you still have obviously brakes, lights et cetera which will also go through the testing regime when they come on board. I wonder if you can help me out with that one, Ellen, on the time period.

Group Director of Operations and Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I think it is probably still around 7 years, 7 to 8 years. That is my understanding as it stands at the moment.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I was just wondering in terms of the fact that the capital expenditure initially is higher whether we would get a longer life out of them. That is where my question was directed. Deputy Gardiner, you had a question?

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier:

Thank you, Chairman. The first part of the question you just asked and it has been answered. The second part of the question is what will be the balance if we take maintenance - petrol or no petrol, charge - cost for the lighter vehicles? I understand that our commercial vehicles will have a 100 per cent difference, but in the lighter vehicles, have you done this calculation? If yes, can we, as a panel, see some of the data, which will include costs, maintenance and petrol and depreciation?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Do you have that, Ellen?

Group Director of Operations and Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes, some of that work has been done, so we can share that with you. The initial issue for us, I think, is the upfront cost because obviously, as I said, it costs more, but over the life of that vehicle then it will cost less because you are not having to do the same kind of maintenance. It is just trying to get that balance right, but it is that initial injection and cash flow to be able to purchase the vehicles to move over to that type of fleet. But we can get that data for you.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you. I am now going to move on to the Island Plan and what is now called the bridging Island Plan. It is suggested that the delivery of affordable homes and key worker accommodation could be addressed through the use of existing public sites and assets, but how will the property strategy and capital programme overcome the political challenges that the Minister for Children and Housing recently highlighted as a key obstacle to providing affordable homes, as discussed for States-owned sites, such as competing demand, the need for outside space and the shrinking budget? You have got a challenge on your hands, Minister, and I am just wondering how you are going to deal with it.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, it certainly is a challenge. Sorry, who do I have on my team? We have lost Tim. John, would you like to take that?

Head of Finance Business Partnering, Growth, Housing and Environment :

Are you going to take that, Tim, or ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Tim is still here. I beg your pardon, Tim.

Director of Estates, Jersey Property Holdings:

I am fiddling with my mute button. This is a question that is directed - because it is an Island Plan issue - at the Minister for the Environment. However, we do have a body that is being set up, the Corporate Asset Management Board, which I think you have been briefed by previously, which is designed to look across the whole of the Government and make sure that there is no sort of individual directorates with specific requirements that are put to the front and that we have the opportunity to consider each site and optimise the site for the needs of the public. So the Corporate Asset Management Board and the Regeneration Steering Group get a total view of what is required and make sure that the most effective and efficient use of the real estate is effected. Now, clearly there are going to be challenges. Demand at the moment is exceeding supply. However, as COVID emerges, then we believe that there will be some opportunities in terms of the way the office estate is currently used and what our future requirement will be for office space and for operating the Government. We believe out of that we may find additional sites available for affordable housing. We do not have all the answers at the moment, but a combination of the new One Government approach to the real estate and lessons that we will learn as we emerge from COVID mean that we will do our utmost to meet the requirement.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

During the call for sites, we received 466 requests as part of the process, which is just over 50 per cent of the housing, so we can get that data to you.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you. The Constable of St. Saviour has a question. Sadie, have you got a question?

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

Yes. Sorry, I could not unmute myself. Yes, I am just a little bit disappointed because we seem to be playing catch-up from the last 10 years. We have now got this, which they are calling a 3-year bridge, but we have got no immigration policy in place. We still need homes, we are still allowing people to come in and when things are not being done, at this moment in time we are blaming COVID-19. What are we going to blame it on when we have solved the COVID-19? Do you not think an immigration policy would help you at all, Minister?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Absolutely. It is a little outside of my remit at the moment regarding that, so I will try and deal with what we have regarding to drainage, infrastructure and keeping the Island moving. But it is a problem, I agree.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

Yes, but we are not keeping the Island moving, are we? We are static. In fact, we are sinking in what we have. When you have a Council of Ministers meeting, do you not say: "I am having a problem housing everybody. Do you not think if we had an immigration policy that would possibly help me"?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Absolutely. As I say, again, it is a little outside of my remit, more a question for the Minister for Housing, but we do what we can to assist our colleagues. We do not have a huge land bank, that is for sure, but we do what we can.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

