



Public Accounts Committee

Estate Management /

Performance Management

Witness: Director General, Customer and Local Services

Monday, 10th May 2021

Panel:

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier (Chair)

Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin (Vice-Chair)

Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville

Senator T.A. Vallois

Mr. G. Phipps

Dr. H. Miles

Mr. P. van Bodegom

Mr. A. Lane

Ms. L. Pamment, Comptroller and Auditor General

Witnesses:

Mr. I. Burns, Director General, Customer and Local Services

Ms. S. Le Sueur, Group Director, Customer Services

[14:04]

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier (Chair):

Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the public hearing with the director general for Customer and Local Services. I am welcoming everybody in our first in a year face-to-face public hearing. As

you can see we are in the States Chamber. This is to make sure we are meeting COVID guidelines. I am Deputy Inna Gardiner, chair of Public Accounts Committee, and I will ask members of the committee to introduce themselves.

Connétable K Shenton-Stone of St. Martin (Vice-Chair):

Karen Shenton-Stone, vice-chair of the Public Accounts Committee.

Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville:

Constable John Le Maistre, States Member of the P.A.C. (Public Accounts Committee).

Mr. G. Phipps:

Graham Phipps, lay member.

Dr. H. Miles:

Helen Miles, lay member.

Mr. P. van Bodegom:

Paul van Bodegom, lay member.

Connétable R. Vibert of St. Peter:

Richard Vibert, Constable, member.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Senator Tracey Vallois, member of the P.A.C.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

And we have Adrian Lane joining us online through Teams. Also we have in attendance ...

Comptroller and Auditor General:

Lynn Pamment, Comptroller and Auditor General.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Good afternoon, panel. I am Ian Burns. I am the director general for Customer and Local Services.

Group Director, Customer Services:

Sophie Le Sueur, group director for Customer Services.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

We will start with part one of our public hearing. It is estate management and I would like to ask to what extent were you consulted on the public estates strategy 2021-2035?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

The public estates strategy came to the leadership team a number of times. I think the first time was in 2019 and again furthermore in 2020. As a member of E.L.T. (Executive Leadership Team) I was therefore involved in understanding the development of that strategy. As a department that has effectively a very small portfolio, probably less involved than others in terms of development of it. But in terms of the strategy itself, I am fully supportive of a much better approach to dealing with the public estate. I think there have been plenty of reports over the years from C. and A.G. (Comptroller and Auditor General) and the like around the estate strategy end. Pulling it together into a more corporate landlord model I think is a step forward, and in the same vein as the overall OneGov structure to have an estate strategy that pulls together all the property and has that better management and better approach to dealing with our significant assets in that area.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Thank you, and I think we do all appreciate how important it is to have a strategy that will operate all our objectives. Was there any specific input that you provided into the estates strategy?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Not especially, no. From my perspective I am supportive of it and was happy to see it finally get through COVID and burst into life at the end of last year. It has been a while but it has been a very important step forward in this area because the public do take an active interest in matters of property and therefore to have a way forward over the next 15 years or so, hopefully we will start building confidence in the public that we are able to deal with those assets in an appropriate way. From my perspective, we have a very small portfolio. The portfolio has been pretty much a clear what was going to happen to most of it because we have been waiting on a new office building, which would solve a lot of our issues. Really from that perspective that was my main primary influence on the strategy, just making sure that I was supportive of a corporate approach.

Mr. A. Lane:

In answer to our written questions you stated that you believe the strategy is fit for purpose. Do you see any issues or undisclosed opportunities with any of the properties you utilise that are not addressed in the strategy currently?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I think the strategy sets out a political oversight and also a new body to have oversight of the estates portfolio as it develops. As well as getting all the synergies and benefits of having a centralised

property service and landlord service for departments, it also does create the ability to have discussions around properties when they are vacant, how we dispose of them, how we use them, how we use them in a joined-up way. So from that perspective, I think it is a good step forward and, from my angle, with my responsibilities, we have quite a small estate. The major buildings are Philip Le Feuvre House and Huguenot House in La Motte Street and they have been talked about as a possible location for our central office to Government since 2015, if not before. The fact that we now have a destination allows us to be able to move forward from that perspective. The other properties, like the library, are obviously fit for purpose and in a good place. We are doing what we can to use them even better as a community asset. I am very comfortable with the strategy, very comfortable with the core parts of it and the fact that we will have a better way forward to look at how we dispose of assets like, for example, Philip Le Feuvre House and so on, and how they use going forward. That will be discussed by the Corporate Asset Management Board and then the Regeneration Steering Group. It is a good step forward.

Mr. A. Lane:

Just leading on from that, how frequently have you met with your colleagues online over the last 12 months? How often are you scheduled to meet over the next 12 months?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

In relation to this activity?

Mr. A. Lane:

Yes.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I was thrown slightly by the question about online; obviously we are meeting online with everything at the moment, although it is nice to be here today. In terms of this, the Corporate Asset Management Board, as a small player we are not part of a regular attendance on that board. But we will be called in as and when there are things that we need to get involved in. Our efforts perhaps being more focused on the new office accommodation site and that building and making sure that there is the voice of customer in the mix, in terms of that development.

Mr. A. Lane:

Just to ask again: over the next 12 months with reference to the new One Gov headquarters do you have regular meetings booked in?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, there is an office accommodation board and that is at least every month. It has been more frequent than that just recently but I think it is every month.

Mr. A. Lane:

Just moving on. Question 4: in your written response you advised that all C.L.S. (Customer and Local Services) activities, including staff at Philip Le Feuvre House, will be moving to the OneGov headquarters building with exception of the library, which is understandable, and the Office of the Superintendent Registrar. Is there a feasibility study for how the properties will be repurposed or sold in anticipation of C.L.S. activities being relocated into the new OneGov headquarters when it is completed in 2024?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

In the draft bridging Island Plan that was just put out for consultation, there is reference to La Motte Street and that site could be used for affordable homes. It is used there as an example. At the moment, there is not a clear plan for that site but clearly in the draft bridging Island Plan there is a direction of travel mentioned. I am just glad we are not having to be in the building while it is being built or rebuilt, as was originally suggested back in 2015, because that would be very difficult to operate a service. We will have a very clean move and transition from those buildings into the new office buildings. I am sure before that happens there will be a clear plan for La Motte Street and disposal and/or development. That should be overseen by the Corporate Asset Management Board. I am comfortable from that perspective that those decisions now have a vehicle where they can be made and of course those property decisions anyway come to the States. There is a good political oversight prior to getting to that stage in terms of the direction of travel. Just one thing, just to correct, the Office of the Superintendent Registrar, it is the Civil Ceremonies that will not be coming to the new office block. The rest of the administration will be.