I am not having a go at you, Minister, but I do not feel at this moment in time it is enough. I am sorry, but I am not having a go at you personally, I just think an immigration policy would help the whole Island altogether rather than just trying to find men to build the homes for people when you are allowing everybody to come in and flood us. It is nothing personal.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We can't go on indefinitely, obviously. We do what we can.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

We would be pleased if that message is communicated to your fellow Ministers.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I have a Council of Ministers meeting later on today, more than happy to pass that message on, Constable.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

With such a truncated Island Plan, what is to stop any infrastructure projects, especially large ones, becoming de facto permanent structures without going through the public consultation process? I suppose I could refer to the Nightingale Hospital and possibly the testing facility at the pier. Are there any others, Minister?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Regarding the Nightingale Unit at Millbrook, that was exceptional and the team did an absolutely superb job with that from consulting with the landowners. The agreement is, as soon as COVID is deemed to be clear, then the whole unit will be removed and the field will be returned to its former green state. An awful lot of that work was done, a lot of it was done over a weekend, which is quite phenomenal. We were warned that COVID was coming. Touch wood, even though sadly we have had very few fatalities, it could have been an awful lot worse. The team did a lot of it over a weekend, Law Officers, Planning Department, Infrastructure, Jersey Electricity, Jersey Water, everybody, and there were lots of local contractors who are normally in fierce competition with each other working side by side to get the Nightingale ready. It was an absolutely superb way to go and it is hopefully a lesson for the future that when the chips are down that Jersey can really pull together. Tim and his colleagues and John and everybody did a fantastic job.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Minister, the whole Island is grateful for the insurance that gives us, there is no question about that, but the point of my question is what is to stop any of these projects becoming de facto permanent structures? If we look at the testing facility at the pier, that is probably a situation that could run on if we are not careful.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It all came under the umbrella of temporary buildings and temporary structures. If it was permanent, then obviously it would need a different set of planning applications to go forward, but because it was an emergency we had emergency dispensation on the grounds that the buildings are in fact temporary. I am sure you are more than familiar with the planning process, Chairman, and it can be lengthy, with huge amounts of consultation, but as a temporary structure this was done in record time, but emphasis on the word “temporary”.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Moving to things that you and I are very familiar with, we have heard that the approval of waste charges at the Energy Recovery Facility could stimulate recycling to avoid the charge and free up to 10,000 tonne of capacity to generate up to £1.5 million of revenues from importing waste from other jurisdictions. How realistic is the importation of waste from other jurisdictions for processing when much of the gathered recyclables are already exported to the U.K. and other places?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have been quite successful in recent times with our recycling record, which decreases the amount of refuse put into the Energy Recovery Facility, which is good news because it extends the

life of the facility. There is capacity there. We do take refuse, which was approved by the States, from our friends in Alderney, which is basically 2 containers, so that is pretty insignificant, but that copes perfectly adequately with that. It comes over in sealed containers and goes through the Energy Recovery Facility with our own local refuse. It works very well.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Has there been any discussion with regard to the importation of waste from Guernsey?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Not in recent times. Our colleagues in Guernsey have an arrangement where they use R.D.F. (Refuse Derived Fuel) where the refuse is sorted and the combustible refuse is baled and sent to Sweden and the remaining refuse is sent to the U.K. for processing. I believe there is some time yet to run on that agreement.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Have you got figures with regard to the amounts that we have reduced - due to recycling - the amounts going into the E.R.F. (Energy Recovery Facility)?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not have that with me, but I am sure we can get that to you. I am not sure if Ellen has that info.

Group Director of Operations and Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes. We roughly incinerate about 70,000 tonnes, of which, as you know, Chairman, roughly just over 30 per cent of which gets recycled through different guises. Again, if we were looking in the future, there are some waste streams again that could be reused, which currently do not, so things like wood. We burn an awful lot of wood within the E.R.F. and that is something that could perhaps in the future be exported or we do something different with.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Very much a moving feast with the recyclables from years ago when the U.S.A. (United States of America) in 2008 had a problem. They stopped importing as much goods from China, so the value of cardboard dropped through the floor, so now that is well back up again obviously the value of cardboard is quite high, so things fluctuate with market prices.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Sorry, Chair, if I may, it is just to go back to Ellen. The question was by how much have you reduced the waste going into the E.R.F., because the Minister said we have reduced the amount of waste,

so I do not know if this is 2019 compared to 2018 or if it is more recent, but do you have those figures with you at the moment, Ellen?

Group Director of Operations and Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I do not at the moment, Deputy, but we can get hold of those figures for you.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Minister, I am going to move on to office strategy. Can you update the panel on the current status of the office strategy and how will it change in the light of COVID-19, given that so many people are working from home and it is suggested by several large companies that they will be reviewing their office strategy in terms of cost when it comes to lease renewals? What are your views?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Tim, would you like to take that one?

Director of Estates, Jersey Property Holdings:

Of course, Minister. So in terms of the current status of the office strategy, 3 potential contractors have put forward 4 potential sites for consideration. Those bids are in the process of being evaluated and a final decision will be taken towards the end of August of this year. The evolving specification of the office space continues to be determined. Flexibility was always a key requirement of the new office and, as the lessons of the COVID discussion emerge, then the work both of the contractors in terms of their bids and their proposals, and also the Government in terms of the way that we will be operating, will be brought together so that consideration for the contract of the new office when it is taken will make sure that we have a flexible space that can accommodate what we need and that it is of the correct size.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Would you be able to confirm whether a site has been chosen yet?

Director of Estates, Jersey Property Holdings:

No, a site has not been chosen. The approach is that, rather than choosing a site, as I said, the contractors will put forward their proposal in light of what we have said that we will need, but also in light of the emerging requirement from our changing needs, so that we are not taking a decision now on the site. We will take a decision in a couple of months' time on a proposal that includes a site, but is more about the facility that is being recommended in terms of amount of usable space, the flexibility that is being built into the space and the options for that space. So it is not about site, it is about the facility.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I do not know if Cyril Le Marquand House forms part of this discussion, but what is the status of that at the moment?

Director of Estates, Jersey Property Holdings:

It is currently under consideration as one of the sites, I understand.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Can I just ask, and this is because it was put to me by a member of the public, so I just want to put this question to bed, with regard to States of Jersey Development Company and the I.F.C. (International Finance Centre) sites, somebody contacted me to say they believe an agreement had been signed between the Government and the S.o.J.D.C. (States of Jersey Development Company) some months ago to use the I.F.C. as their office space. Can you confirm that is not the case?

Director of Estates, Jersey Property Holdings:

I am not aware of it if it is.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Is the decision going to be dictated to a degree by the length of the leases on the existing properties in Broad Street and the Parade?

Director of Estates, Jersey Property Holdings:

That clearly drives the approach and the timeline. However, if there are issues then negotiations could be had with the landlords to extend, or indeed contract if necessary, the leases. So it is a factor, but it is not the primary factor. I come back to the issue is more about the space that we need, the flexibility that we need in our future office, and those are going to be the driving issues.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

This may be something for John. Minister, please can you update the panel on the indicative funding requests totalling £12.7 million in 2020 set out in the Government Plan 2023 for the infrastructure rolling vote projects and will any of these be revised following the outbreak of COVID?

Head of Finance Business Partnering, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I can take that if you wish, Minister. There are currently proposals that seek to remove somewhere between £5 million and £8.5 million of funding from that £12.7 million allocation. That is quite a challenge and we have already seen delays due to coronavirus, where stuff has either stopped or been delayed. We do hope, however, that additional funding to support the various construction industries associated with those infrastructure works can be approved and delivered before the end

of the year if we do have those cuts so that it may work both ways. But at the minute, yes, there is a potential for deferral of or removal of some of those budgets.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Have you got a list of potential cuts? Clearly there will be a series of budgets. Would you be prepared to share those with the panel?

Head of Finance Business Partnering, Growth, Housing and Environment:

We can provide a full list. There are some big road resurfacing schemes that are potentially at risk, La Grande Route de la Côte, which was due to start in the summer, some of the other ones are ongoing, so we have either reduced scope of some of them or the length that is being resurfaced, but there are some other things that just would not have been able to happen. For instance, the micro surfacing, the micro-asphalt surfacing, the contractors and machinery coming over during the summer probably was not going to be deliverable, so we have moved that back to 2021 fairly early on in the process, as we did not think that was going to be achievable. But I can share a full list with you.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, that would be interesting, and for the Constables among us who see certain roads in our parishes in dire straits and getting regular complaints from our parishioners, so it would be useful tell them exactly when this work might take place.