Mr. A. Lane:

When the lease expires on Eagle House and the property vacated, how will the fixtures and fittings be decanted?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I think we have a repairing lease. Yes. So we would repair the property and remove the fixtures and fittings that we need to in the normal way, using removal companies, et cetera. If they are still able to be used I am sure we will use them. If not, I am sure we will dispose of them or donate them. The whole building is now used by government. Our colleagues in Health and Community Services use the other floors. We took that on as an initial 3-year term, I think. The services we run out of that building are around Back to Work and we will be making sure that those services can operate

in the new office accommodation. There will not be a need for Eagle House to operate in that same way.

Mr. A. Lane:

That is Eagle House and Philip Le Feuvre House, all of the staff from those 2 premises and Huguenot House, they are all going to go into OneGov?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

That is right.

[14:15]

Mr. A. Lane:

Have you made provision for terminating your existing leases?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I think we have not yet given notice because I think we have a while to go yet. That is on our register definitely and we will make sure that we are joined up. The overall office accommodation programme has got all the leases of all the properties that are going to the new building, so that is under control to give appropriate notice. In our case I think it comes after 3 years; I think it is 2023.

Mr. A. Lane:

Are there financial obligations for when you exit these leases?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I think it is just a give notice and make sure to make good and repair. I think that is it.

Mr. A. Lane:

In line with the lease.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes.

Mr. A. Lane:

Do you have a contingency for mitigating costs for these ultimate costs?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I am not sure they have been budgeted for as yet. I can double check on that for you and come back to you, but from memory I am not sure if they have been. I do not think it is very much. It was already office accommodation when we moved in. I think we maybe have erected some temporary rooms, as it were, to allow us to see people on a confidential basis but I think we did not do a lot to the room. Sophie, I think helped us entirely move in there. Was there anything else?

Group Director, Customer Services:

No, it was all quite simple. Just taking down a few partitions, and we knew at the time that we would give it back as we took it on. So it is not major structural work at all.

Mr. A. Lane:

As you say, Sophie, it is simple partitions. Are there any air-conditioning units that have gone in there?

Group Director, Customer Services:

No, it is as it was when we leased it. There is air-conditioning but it is in the condition that it was under the lease.

Mr. A. Lane:

Question 5. You told us that Jersey Property Holdings are revising the condition surveys of 2008 on all the properties that you utilise. There are potentially several risks with a survey that is quite out of date. You could find several items within these buildings with that duration of time that started to manifest. When will the new surveys be updated and completed?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I think J.P.H. (Jersey Property Holdings) are setting up a programme to work through those condition surveys for buildings that are obviously going to be around. For that reason I think the buildings we are currently using are not at the front of that list albeit we have been operating ourselves obviously a difficult balance between investing in the properties like Philip Le Feuvre House knowing that at any point since 2015 we might be a new site and therefore we have had to make some investment decisions which, with the benefit of hindsight, made the right choices but things around like air-conditioning; replacing all the air-conditioning at Philip Le Feuvre House when you might not be there in 2 or 3 years' time it would be a significant expense. So we have been able to try and make do and try and do our best to maintain a good atmosphere, a good airflow for colleagues, and for customers while at the same time balancing off the risks should the air-conditioning break down. Hopefully it will keep going for a little while longer.

Mr. A. Lane:

Do you have measures in place should these go wrong in the immediate future?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, we have some contingency for the air-conditioning. But the actual system itself is end of life in terms of getting parts and the like. We can regulate temperature by opening windows and portable heaters, and the like. We will do just that. Our main focus would be making sure the ground floor would still be fed with appropriate air-conditioning, heating and cooling.

Mr. A. Lane:

You stated that there is a maintenance programme for essential repairs on Phillip Le Feuvre House and Huguenot House. How is this cost managed and market tested?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

We have a budget earmarked for maintenance and, as I say in the way I have just described, I would not describe it as a proactive comprehensive maintenance programme. We are just keeping the building going but at least now we have a date hopefully by which time we will be moving out. So we will be able to make, again, some decisions around things which are what we spend money on. But it is generally keeping the building going. It is in good nick in terms of an office location. There are things we would have done if we were staying there longer of course. But we are managing our expenditure. 2020 was a bit less than 2019. I imagine that 2021 would be somewhere in between those 2 this year. But it is all pretty straightforward in terms of there are no big decisions to be made. The big decision is around moving to an office block.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I am looking at the disability legislation. Based on the survey information that you received from HLG Associates what is required to the properties to meet the legislation?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

We have had reports from HLG and we have also had some reports from Liberate. They are 2 different sorts of reports but they do produce very similar information.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Would you be able to send the Liberate report because we have requested, not from you specifically, but if you can send?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, so the Liberate report perhaps also covers things to do with colleague training and development. So recognising that you can do quite a lot to help improve access and the experience

of somebody with a disability through making colleagues aware of that impact and how they can just change their behaviour to make it much easier for somebody to access a service. Liberate, that also comes under the disability strategy, which is the Minister for Social Security. Obviously I am aware of that in a bit more detail. I think we have had about 20 buildings done so far under the Liberate banner. That is funded in part from the disability strategy work. That does cover wider softer observations but it also picks up some of the things the HLG report covers. For example, Phillip Le Feuvre House, the report from HLG talked about things like the lifts are not big enough, that the stairs are not wide enough, and the like. So fairly significant structural items, which would of course be very expensive to do for short-term measures. There are some big challenging things in there. It also covers things like parking as well and access to the buildings, whether it be the library, whether it be Philip Le Feuvre House. So it does cover some fairly major things. From my perspective it is slightly trickier to get that investment balance right given that the Philip Le Feuvre building should not be used too much longer. But for the library, of course, it is very different because there are no plans to move that and therefore there could be some things we could do to make a difference. That is in both those reports. There are things there that we will be looking at and working with J.P.H. over to consider how we can make those improvements. But some of them are very easy to do and some of them are more structural and more expensive, and perhaps will take longer to get through. And probably planning and all sorts.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

How are we with the requirements of the legislation; the compliance with the legislation?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I believe we have done everything we can within reason to comply with the legislation. Where we have taken on a new building, like at Communicare, for example, we have moved the branch library to a great new site in the west of the Island. Where we have moved in there we have clearly fitted a new ramp, automatic doors, disabled toilets and so on. We have done moving into that and being able to, with the support of the Communicare team, make changes there to comply with some very basics but some important steps to make that property even more accessible. So that is a good example of where we are mindful of the Discrimination Disability Act and are making steps and taking steps to try and make improvements.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

What about the library?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

The library has got some good access already and that is a positive. There is some good feedback about parking and dropping people off, on which side of the road you are on and so on. But there

are other improvements we can make to do with signage and the like that would improve people's experience. There are some things in the staff area that perhaps are more structural issues like columns being in the wrong place, not enough width or the wrong height for kitchen facilities and the like. There are other things in that report that are more complicated as well. So we will be looking at them. We are looking at this collection of issues and will have oversight of this through ... in C.L.S. we have a quarterly risk meeting, which is my leadership team oversight of a number of issues, particularly risk and also around health and safety. We will be monitoring progress on here and helping make decisions in this area in terms of what ones we are going to do and which ones we are not able to do and why.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