Head of Finance Business Partnering, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Routine patching and so on has continued throughout the period. There has been a 2 or 3-week hiatus where it was not, but road inspections and patching work has continued. It is the major refurbishments that are funded out of the infrastructure rolling vote.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

From my point of view in St. Brelade, Route Des Genets is a shining example of a need for resurfacing and I know there is much work going on there.

Head of Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Sorry, I missed the beginning of that. The safety critical work and patching has basically continued right the way through the period and Route Des Genets remains on the list, you will be pleased to hear, for next year.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Which end of next year, if I may?

Head of Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I will double-check if we have it in the notes. I can send that to you if I do not have it now. It does not go quite as far as Route Des Genets. Sorry, I will get back to you on that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

That would be appreciated. Moving on, I would be interested to know whether you have received updated cash flow projections from LibertyBus and do you anticipate that it will require further subsidies? Perhaps you could just encapsulate in that answer the effects of COVID on the Island's bus services and whether the continued reduction in services is still prevailing.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I will hand you over to Tristen shortly because he is the bus expert, but I believe the buses were up nearly 15 per cent and doing extremely well until the outbreak of COVID-19. It was not so long ago, while promoting the S.T.P., I was encouraging people to desperately get on the bus, do not use your cars, and now we are going to the other extreme in the sense that we are advising people not to use the bus, but if they use the bus they have to take precautions. Buses are cleaned regularly and they are sanitised and people are advised to wear a mask, but the Government's contract with LibertyBus means the income fare is at risk and that is placed upon the company. However, late March 2020 revenue reduced to negligible levels, meaning that the bus service is currently no longer financially viable. Discussions were held with LibertyBus, who have undertaken to continue to provide the service open book at zero profit. Treasury financial support for the net additional costs of running buses for the existing timetable between May and June 2020 was approximately £400,000, providing this maintains the employment of all full-time staff and protects the Government from the current contractual terms that is force majeure. The contractual resolution is of a similar order of the cost for the co-payroll scheme, which did not apply to LibertyBus as a Government contractor. Going forward, revenue predictions for July, August and September are in the process of being finalised. Revenues will depend to some extent on the maximum permitted carrying capacity of a bus. At present this is 50 per cent of the number of seats on board, but it is anticipated this percentage will rise at the point that restrictions move from level 2 to level 1. Passenger numbers have increased during June but only to around one-quarter of what would be normal for early summer. Additional service relative to the rationalised timetable, not embellishing July and August, but there may be some extra operating costs if ad hoc duplicate journeys need to be operated to cater for passenger demand, particularly if a significant number of visitors materialise during the school holidays. Otherwise the bus service will continue to run at a level equivalent to around 70 per cent of the winter 2019/2020 daily scheduled journeys. I do not know if you have anything to add to that, Tristen.

Head of Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment:

There is not much to add to that, Minister. You covered nearly everything there.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can I just ask for clarification on the late-night buses? I was asked yesterday whether there will be any consideration given to extending what is now the last bus service at 10.30 p.m. to a later one. I talk specifically with the knowledge of how St. Aubin works, given that pubs and restaurants are now opening until later hours and buses running after 11.00 p.m. would be extremely helpful.

Head of Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment:

We are in discussion with LibertyBus on that at the moment and we are looking at what we can do. At the moment they are a bit uncomfortable with running the later night services when the pubs are turning out because of the social distancing requirements on the bus. What they are finding is when the bus stops are busy people are trying to pile on the bus because they can see spaces and they are not respecting the social distancing and so that is making the situation difficult for the drivers. So they prefer people to plan their journeys a little bit more carefully and they have put out advice either via Twitter or via the website on that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I fully empathise with that situation. Possibly consideration could be given to putting fairly bold signs up in the bus shelters indicating when the last bus leaves because that appears to have been an issue. Just going on to the bus stops, following the loss of the bus stop at Broad Street, please could you update the panel on the progress that has been made to arrange an alternative bus stop for numbers 19 and 5 at Library Place?

Head of Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment:

At the moment we are unable to accommodate that within the schedules. It is only those 2 particular buses, so it is a bus every half an hour from the 5 and the 19 that come through, so those passengers at present would be expected to walk into town, as to the passengers on the number 1 or the number 15 or any other service that terminates directly at the station. They just happen to be a nominee that passes through; it is not people transferring from the station on to those.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It is a question about my parish. Tristen, as I am sure you are aware, I have raised some issues about bus stops on St. Lawrence main road with your staff and I was just wondering how work is progressing on that because I know that the 2020 budget, they had decided they were not going to do anything, but I am trying to push for that to be in the 2021 budget, so I was just wondering how that is working.

Head of Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I will have to get back to you outside this meeting. I am not certain of where we are currently with budgets going forward. Obviously, as John has been explaining, there has been some chopping and changing of bus budgets. However, if it is on the list, we will get to it as soon as the money is available.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Money is a constant merry-go-round, so how does that system work? How do we try to make sure that you do bring these things up?

Head of Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment:

The bus shelters are funded by a number of different means, partly by planning obligation agreements with developers, also with the profit that we receive from LibertyBus, or not profit, the excess funding. Of course that is going to disappear, so we do not really know where we are at the moment in terms of that money going forward. We also use the money from the carpark trading fund we receive to improve accessibility to the bus stops and support those kinds of works. Again, with the reduction in that this year I am not quite sure where we are going to be with budgets going forward. But I will get back to you with something more concrete on that. I am really just trying to describe the uncertainties around that programme at the moment.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Of course one of the issues with some of these bus stops - and it is not just in the Parish of St. Lawrence, but others as well - in this case was your officers had agreed that they were unsafe and so when safety is an issue, surely budget has to be made available. Regardless of where you would prefer the money to come from, surely safety has to come first.

Head of Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment:

We do not provide any bus stops where we felt it was unsafe. However, it sometimes occurs that the situation of them is less than ideal. We basically have an evaluation process, which helps prioritise which ones occur. Sometimes there are bus shelters that people question why that is and that is because of the planning obligation process just provides the opportunity to site a bus shelter in that because there is a development there so that is done to grow patronage or it might seem out of order but it does go through an assessment process, which is recorded.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Going back to Broad Street, as you can imagine, Deputy for St. Helier 3 and 4, where is number 19 and number 5 going through? I have received dozens of emails, telephone calls. Only yesterday I had 2 emails, and it is an issue for special elder people to go to the central bus stop. I do appreciate

others need to do, but it was an arrangement and people used to come to town without taking cars. I have been told: "If I need to walk, I will take a car." My question: for the last 3 weeks I understood that it was a negotiation with the LibertyBus for a possibility to have a bus stop at the Library Place. Is it still going on or have we closed this by now?

Head of Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment:

It remains under ongoing discussion. It is really about the prioritisation of resources. If we were to run a dedicated service around that loop you are effectively talking about taking a service somewhere else out of the network. The bus company only has the money at the moment that we provide it to work within because the fare revenue is not anywhere near covering the costs.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

But how much more expensive? I just need to understand, how much more expensive to have a bus stop at the Library Place than it was at the Broad Street? Yes, it would be extra 2, 5 minutes?

Head of Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment:

On every service throughout the day, depending which ones you run through there. At the moment, within the resources that the bus company are deploying, it would be disruptive to the current timetables they are running.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The road is only closed while we have the COVID emergency, so the intention, as soon as COVID is declared clear, Broad Street will reopen again.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Do you have an indication when it will happen? Sorry, Chairman, somebody really asked. Last question: do you have indication when it would be open?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

As soon as COVID is declared clear and then the road will open again.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

What does that mean, when COVID is declared clear? This could go on for years, for all we know.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

As soon as I am advised it is safe to reopen then more than happy to reopen. We were looking roughly at September-ish, August/September, but I am in the hands of people who know more than

I regarding COVID-19. Obviously I rely on expert advice from the Health Department plus our own health and safety team.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Would you agree that while the one metre recommended social distancing is in place it would be wise that it remain closed?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

At the moment, yes. There is a pinch-point around Charing Cross where, when things are busy, you can see 30 or 40 people sometimes waiting to cross on a zebra crossing there all bunched up, so that is one of the pinch-points in both senses of the word that causes some of the problem. Obviously we do not want people literally bunching up. Likewise with the bus stop in Broad Street, people complain to me: "But we have dozens and dozens of old-age pensioners waiting to jump on the bus." Sadly, that is what we are trying to avoid. We do not want huge queues of people suddenly piling on the bus and people get upset if they are left behind, but sadly this is the world we are living in at the moment because of COVID-19. We like to keep people moving and get people home safely.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Moving on to the Esplanade, the bus shelter at the upturned boat, La Frégate, that was due to be back in February and it has been made and sponsored by a third party. It was suggested that a special mainland team would come across to do the job. It seems surprising that local craftsmen cannot erect a bus shelter. What is the status of that at the moment?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I have regular correspondence from one of your parishioners. I have had one this morning regarding that very subject, but, Tristen, would you like to take that?