What anticipated cost implications for at least planned work for 2021 and 2022?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

At this moment in time we do not have a plan of all these issues because I think the Office of the Superintendent Registrar one was only just completed in March. So we are looking at them all. They have all been done in the last 6 months for ... sorry, the Liberate ones and 2 of the HLG ones have been done in the last 6 months. We are going to look at them in the round and come up with a plan.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

When do you think the plan will be ready approximately?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I would hope in the next quarter. We will need to work with colleagues from J.P.H. who of course operate some of those buildings for us. But where we can do things quickly we will do.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

If I understood correctly, just double check that I am at the right page. You have done survey, you know what are the problems but the plan is still under development to address to make the compliance and the plan might be ready within the next 4, 6, whatever months.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I would say next 3 months because some of them are clearly ... I am not an expert but replacing lifts would be very expensive and given we are moving out of the building you can almost automatically say that is not worth it. Other things may be borderline; that may be worth it, that may not be worth it. That is what I was trying to say. There are some things that are so obvious and almost free that we just do them anyway. There is a range of recommendations that we will need to work through

and make that assessment because we will need to justify why we have not done something if it was a recommendation. We need to therefore give it that consideration that you would expect us to give it. That is what we will be doing.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

As a Public Accounts Committee, our concern is about the risk that we are facing not complying with legislation and because legislation came into power in September 2020 we would like to see a plan going forward. I understand it is in progress. Apart from the move into the OneGov office building headquarters is there any other long-term project under your directorship, which will require land or property to operate?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Everything is looked after by J.P.H. apart from Phillip Le Feuvre House and Huguenot House.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

But do you have any other needs from your department that will require ...?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

The Communicare library, we have a lease there for 5 years so we will want to understand what is happening perhaps with the Les Quennevais building out west. To consider that, whether that is something that ... it has been talked about in various guises. Obviously now it has been used to de-camp Overdale but if it was going to become a community centre, for example, it might therefore be a good place for the library. As it is right now, where we have the library located, is very positive and the feedback we have been getting is very positive as well. We will look to see but the library would be the remaining one. The Office of the Superintendent Registrar building is less than perfect but of course we have a fiscal stimulus bid to develop and refurbish Howard Davis Hall. So that will become an excellent site for wedding venues and other services. We have some things there that are moving along in that sense. But again the O.S.R. (Office of the Superintendent Registrar) will end up being part of the One Government Building.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

What are the requirements for the crematorium?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

The crematorium, there are discussions taking place around the options of the crematorium. Obviously the crematorium is where it is. I know there have been comments around the worry about the garden, for example, moving. There is no intention at all to move the garden.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

No intention?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes. Whereas having services take place next to the hospital during construction, that is probably less than ideal.

[14:30]

We have set up a service users group, which includes members of the clergy and funeral directors and so on. We will be working using them as well as working through some options around what we could do in the meantime or what we could do for this period to try and give the public a good service while at the same time having the hospital built. There are quite a few options and we are having those issues looked at for discussion with the political oversight group.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Just a follow-up question with regards to the 2 assets of the Social Security Fund. Is there a recharging mechanism to the Social Security Fund for any works that J.P.H. carry out on it?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

J.P.H. do not carry out any work on those buildings. That is why we have listed them as slightly different. So the department is responsible for the maintenance of those buildings. If I knew in 2015 that in 2021 we would still be in those buildings, I think we would have transferred that then and there. But it was always about to happen, always about to happen, that we were going to be having a new building. Again, J.P.H. have got other things to worry about right now so we will carry on with the maintenance for that building until it closes and we move to the new One Government building. From that perspective, J.P.H. are not involved in day-to-day maintenance although of course we do work with them and get their advice all the time. There is no rent paid by anybody in that building to the Social Security Fund and there is no cross charge to J.P.H.

Mr. A. Lane:

I have one more question. You are aware that COVID-19, the last 12 months has caused impact on materials and labour in the building industry and that we are experiencing inflation on these items; have you planned for this going forward for the properties that you currently occupy? You are in those properties until the end of 2024.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

To be honest, I do not think that we have, apart from probably allowing for inflation, which has been forecast by the F.P.P. (Fiscal Policy Panel). We would include allowing inflation. That is about it really. We have a basic programme of maintenance and repairs and I do not think there is much in there that will dramatically change that budget. With the Howard Davis Hall redevelopment that we are going through. We have costed that very recently of course and therefore that would take into account current pricing and we hope to get that completed by the end of the year. Hopefully that will not be affected by the scenario that you have painted.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Another follow-up question on the maintenance. How do you manage the cost of the maintenance that is in your portfolio? Do you do market tested for the cost periodically?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

We use suppliers from the government supply list and if it is over appropriate levels to get quotes we would get quotes. But most of our maintenance is very small and with people who use the building, who know the building, and from that perspective we do not really need to go out and test maybe a few thousand pounds' repairs for that or a maintenance system for a security system, and so on. The scale of what we have to operate does not really require me to get quotes for single issue items. If we had a big item, of course we would.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

What is the threshold?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Three quotes over £25,000 up to £100,000. So we would follow that if we were spending that sort of money. But if we are spending that sort of money probably you would be asking me why I am spending that sort of money if the building is going to close in 2 years.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Absolutely, yes. You mentioned that you are in conversation with J.P.H. about the new condition survey because that had all be done in 2008 and obviously now it is the new one too.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, so J.P.H. are, I think, setting off a programme of condition surveys across the estate.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

What is setting up timescales?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

They are starting to, as I understand it, and you may know more than me, they are going to start to pick up and have completed condition surveys across the major properties that are still being used across government. I get the impression that is what they are going to be doing. My point is they are unlikely to do one in that context for Philip Le Feuvre House. They are more likely to do one around what it could be used for rather than its condition as an office.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Have you been given any timescales as director general?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I cannot recall how long the condition surveys will take but I am sure that we can help get J.P.H. to get that to you.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

It is connecting me to another. When we question about Corporate Asset Management Board, our understanding was that director generals will be on board contributing from their point of view the needs and what is happening and kind of get the knowledge together to put the right priorities into the corporate asset management plan. Your department is serving almost all possible departments that we can think about - Education, Social Security, Home Affairs director generals - and you said that you are not a permanent member on the Corporate Asset Management Board. Why is it and what are your thoughts about it?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I am relaxed about that. We have a very small portfolio of property and we know what we are doing with it, as we have already covered in this hearing today. Therefore, there are bigger departments with significant portfolios who will be part of the Corporate Asset Management Board and our focus has been on the new office building, which of course is important for the future services we will be offering and the location of those services. That has been our focus. If we realise that we should be part of that then it is not a problem for us to attend. But again it is just at this moment in time the Corporate Asset Management Board has prioritised its membership and we have prioritised our time as well. I am very trusting of colleagues who know more about property matters and have got bigger property portfolios, that the right people are attending the Corporate Asset Management Board and that we will attend, as I say, our specific issues. If we see that is not working, then we will change that. But that is as it is today.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

We will finish with estate management; if there are any more questions on estate management?
We will move now to the performance management.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Your target operating model for your department was fully implemented on 1st January 2020. As per your business plan, the efficiencies in 2020 were made through implementing phase 1 and 2. Could you advise what those efficiencies were please?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Customer and Local Services target operating model was completed in 2 phases. I am pleased that we completed it in 2019. We did that professionally and quickly because I wanted to make sure that colleagues who were affected would have the smallest amount of uncertainty they possibly could. As already described, the colleagues in C.L.S. deal with the full range of Islanders but, in particular, we do support Islanders who are in vulnerable situations. To have a protracted period of uncertainty would be wrong and would affect our service. So I was pleased that we could get that completed. That also meant therefore we delivered the savings ahead in 2019 for the start of 2020 and that also means therefore people have that certainty going forward that we are not about to do another restructure in 2020 and so on. The total was £1 million net. There were further savings but they were used to provide and fund roles in line with the One Government targeting operating model. For example, out of the structure we were able to create a customer experience team for government and that included a customer feedback manager for government. They are important roles. We also funded a director of Local Services, which is a brand-new area of activity for government under that OneGov model, which hopefully and has started to build our community partnership working with the voluntary and community sector. That is an important asset for the Island and it is important to make sure we can work in partnership with that sector to build services for the future. That was the total. Thankfully we were able to manage a lot of those savings through vacancies. We therefore did not replace roles we knew we might be making redundant. Therefore, we have managed to limit quite a lot the number of people who were made redundant or put at risk throughout those phases. I think as these things go, I was pleased that we were able to come out of the target operating model with a good structure, a good vision that helps support the OneGov vision, a good structure that was in place and that we minimise the impact on colleagues and also therefore any potential disruption to services that the public may have had. Now, we will see the benefits of those service improvements come through.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

That is helpful. In terms of the significant changes, you have mentioned a director for Local Services, a feedback manager that is being created through this restructuring, as we will call it. What is your

assessment - it is over a year now that this has been in place and bedded in - have you done an assessment or what is your personal assessment of how things have gone for your department?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I think that some of the corporate resources that we created, the ones you just repeated back to me, Senator, have been a real positive difference to our approaches for the customer. We have used those resources to really accelerate the customer feedback work we started, the development of a customer strategy, the improvements in measurement of customer service, measurement of customer effort and also the sentiment of our customers. That is a real leap forward. If you go back to 3 years ago, 2018, Social Security, as was, may have had some of those measures. But now we are really moving forward and having a much more OneGov approach to improving customer service and measuring customer service. But the customer feedback is probably the biggest step forward in terms of the ability of a member of the public to register and log a complaint and the ease at which they can now do that and the fact they get a response, and ideally the lessons that can be learned across government out of those complaints. That is a big step forward. If you are having resources in place, it might seem like an obvious thing but investing in that area means that we have the resources to have that oversight and help support others in understanding what we are trying to achieve with that customer feedback policy and help others also record information and get it consistent so we can improve the services. I think that has been a very positive step forward. The director of Local Services that you also mentioned, that has been affected by the pandemic. In particular, we started up a programme of Close to Home as a flagship event to try and bring services out around the Island and make it much more accessible to the public. That obviously has been impacted significantly by COVID but we are very keen to get that back up and running. Every one we have rung there have been great stories about people who have attended one thing, had support from somewhere else and in a proactive way have been able to have an impact on their health and well-being, in particular. That has been very positive as well. A very obvious example has been, out of the changes we have made in the target operating model, we have been able to support and fund the extension of activity at the library. So the library hours in town are now extended and that is more accessible. Again COVID has impacted on that but the hours are back to evenings. We were running, prior to COVID, a range of community events and getting community partners to be able to use that space. It is a much more flexible space. We also improved the ground floor as well, which again COVID has just knocked back a little bit. But that has been a really positive step forward and got a lot of potential I think with our library service to really build and build its power as a community facility for the Island. They are again further examples of improvements. Then we have the more segmented approach within Customer and Local Services with our hub structure, where we redesigned our services not around historic benefits or historic services and legislation but around the customer. So we segmented ourselves around the customer with people of working age,

people who perhaps are pensioners or in care, and that starts to reshape our way of thinking about services.

[14:45]

If you then combine that with the ability to try and bring in services that are provided already by community partners, you then really start to have quite a powerful potential. There are lots of examples of those improvements that we have already made and we have got more to come. Some of them are in our business plan and how we want to move things forward to make that better and better. Then learn from that cycle as well to try and make improvements based upon customer feedback. We have done a lot. Personally I would say, yes, we are making good progress. We have got customer feedback that says that also. Obviously we are measuring customer satisfaction and our customer efforts and customer sentiment. We would want to see that continue to improve alongside the increasing expectations of the public of course. As you make an improvement it becomes the new norm so you need to keep going again to improve those services. But all those things will feed into improved outcomes down the road for the Island as well. There is a lot of positive but I perhaps would say that.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

That is very useful because my next question was going to be about how it benefited Islanders, so I will skip that one. The next questions are back to the target operating model. In your letter you stated it created opportunities for colleagues to use their skills across a wider range of services leading to more variety and better career opportunities. In the absence of a central skills register, how do you identify candidates to fill vacancies across subdivisions?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

One of the principles of the OneGov target operating model was that there would be generic job roles wherever possible. There would be a more reasonable span of control of like one to 8 approximately. That we would also look to transfer services to the right part of government, the new structure. Finance team to Treasury, H.R. (Human Resources) to People Services, and customer-facing areas coming into C.L.S., et cetera. Out of our target operating model and applying those principles we have a lot more generic roles, which makes it much easier for people to move around. It makes it easier for us to be flexible in our responses to customer demand. The span of control also means that team leaders and line managers have a better opportunity to line manage rather than just supervise one person or, the other extreme, say 20 people where they were not really doing colleague development. That is another important and sometimes overlooked part of the OneGov approach, was having that span of control right means you have the time and capacity as a leader and line manager to help develop your team. You have a better awareness of people's

skillsets, you have a better awareness of where they need training support and development coaching and our colleagues have a better awareness of the roles that exist in the department because you have just gone through restructure and how they can move around. We do have lots of opportunities in C.L.S., always have done. I am a great believer in secondments and people taking opportunities to provide support and pick up project work rather than necessarily bringing in people. That has been something which we have seen lots of. If somebody wants to move roles through their regular "My Goals My Conversation" discussions, they will flag up about development aspirations. They will flag up about whether they were interested in another role. We have got the "I will" programme, which we are supporting through coaching, mentoring and shadowing, for example. So there are lots of ways that people can show an interest and make things happen in terms of moving around the organisation. We have got examples of people who have done that, moved around different hubs and taken secondment opportunities and then have ended up getting promoted perhaps in a different area and so on. It is a flexible response and I think it is a sensible way of managing and supporting the development of the teams. COVID has tested that to its full, it is fair to say, and I am pleased that we survived that test with significant results for the Island, and I am very proud of the work that the C.L.S. have done in the last 12 months, particularly around our response to COVID. That could not have happened without the flexibility of effectively, not only the structure, but also the flexibility of course of our colleagues who at the drop of a hat have switched jobs and in some cases moved from one role to the next in a week. There has never been any pushback from people at all to say: "No, it is not my job. That is not my job description." People have just cracked on. That has been a real pleasure to see and I am very grateful for that hard work.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