Head of Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment:

The intention there in that prominent location, because we have some sponsorship for the shelter, is to have something slightly more upmarket than the standard shelter. The manufacturer that has designed and built it has basically said that they would want to put it up. However, you are right, so I believe that the engineers are in consultation with them about having them video it being put together in their work yard and then sending it over. We will look at using the video or something like that to make sure that we did it in the correct sequence to their instructions. I would have to get an update where we are with that, but my understanding is we still intend to deliver that this summer.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Could you please advise the panel what effects the pandemic may have on the carpark trading fund?
Do you have any cash projections on that at this stage?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

“Trashed” is the word. Carpark trading fund.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I could sharpen my question up and say do you anticipate having to raise car parking charges to cover the shortfall?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

You will recall, Chair, I suggested that a few months back and my ribs are still healing. I had a good kicking over that one, but there you go. That is the way it is at the moment.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Would you be prepared to try again in the light of the pandemic?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Obviously we have made the carparks free, as you are aware, because people self-isolating could not get to their cars, so people park free of charge in the multi-storeys and on road. Also we freed up Patriotic Street carpark for our colleagues in Health, who were literally at the sharp end of things. But as of 1st July we start charging again, but the effect on the trading, the loss of the income between April and June is anticipated to be at least £1.82 million of a typical annual budget of £6.1 million, basically between £600,000 and £610,000 per month losses. Parking charges were reintroduced on 1st July. It will take some time to evaluate the post-COVID travel patterns. Commuting traffic, where drivers paid to park all day, forms a large part of the Jersey carpark income. Without understanding how this has changed, it is not possible to make accurate projections at the moment. It is difficult, but the team are still evaluating that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What is your view with regard to putting in place dedicated permanent parking arrangements for hospital staff at Patriotic Street?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I would not have a problem with them having their own dedicated parking, but basically it is extremely expensive, multi-storey carparks, as you are aware, running and maintaining them. But we at Infrastructure are not really in a position to subsidise the Health Department. If there was some transfer from Treasury then I am sure arrangements could be made but with the pandemic, when it

was at its height, we had permits for people at the General Hospital to park up. It was not just doctors and nursing staff, this included engineers, cleaners, you name it. There were 800 permits handed out or thereabouts. As I say, we are more than happy to help out during an emergency, but it is not really for Infrastructure to subsidise the Health Department, but more than happy to make arrangements if they wish to pay *en bloc* or via the Health Department or whatever. There is a section of the lower level of Patriotic Street that is reserved for Health and visitors et cetera.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

A couple of questions. I found it interesting when I applied for a parking permit for my electric vehicle that I received 7 days' worth of free parking or half-priced parking as a result, because it turns out that you need to apply from the immediate date of registration of your vehicle. I can tell you about the conversation that took place with the person involved at car parks. It was not very pleasant because it became clear that they said: "This is a way of making sure not too many people gain from it." Do you believe that this is an appropriate way to run the electric vehicle half-price parking and, if so, how do you think it will incentivise people to purchase electric vehicles, given that you do not get a year's parking at all?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We did originally. First of all, well done for having an electric car. Tristen, can you take this one?

Head of Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Obviously as part of the Strong Start programme this is all up for renewal with the Carbon Neutral Strategy. It is important that the carpark trading fund does generate enough funds to pay for the maintenance of the infrastructure and also to support things like concessionary bus fares for people with disability. As electric cars become more prevalent and the price point starts to equal that of traditional combustion vehicles, then of course the amount of subsidy you provide to them will have to reduce. We are not there yet. We provide one year of free parking and then after that you get half-price parking and that is a very generous offer over the lifetime of the vehicle.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It was suggested by the person at the carpark that it was designed this way to minimise losses to the department. Would you agree with that?