You are one of the director generals that have completed the target operating model. Other areas have not. So when you are talking about those career ladders, those career opportunities, moving between services, "My Conversation My Goals", those types of things, how is that assessed appropriately when not everything is necessarily being done in the timeline as it was expected?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Most of my background has been in the private sector and in the private sector you would tend to restructure all the time. It would be something that you would do. You would be good at it because it would be a constant evolution of your organisation. In government, that is not quite the same approach. So, for many, this is the first time that people have had a restructure, target operating model redesign, for decades. So, from that perspective, it is understandable that it is not easy. It is understandable also that people would operate at different speeds. The Health Department is very different to Customer and Local Services and we are very different to the Treasury Department. So you can obviously understand the scale and context of those, both in terms of the roles and so on.

So that is understandable. You cannot have everybody going through something particularly before you can start again and we need to become good at being responsive to the demands of our services for the Island. We need to be responsive to the financial envelope and we need to be responsive to technology and so on. That will involve us doing restructuring on a more regular and frequent basis and not all areas at once. If you think about why would you perhaps restructure everywhere at once? Because of the demands on support services, the demands on H.R. and so on. So there are lots of reasons why you would do things differently. So, to answer your question, how could we do it without having everybody through it? Many colleagues now are seeing roles coming up in some of the areas where we are investing and expanding, like M. and D. (Modernisation and Digital) for example, People Services, where we have been underinvested for years, and they are well placed to apply for vacant posts. So that is great to see colleagues who have developed in C.L.S. moving to posts elsewhere in government. That is exactly what you would want to see. In an organisation you want to see internal resources move around, develop, upskill, and bring with them of course the excellent training and development they have had in C.L.S. to new areas of government and also their passion for the customer. That is a very positive way forward. So that is something that we have seen, I am sure we will see, and we should be moving and restructuring the whole time going forward as a government. Some parts should be.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

That is very helpful. In terms of you referred to financial responsiveness, part of the target operating model is about pay protection. How have you considered this as part of your financial modelling as director general? When will it impact you in particular?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

So the pay protection policy is for 3 years and so an individual who went through an evaluation, went through a restructure and was matched to a role that was at a lower grade, would receive their previous grade for 3 years. At the end of those 3 years their salary would reduce to the new grade. That was the pay protection policy. Sophie will I am sure jump in if I have that incorrect. But that was the policy. Therefore, that would give colleagues 3 years to be able to either adapt financially to that new impending envelope that would be coming their way in terms of their reduction in salary, or to find a role at their current grade. We have seen both. We have seen both happen from some of those colleagues who were in pay-protected posts. They have moved around. Some of them have taken on further responsibilities in a different part of government and therefore a higher grade or a grade that was closer to their previous grade. So we have seen all sorts and that is the idea of the pay protection policy. It is a good policy to ensure that people do not overnight lose their salary, but also we retain some of those skills in government.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

In terms of the impact on your financial modelling, will that be considered whether it is a plus or a minus, at what year roughly?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

So that was in 2019, so it will be probably the end of 2022 they would all run off.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

So in terms of talking about the whole target operating model, the number of things and the benefits that you have talked about, how do you ensure or prevent that restructured departments do not fall into what has been known and referred to many a time as a silo mentality?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

That is a good challenge, how do we stop that from happening? Because it has certainly been a benefit of the new structure, the OneGov structure, to try to make sure that we are looking at things in a different way across government. So we look at the customer work we have been trying to do. That again, much more traction than we ever had before because of the new structure and because of the emphasis and the resources that we invested as part of the OneGov target operating model and the C.L.S. target operating model. People are operating differently now; that is very clear. Now I have been in the government 10 years and since the OneGov changes came in we are operating in a different way, in a better way. From our perspective, more focused than ever before on customer activity and the feedback of customers. So, within C.L.S., if the question is perhaps more about how we in the department would stop us going back to old ways of working. But we have of course a shared set of goals that are communicated by myself, my leadership team, across the department. We make sure everyone understands that is what we are aiming to deliver. So there is a common set of goals there. They all have their team and individual goals as part of the "My Goals My Conversation" programme. That is the first thing, so everyone is lined up, there is a golden thread that runs through from the Government Plan all the way through and down to people who are serving customers face to face, for example, or over the phone. We also have the Team Jersey programme. So again there are a set of values there that colleagues, not just that C.L.S. have, but all across government. Those common themes there are around behaviours and expectations, again help ensure that people realise they are working together as a part of a team and that they should stick to those behaviours and deliver those goals for the greater good of the performance of government. So we have those. We are also working with colleagues across government on things like customer strategy work, customer feedback activity. But also things like life events. So we want to look at, holistically, life events for the public. This year we are hoping to look at 2; one is starting a business and the other is end of life. When someone passes away and the impact on their family and how we can make the services they receive easier and better and add greater value where appropriate in those 2 services. That is not going to be us in C.L.S. sat in a darkened room working it out. That

will be colleagues from across government as part of the customer strategy looking at all the elements to that and hopefully coming up with solutions. Also listening of course to customer feedback on those services at the same time. So that is our ambition and that is in our departmental operational business plan, it is in the customer strategy, and that is what we hope to be able to do. I am not suggesting that is easy. But that is what we are aiming to do. That is again breaking down the silo mentality around different chunks of customer. We have lots of feedback from businesses who say they are fed up with giving us the same information time and time and time again. We can surely, between us, make that a lot easier for somebody and let them get on and run their business. To have somebody who has just suffered a bereavement go around notifying different parts of government about a death, that is also something we want to avoid and make it a lot easier for them at that difficult time.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

So, in terms of the customer focus, which is great, and absolutely right focusing on the public, you are serving a number of Ministers as a director general, not just Minister for Social Security, Minister for Education, Minister for Home Affairs, because of the administration that comes under your department. How does that affect your ability to implement your business plan?