Head of Transport, Growth, Housing and Environment:

What we have done with it, we used to do it for low-emissions vehicles, and as they became more prevalent we have had to reduce the number and the amount that is offered to them. The car parking trading fund still has to generate enough to cover its costs. It is natural, as there are more and more electric vehicles, the criteria become stricter. But at the moment I would still say that it is a generous

scheme and it is one that has had political approval from previous Ministers, but it will be reviewed as part of the Carbon Neutral and Sustainable Transport Strong Start.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Just on that issue, probably for the Minister, it has become clear over the last few questions that the department relies on the carpark trading fund and other variable sources of income such as the profits on the buses in order to deliver quite a lot in terms of maintenance, upgrading of bus stops, safety of bus stops. Do you think this now, as we have seen this year, will be hit, the carpark trading fund, these variable income levels will be hit quite substantially? Do you think it is time the department was put on a more certain footing with regard to the money it has, particularly for maintenance and safety?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I would like that, yes. All departments are going to take a hit this year, but I would like to minimise that and make sure that the essential things are carried out within the Island and within our budgets. But as you quite rightly say, the carpark trading fund does fund what I would call a lot of the smaller projects like bus shelters and minor road repairs et cetera and general improvements in the Island. But it has taken a terrific hit and obviously it has to cover the salaries of parking control officers and general maintenance of the multi-storey carparks and the open carparks, which all need maintaining. But we are anticipating a hit. The team are trying to narrow down exactly where we are going at the moment with that and how long it will take to recover these funds. At the moment obviously we have lost the best part of 4 months' revenue so that will take a while to recoup, so we have to cut our cloth very carefully and obviously non-essentials will be phased out, but there are still a lot of essential things that I would like to see carried out.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Last question, very quickly. You mentioned you would take a hit from the trading fund. Do you think we may see rises in parking fees or an attempt to go back to the extended parking hours that we saw last year?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I cannot rule that out. I would say I hope not because, having just come out of COVID, an awful lot of people are very short of money and to hit them with parking charges at the moment would be a little unfair. Possibly down the road some way that may be something that we have to do, but I want to keep things as they are for the time being.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Could you update the panel on the indicative funding request totalling £1.5 million in 2020 set out in the Government Plan for the drainage and sewer extension project? I know you are keen to get as much of the Island connected as possible. Is this being revised following the outbreak of COVID?

Head of Finance Business Partnering, Growth, Housing and Environment:

At the moment, current proposals seek to remove £1.3 million of that £1.5 million in support of cash flow et cetera for the States. That will leave a very small project of about £200,000 to be delivered this year and we are also doing planning work to undertake to deliver schemes in future years, assuming that funding remains in the programme, which at the moment I believe it is. The 2 foul sewer extension schemes that were planned for 2020 were Charriere du Bourg and Boulivot de Bas, which are not going ahead now, but longer term that funding remains. The deliverability and funding this year have knocked those 2 on the head at the moment.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I mentioned previously that while I am in the States, it is my desire to see at least 98 per cent of all homes in Jersey on mains drains and hopefully mains water. Obviously that has taken a knock at the moment, which means I will have to stand again, unfortunately. We have the new sewerage treatment works which will be coming online in the not too distant future and works are progressing well with that, enabling works, and the construction at Bellozanne is on schedule.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The first tower pumping station, similarly there was a £650,000 request for that. Is that being affected in any way?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Not to my knowledge, no. I believe that is going ahead as planned. That takes the main flow from east and west and pumps up to Bellozanne and then new pumps are being installed there in a general upgrade, so that is going ahead.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Is that in connection with the new S.T.W. (Sewage Treatment Works)?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That will provide for the new S.T.W. but the old pumps were getting past their sell-by date. They have provided excellent service so it is all part of the upgrade, yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The bridging Island Plan, as proposed, sets out under the housing needs and migration policy section the policy on migration will be decoupled from the Island Plan review. Please can you share your thoughts on this? Do you think it will gain ministerial and wider political support that the bridging Island Plan states is required?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, that is a difficult one; it is a tricky one. Do you want to go for that one, Tim?