[15:00]

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

It does not affect our ability to do it, because obviously we are creating that business plan with having conversations throughout the year with Ministers. Predominantly the Minister for Social Security, most of our activity in C.L.S. comes under her remit. We would feed into the Government Plan, like any other function. Also therefore take out of the Government Plan what we need to deliver as a department to support Ministers. So I do not see that as something that prevents progress. In fact, having a clear Government Plan, having some clear strategic aims, makes it easier in many respects to be able to support the Council of Ministers across all their areas of activity. As a leadership team, we are meeting every couple of weeks, we are discussing policies and we are discussing initiatives and things that we need to review and make decisions on. We are joined up as a leadership team in that sense. When we come to look at our departmental operational business plans, we have a peer review session as well with the most-closely overlapping departments to understand what their aims are. If there are any crossovers or gaps, we can have those discussions. Each departmental operational business plan has in it a section that says: "We will be working with other departments on these areas." So we are very joined up and then linked back of course eventually to the Island outcomes, which we are trying to deliver for the long term. So I think that there are no barriers in that sense to making progress. Just because you have Ministers, in our case we are, just like

S.P.P.P. (Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance) and others, serving and supporting multiple Ministers.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Before I just pass the next question on to the chair, how would I know, if I was just a lay-member on the street, whether you achieved everything in your business plan from last year or the year before?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Some of that would be picked up in the annual report and accounts in terms of the high-level strategic outcomes, performance. Certainly, colleagues who work in C.L.S. would understand whether we had performed or not because they would be receiving regular updates in terms of our metrics. We are going to be starting to publish, from the first quarter of this year, a quarterly performance report for Government. That is the idea across all the measures in the departmental operational business plans that will be published. We will be also ensuring there is some customer feedback performance measures in that quarterly report as well for Government. So that is again another way of understanding how Government is performing. That is slightly different to your question, Senator, which is you have a list of 22 things in there, have they all been done? There is also perhaps more detail that could be provided in terms of how we perform. But the high-level ones will end up in the performance report and accounts.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Going back to your business plan in 2020, it was used the corporate learning and development forum. Would you please give us a bit more information what it is and what it has done, if any, in 2020? Because we realise that 2020 was ... it is on page 10 of your business plan 2020.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

So last year's business plan?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Yes. Because we found it there, we wanted to know what it is and what it has done in 2020.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

We might just want to call up that reference is that is okay. You said it is corporate learning?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Corporate learning and development forum, which should incorporate lessons learned by other departments and improving performance management. I will move to the next question; we can follow up.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, we have been preparing on this year's business plan as per the questions that I was ...

Deputy I. Gardiner:

But this is interesting where it has come ... but this is what we are looking at, how we are making sure what happened in 2020, what is done, what is not done, and how it has carried on or not carried on to 2021.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, sorry, the way you described it the first time it sounded like it was a learning and development, but the second time you said it was more like a corporate ...

Deputy I. Gardiner:

The corporate learning and development forum. This is the description in the business plan.

Group Director, Customer Services:

There is a corporate learning and development forum, which is very much about learning and development and developing individuals. That sits within People and Corporate Services and we as C.L.S. feed into that. But I am getting the impression that is around how we are going to develop our colleagues, things like corporate training. So rolling out cross-departmental initiatives and things like that. That is what we call often the corporate learning and development. But that is really about training and developing ...

Deputy I. Gardiner:

But we can follow up. It might be easier to follow up. We picked up it from your business plan so we try to understand how does it work and they probably will ask probably other director generals if they will be in their business plan.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, so there definitely is a Corporate Learning and Development Forum, but it sounded like it was more about lessons learned rather than the way you described it, which I know is something that P.A.C. are very keen on. But that is something slightly different. It is more like Sophie described it.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

We just want to know what it is and what it has done in 2020 and how does it work. Going to the recommendation. As you know, we have a recommendation structure that we are going through. In your written response you said there are 17 outstanding recommendations. You told us that main

blockages for implementation, the recommendations were dependencies and lack of resources. Can you please expand on it?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

So we have 17. They are all in relation to the Comptroller and Auditor General's report on complaints. We are working through those and I will hand over to Sophie in just a minute. One of our challenges has been some of them are related to resources from M. and D. and of course over the last period M. and D. resources have been very focused on the highest-priority activities. So that has meant that things like developments to our customer feedback system have not been delivered as we hoped they would have done because they have been doing things around co-funded payroll, et cetera. So that is the reason why.

Group Director, Customer Services:

I can follow up on that as well. I would say we are making really good progress. We have really close oversight of those recommendations. We have a lot of activity in terms of when we look at how we have progressed corporately in terms of just the overall theme of embedding a culture of good complaints handling. We now have really extensive buy-in at a senior level, whether it is E.L.T. and Ops.Co. (Operations Committee), departmentally we have a good network of departmental feedback managers. But on a line by line in terms of the recommendations, they broadly fall under 6 themes from our perspective in terms of what we are doing around them. Training for colleagues was a really important one. There is lots of progress that is happening now. Just a couple of weeks ago I was on an advanced complaints handling course focusing on how to do high-level responses, good investigations, apologising and those sorts of things. So training is well under way. We have a quality assurance framework that has been developed and it is just in that final sign-off going between different departments before we launch it to all colleagues. That will be around making sure the quality of how we handle our complaints is measured and improved upon. We have recently reviewed and updated the customer feedback policy and we have developed a procedure manual in line with those recommendations. Again that is just working through the different departments prior to formal launch there. So I would say the recommendations have been a really helpful way to measure and make sure we are making progress and to keep on track with them.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

You have mentioned complaints and that you are working through the complaints and customer feedback. What did you find are the top 3 major complaints areas that you receive and you think this is the top priority to work on?

Group Director, Customer Services:

So corporately the main areas are similar to what they are departmentally for us. Broadly, we are looking at processes; is an area where customers feel like the process has been difficult for them. Either it has been confusing or it has taken far longer than it should have been. Error has been a theme. The third-largest area would be around customer service in terms of how people feel they have had that service. So there is a lot that we are doing to address those through a lot of the customer strategy work. The customer strategy is focused on 4 key principles, which we badge as A.C.E. plus (Accessible, Consistent, Easy and think ahead). A lot of those are things to try to improve the processes. It is around making it easy for customers, making our services more accessible. So a lot of the work we are doing in those areas is also addressing the highest area that we are seeing complaints in at the moment.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

There are statistics published. There are statistics how much complaints in each area do you have. Did you put any K.P.I.s (key performance indicators), like the cases, the quantity ones where you would like to be by the end of 2021?

Group Director, Customer Services:

We have in the quality assurance framework that is in draft just going through departmental review at the moment. In line with the Comptroller and Auditor General recommendations, there are targets for some of the measures where we feel like this is something we are measuring now, this is where we are at, and this is where we would like to get to. They have been proposed and they are undergoing that final sign-off. There are some things where we feel like we are not necessarily setting a specific numeric target. It is really important that we do not drive the wrong behaviours around complaints handling. We know that getting the culture right, we have made really good progress from where we were a couple of years ago. But we know there is still a way to go. For us, it is about doing things right, doing things properly, making sure the customer gets the right outcomes, rather than in some cases setting a target, which might lead to underreporting in some areas or something like that. So we have set out through this quality assurance framework where we would like to get to and how we plan on measuring that and what "good" looks like.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

There are 9 recommendations delayed. What are they and what is required to get back on track on the number in the response?

Group Director, Customer Services:

A number of those are ones that Ian referred to around our ability to capture and work with data in a better way is reliant on system enhancements. We have a good customer feedback management system that is cross-departmental and that is something that brought us forward a huge way. But,

as with a lot of these things, it was built in-house by M. and D. and it achieves what we want. But we know that there are things we want to develop and many of those in line with recommendations as well. So those are some of the ones, the primary ones there are delayed. Some of the other again was just due to resources due to COVID, people from, for example, the customer experience team or others being seconded to other areas of government. We are now back on track so we have forecast some of those milestones. We are making good progress.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I will pass to Dr. Helen Miles.

Dr. H. Miles:

Just some questions about this year's departmental operational business plan and we note that there are a number of departmental initiatives, which do not form part of the Government Plan. Can you tell us how those are going to be funded?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes. There are a small number that are not specifically in the Government Plan but they are linked. For example, the first one is customer strategy, which we have been talking about. The first one is our corporate efforts to improve the customer strategy. That is not specifically in the Government Plan in that example, it is not, but clearly it is something that Ministers will want us to improve and I am sure the public would as well. So that is the first one. We have resources for that because our target operating model freed up resources to invest in that area. Then we are now developing with our customer strategy board colleagues a representation across government to help make customer strategy improvements happen. Then the next one is our own commitment towards the customer strategy. So, as well as asking everybody else to do it, we should make sure we do it as well. We are of course having the department focus on the customer for some time, we are well ahead, we still have things we can do to make improvements. So we need to ensure that we have an effort and prioritisation in that area to deliver those customer strategy initiatives within Customer and Local Services.

[15:15]

So they are the first 2. Then the third one is about further execution of the OneGov target operating model, which is there are still customer-facing areas across government who we have been looking and discussing to transfer within Customer and Local Services if that were to work. So that is what we would call OneGov incoming services. Again, so that is about that realignment of the OneGov target operating model. Then we have, within our own target operating model, looking at service redesign. Again, how can we make things easier for customers? Are there processes that we can

improve? So that is, for example, we are looking at simple robotics to try to make attachments and things like that work better in our current I.T. (information technology) systems. Whether we can get online appointments when you need to book a wedding, for example. Those are things we can do and they are being done through predominantly existing resources and existing budgets. So that is the next phase. Our cost savings, which is a part of the Government Plan commitment to deliver our 2021 cost savings, so delivering those, which we have done. Then we also have the income opportunities that exist for the Office of the Superintendent Registrar, which is potentially to, as we now know, refurbish Howard Davis Hall and be able to bring extra income in by utilising that space, a fantastic community space, for weddings and other services. So, again, that is linked financially to the Government Plan. Staying with the Office of the Superintendent Registrar, we have a whole load of legislative changes that are needed. For example, there are changes there that are needed under our Putting Children First commitment around the age at which you can get married, which does need to be changed and sorted out. So there is legislative work that we will be working with S.P.P.P. resources, already existing resources, and ...

Dr. H. Miles:

Are you confident that you have the funding to be able to deliver those initiatives?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes. So we would have looked at that in the Government Plan and where an area that we did not have resources in the Government Plan that was obviously in response to COVID, we had many more people who were both claiming support and also out of work. So, where we did not have the resources, we requested the resources and the Council of Ministers supported that, as did then the Assembly. So we then have resources to be able to use to help people get their lives back on track and get a job and hopefully move off of income support.

Dr. H. Miles:

Also in your departmental business plan, it sets out your performance measures, page 18. Other departments have told us that 2020 performance was used as a baseline consistently across government. But a number of your metrics do not reference the 2020 performance. So why did you decide to use a different baseline?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

On some of our measures, we have used 2020. 2020 was a very different year in terms of customer activity and customer expectation. So customers' expectations have moved significantly in terms of the type of services they have been using and how they have been using it and the channel they have been using. But some other ones, we have been using these similar numbers and measures

for some time. But we have looked, based upon our experience, at what the appropriate target would be for 2021.

Dr. H. Miles:

So what was the process that you went through then?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

With the leadership team we would have discussed and agreed those targets and challenged whether we felt they should be the same or not. Some of these are in effect unique to us, so the number of people who start a job, for example, who were unemployed, who we get to start a job, is unique to us. We have the experience of that and therefore in the context of Jersey we were able to set a target that was our ambition for last year. We did not achieve our ambition for last year but the target was the same. So therefore we are optimistic that we can stick to that target for this year. So this has come from our leadership team and then the Minister for Social Security, in that particular example, has supported that as well. So that is as straightforward as that.

Dr. H. Miles:

So where you have used the 2020 as the baseline, do you have any specific concerns as to the relevance or reliability of it as a starting point, given the experience that we have had with COVID?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

The majority of these we believe we can achieve and, based upon our experience, deliver them. The unknown ones, and Sophie might want to come in here, are around customer satisfaction and customer effort. So we have set targets for that, ambitious targets. None of these targets are particularly easy but we thought when we would have written this in September, and we discussed it, we may have thought that we were through it. So we are of course still striving to achieve it. We set ourselves a target against that baseline of 80 per cent. The measures have changed and that is one of the challenges of the customer satisfaction measure, the measures and makeup of the basket of measures have changed. So we are of course monitoring our performance and we will see how we get along. But it does not mean to say we should not try to achieve a higher performance.

Dr. H. Miles:

In terms of your measures that you have talked about, only one of the ones that you show in your plan is shown as capable of international benchmarking. You have explained a little bit why that would be difficult given the Jersey context. But in the absence of international benchmarks, or any benchmarks, how do you know what represents good performance?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Firstly, at the time, we did identify only one has international benchmarking. That was back then in September. We think there probably are some more we could benchmark against realistically ...

Dr. H. Miles:

Which would those be?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Perhaps calls answered, the sustainability of permanent job starts might be an area as well. We might be able to find some similarity. Again, it would depend upon the size of the jurisdiction and the type of measurements they have. So there are possibly more but in a number of these we have a good understanding ourselves of these targets and we know that we do not necessarily meet them all the time, which indicates to us they are hard to achieve in many cases. So that is how we go about setting it. Some of them are just industry benchmarks, not international, like calls answered at 95 per cent. There are lots of different metrics around telephony measures. The one that we think is the cleanest and the most focused on the customer is trying to answer 95 per cent of all calls. Other ones tend to mix and match and potentially create unintended consequences. But for us that is the clean one. So we use that. That is still a challenging target for us to meet, although I am pleased that we have met it very well this year so far.