Director of Estates, Jersey Property Holdings:

I will have a go, but the Island Plan, again it is clearly the responsibility of the Minister for the Environment and I understand that he has had a private briefing session to discuss the proposed changes. The need for and challenges of delivering homes is being established through an objective assessment of housing requirement, which is being worked up with Statistics Jersey and with other Government departments, SP3 as well as the Housing Department. We understand that migration is a hot topic and that the methodology to inform the planning assumptions continues to evolve and it will be a political debate and discussion to effect.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There have been a range of migration scenarios, modelling, to establish exactly where we are going that have been used to determine a new planning assumption, but as Tim has said, this obviously is being led by the Minister for the Environment.

The Connétable of Grouville:

It was a political question really. What we want to know is what the Minister's view is and whether we should set a maximum number of inward migration per year so that we can work out how many houses we need, which will be built on Property Holdings' land.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

So that is holding my feet to the fire, as they say. How many people are too many people? We are probably about 108,000 to 109,000 people at the moment that we know of and we are getting very close to the point where I would say that we need to really draw the line now.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Minister, in this vein, one particular property in my parish is often questioned and we have had discussions. Could you tell me what the status of the old Quennevais School site is at the moment? I understand the new school will be moving in in September, so we have a large site there which is ripe for housing development. What are your thoughts on that? We discussed it at a meeting some time ago but I have heard nothing more.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is very much up in the air at the moment. Tim?

Director of Estates, Jersey Property Holdings:

Absolutely. You are right, Constable, it continues to be a possibility for housing development. Again, there was a call for sites and the opportunity for a public consultation on what people might like to see there and that is being considered at the moment. There are also emerging requirements from the future of a number of other projects around the Island, but the bottom line is it is a valuable site. Notwithstanding the fact it is in your parish, it does have a strategic importance to the Island as a whole and under the new One Government approach to the estate the Corporate Asset Management Board at the R.S.G. (Regeneration Steering Group) will have the opportunity to look at all the competing requirements to make sure that the most valuable and the most cost-effective one is selected.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Are there any other questions from panel members? Deputy Morel.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

In the same vein, 2 properties which are often talked about, would you be able to give us an update on where we are with the La Folie site. Are there any moves or plans there, and also Piquet House, which last I heard was going to be used for the Family Court or Family Service?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, Piquet House has been on the cards for some time. That was going to be sold off several years ago, but was stopped by a proposition from Deputy Young when he was first in the States. He brought a proposition to say that it should remain in States ownership and that was accepted. So we have had lots of temporary uses, various associations have used it, namely the Poppy Appeal have used it on a regular basis, and a few other people for exhibitions. It is still scheduled to be, as you quite rightly point out, meeting rooms for courts and family liaison. Regarding La Folie, that is not ours. That comes under Ports of Jersey and I would dearly love to see that building restored, opened as maybe a restaurant and a pub. Sadly, I am old enough to remember it running as a pub. Last time I was in that pub I had an enormous fight. Luckily I was working on the Bergerac series and it was all fake. I am teetotal; I am sipping on orange juice here. It is a wonderful building. I would love to see it reopen for some facility as a restaurant or put to a very good use. It does seem a shame to see the building lying idle, I agree with you.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Minister, in that vein, and it may be one coming under Ports again, the Sea Cadet Headquarters, are you aware of what the status of that is?

Director of Estates, Jersey Property Holdings:

The headquarters continues to be a source of concern. It is something that we were trying desperately to sort out in February and March. We were saved somewhat by the fact of the virus meant that the Sea Cadets' activities were curtailed, but as we start to emerge from the lockdown and the constraints of the virus we are very aware of the need to find somewhere for the Sea Cadets to go and something needs to be done to their premises. In the longer term with regard for the remodelling and regeneration of the Fort, it is unlikely that the Sea Cadets will be able to stay in situ and so we are trying to find an alternative location either in the short term before we find a permanent location for them or indeed in the long term to find a permanent location for them. We are working with the Justice and Home Affairs Department, who are responsible for the Sea Cadets, and the Sea Cadets themselves to try to identify a suitable location.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I do not know if there are any further questions from the panel. Nothing showing, so Minister and your team, I therefore thank you for your attendance this morning, thank you for your answers, very much appreciated. You have alluded to a few of the questions being answered later in writing so we look forward to having that. We look forward to meeting once again at the next quester. Thank you very much indeed.