Dr. H. Miles:

We have also been critical, as the P.A.C., of there not being enough baseline data in place for a lot of the departments to have meaningful performance indicators. You have mentioned some of the steps, including robotics, which sounds quite interesting. But can you tell us about any specific steps that you are taking to collate the new baseline data and how you are going to track appropriate performance against it?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

If I have understood your question correctly, all of these measures here are measures that we already have in 2020. In some cases, they go back quite a way. From that perspective, the baseline data is our 2020 performance adjusted perhaps for a change in the makeup of the survey types, for example. Customer effort is still very new in terms of our measurement. Last year was the first year we measured it. Is it for the whole year?

Group Director, Customer Services:

We did measure customer effort for the whole year, but satisfaction we have measured for a number of years in our department. But because of the different ways of doing it, and our sophistication is

getting a lot greater now, we treat our current measures as being more accurate. But there are none of these where we are not able to baseline against previous years.

Dr. H. Miles:

Thank you. I will pass you on to Graham now.

Mr. G. Phipps:

Thank you. Ian, I think we are all pleased to hear your enthusiasm for customer feedback and satisfaction. It is an area everyone is concerned with. I have a few other follow-up questions. You sent us some quarterly customer feedback reports and we welcome the reference to the C. and A.G.'s recommendations and the decisions to follow best practices. What are the main themes of feedback you receive and how do you handle them?

Group Director, Customer Services:

I am happy to answer that one. The main feedback of course is both positive and negative. It is very easy, when you are looking at reports, to immediately look at the negative feedback. But overwhelmingly we get far more positive feedback about the things that colleagues and overall services are doing well. But in terms of breaking it down, when you look at whether it is customer satisfaction measures, customer effort, certainly in the customer experience scores there is, through the increased volume, we are seeing feedback around areas such as consistency of information, which does link into those key complaint themes that I talked around earlier. It is you see that people are wanting to make sure they get a good quality of service, consistency of information, making sure that information is available. So we see a trend of feedback around trying to have more information accessible online or being able to do more self-service. That is something, whether that has been through focus groups that we have done with customers, through wider surveys, or just through our experience surveys that we do. That has certainly been a theme that we try and listen on and are continuing to have local projects to try to improve those.

Mr. G. Phipps:

You have a 3-stage internal process with clear timescales. But how do you communicate with the complainant during this process and how do you track the communications as you interact through this?

Group Director, Customer Services:

The communication with the customer is key. This is something that we recognise has not necessarily always been as good as it could be across government. But that is what we have now. The policy explains when you are meant to acknowledge, you need to acknowledge straight away. The ideal thing is if you receive feedback and it is a complaint that you can handle it there and then

and you can resolve it for the customer. That is always the best thing. We want to empower colleagues to be able to reach an early resolution. We recognise that in many cases that is not possible. The communication, we do tell customers straightaway when a complaint has come in what the timescales are, when they will hear back from us. It does depend on the stage of the complaint, so if it is a stage one complaint it should be within 5 days. If it is a stage 2 complaint it should be within 10 days after that. So we do tell this to the customers. Training that is happening at the moment and the manual that is almost launched is in sign-off phase; that does reiterate how you keep those customers involved. We do recognise in exceptional circumstances there are times when you need to extend the timescales and it is about what is right for the customer. Making sure we can do a thorough investigation, for example. So, in those cases, we would make sure we keep up that communication with the customer. Let them know what the revised timescales would be. That is how that should happen in line with the policy.

Mr. G. Phipps:

Thank you. You have answered the questions so I will turn it back to Tracey.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

In terms of the staff feedback, there was a survey called Be Heard that was carried out last year. Inside that survey there were contained several criticisms specific to your department. Can I ask what you have done to take them on board and improve?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

The Be Heard survey was fairly comprehensive and even just the results from a corporate perspective, and also a departmental perspective, are worthy of significant reflection and consideration. I do not think anyone was particularly pleased overall with the results. In terms of colleague feedback, there are lots of areas across government as a whole, but also individual departments, where we do need to listen and work through with colleagues how we act differently and how we make improvements. Then see how well we have improved going forward. From a C.L.S. perspective, since the results came out, we have been holding workshops with colleagues, reviewing those results, getting their feedback. Of course I am pleased that so many of our C.L.S. colleagues filled it in, in the first place, because that means we had some good solid grounded results.

[15:30]

But it has also been quite a while since they filled it in. So we are also trying to pull up how people feel today as well as how they might have been feeling back in July. But those workshops are running at the moment, we have held 17, and they are pulling together some themes for us to take

action on. It is always really important, when you go out and you ask for colleague feedback like this, then you do, as a leadership team, need to listen and then seek to develop actions with them to make a difference and change. If you do not, nobody will fill it in again going forward. So that is a really important step. We have some good themes already emerging in terms of people being able to get perhaps more time for their development. More investment in them and in training. Ideally, people would like to see perhaps improvements in teamworking, which of course has been really tested by our virtual approach. We have had many colleagues working from home. We have had many colleagues working in the office still. In terms of someone's line management experience, how you support colleagues in both areas and both types of work and virtually is another test. So better teamworking is another important theme. They are the trends initially from our workshops. I am conscious that in your question, Senator, you suggested there was feedback specifically for our area in the Be Heard survey. It perhaps might be helpful if you shared what your angle was, because I am not sure I have answered your question specifically without knowing the types of questions. Because there were questions that we put in specifically on customer feedback.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Just bearing the timing in mind, what we will do is we will lay them out in a written question to your department and then you can reply via that way. I will pass over to the chair.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

If I could, Chair, just on your earlier question about the Corporate Learning and Development Forum, I have now had a chance to double check. That is under the context of staff development as opposed to what I was thinking. There have been quite a lot of things such as My Welcome induction, corporate learning around line management and the like. So, yes, there has been quite a lot that has been going on corporately from that forum in 2020. We can obviously provide you with more information on that from People Services.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Thank you. Now, thank you very much for your answers today and I did mark maybe 6 or 7 follow-up questions that will come in the written form to follow up. But, before we close in public hearing, I would like to ask you and Sophie if there is anything that we did not raise in the public hearing and it would be good for the public to know? Because it is a public hearing. That you would like to bring to our attention from the performance and estate management point for your department?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

There is nothing specific. But in general I would ask customers and the public to of course let us know how we are performing and if they are unhappy about a service it is really important they also take the step to register their dissatisfaction. Because we can then try to do something about it. We

can do that both within the area of the service but also they could be helping improve the service across Government. That is I think a really important message, under our customer feedback policy that we have been promoting to the public, but it is worth repeating every chance we get.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Thank you very much and the public hearing is closed now.

[15:34]