



# Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny

## Panel

### Quarterly Public Hearing

### Witness: The Minister for Infrastructure

Wednesday, 15th February 2023

**Panel:**

Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin (Chair)

Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central (Vice-Chair)

Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier North

**Witnesses:**

Deputy T. Binet of St. Saviour, The Minister for Infrastructure

Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North, Assistant Minister for Infrastructure

Ms. E. Littlechild, Director, Operations and Transport

Mr. T. Daniels, Director, Jersey Property Holdings

Mr. A. Scate, Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department

Mr. T. Dodd, Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure

[11:30]

**Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin (Chair):**

Welcome, Minister, to our second quarterly hearing with you. Before we start off on our question plan, we will just as usual run round the table to identify who we all are. I am Deputy Steve Luce, St. Martin and Grouville, and chair of the panel.

**Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central (Vice-Chair):**

Deputy Rob Ward, St. Helier Central, and vice-chair of the panel.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier North:**

Deputy Mary Le Hegarat, District North of St. Helier.

**Connétable M.J. Jackson of St. Brelade:**

Mike Jackson, panel member.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

Andy Scate, chief officer for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Tom Binet, the Minister for Infrastructure.

**Assistant Minister for Infrastructure:**

Deputy Steve Ahier, Assistant Minister for Infrastructure.

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

Ellen Littlechild, director of Operations and Transport.

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

Tim Daniels, director of Jersey Property Holdings.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Thank you very much. Minister, we will kick off with something quite pertinent and recent. Of course, since the last time we met a large amount of rainfall, peculiar weather patterns we are experiencing at the moment, January basically wet every day, February appears to be dry every day. But we did have this significant flooding in Grands Vaux area. Where exactly are we at the moment? What is the latest on households that were evacuated, how many people have returned? Could you just give us an update on where we are with that issue?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Since the flooding there is a lot of work being taking place between Jersey Water and I.H.E. (Infrastructure, Housing and Environment) and I will leave the officers to make some further comment on the detail of that. From the political perspective, we promised the people that have been affected in Grands Vaux and the surrounding area a public meeting to explain and update them on all the work that is going on, and that is due to take place I think on 9th March. That is the date that we are targeting. That is going to involve Andium, I.H.E., Jersey Water and St. Helier and St. Saviour Parishes, because unbeknown to me beforehand the drains in the area are run by ...

there are 3 lots of drains. There are 2 lots of parochial drains and I.H.E. drainage. There are a couple of things that have emerged since that time in that some of the Parish drains had not been particularly well-maintained. I think they have since been ... am I correct in saying that they have since been cleaned through by I.H.E.?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

They have, yes.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

There is a possible proposal going forward that all of the drains in that area possibly ... this is just initial discussions, might be taken over ... the running of them will be taken over, maintenance and by I.H.E. in conjunction with the 2 Parishes to ensure that they are done on a regular basis.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

We will come to measures that could be put in place in a minute, Minister. But could I just turn to the initial question which was how many people have returned and how many people are still to return to their homes?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I think that is a changing situation almost day by day. I think the 3-bedroomed houses, and I stand to be corrected, are going to take a longer time to drain through and to dry out. A certain amount ... I am going to have to ask ... I spoke to Andium about a week ago on that but you have probably got the up-to-date figures.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

We have got 16 homes which are still out of action in Nicholson Close in Grands Vaux that are Andium Homes. So 10 of those are 2-bed houses and the others are 4-bed houses. The 4-bed houses are likely to be back in action within about 6 to 8 weeks. The 2-bed houses are going to take a lot longer time to dry out - we are potentially talking months to resolve - and then Andium have got a plan of refurbishment and clean-up as a result of that. So there are still a number of families who are displaced, still a number of families in hotels. Andium are doing a lot of work on a daily basis in terms of trying to find families rehoming options. So a number of families are being continually rehomed and options given to them.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Are Andium confident that they will be able to retain enough accommodation in the private sector or wherever for these people over the summer? Because once we get into the winter season obviously it will become more pressing.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I spoke to Ian very briefly yesterday, he is hoping that by 9th March that everybody will be moved from at least hotel accommodation into longer-term accommodation pending their eventual return to Grands Vaux.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

That is fine. We will move on to measures to be put in place and you have mentioned, Minister, the drains and the different responsibilities for drains. But is it not the case surely that regardless of who is responsible for them, whether the drains would have worked or not, the amount of water in that area had nowhere to go?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I think it is certain to say that however clean the drains would have been there is no way they would have coped with that amount of water. We have entered some not contentious territory but unusual territory. We are now having detailed talks with Jersey Water about the possibility of them having a slightly changed mandate from simply supplying the Island's water to being a part of an active flood management programme. Because what we did do is I actually called a meeting of all the various players, which took place Monday evening - we are going to meet again - but the outcome of that is that in 10 days' time we are going to compare notes on it. But it could well be that Jersey Water have to have a slightly amended mandate. Given that the drains are not ever going to cope with that volume of water, if we are going to prevent flooding it has to be done upstream in one way or another.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

The Grands Vaux valley is the largest catchment on the Island. Do we know that even if Grands Vaux reservoir was completely empty at the start of an incident like we had, whether it would be enough to hold back the water?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Those are the calculations that are being done. Those are the calculations that we are asking for because if I had been flooded out that is exactly what I would be thinking. At the moment we have got a reservoir that is full. There is no spare capacity there either. So I would be thinking do we have a problem. When you get into the detail of it there are more issues to be taken into account because they have got history with silting and issues with ... there is a bypass that runs pass the reservoir that takes some of the water which they cannot control. So it is not as simple as it first seems.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

I think you are right. The Grands Vaux catchment is about 10 per cent of the Island's area. With some rudimentary maths, possibly about 600 million litres of water would appear in that rainfall event across that area. The reservoir holds just under 300 million litres of water. So it is a big tank but it would not have held that amount of water. We have also got to plan the saturation levels in the catchment; the Island was very saturated at the point of that event. So a lot of rainfall came off. In terms of practical measures we have got a recovery co-ordination group that is set up under our emergency planning protocols. I chair that meeting. It involves Jersey Water, the Parishes, I.H.E., Andium. So we have got some formality around interagency working to think about what happened. We are doing an assessment report just to clarify what actually happened, what happened on the day, how did the infrastructure fair or did not fair, that sort of stuff. But I think importantly it is going to be looking at some immediate short-term measures but also looking at medium and longer-term ways of different water management. Not just for this catchment area. I think it is something we need to take into account in other catchments as well. We are likely to see more rainfall events hit the Island, whether that be summer rainfall or winter rainfall we will see bigger, sharper floods and rainfall events. We have got to become more flood resilient as an Island, so we will be looking at some of that work as well.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Four or 5 years ago, you may not know, but in the west coast of the Cotentin Peninsula in Normandy they were looking at raising the houses out of the ground on stilts to make sure that in the coastal erosion and rising tidal areas that the homes would not get flooded. Is that something that we should be thinking about in this particular area of Grands Vaux?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

That is something that is being considered. I know it is being considered by Andium. The last discussion we had with them, they are looking at the houses that were flooded most severely and looking at the possibility of ... I think there is a small strip of land at the back of those houses that could be developed and that could then be developed, and then we would move forward to redevelop the ones that are sitting below water level. That would involve them being raised about a metre and a half and rebuilt. But all of these things are going to take time. I think there was an estimate of something in the order of £9 million worth of spend to do that.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

I think for housing design across the Island, the bridging Island Plan introduced greater concept around flood risk areas and planning around flood risk. Certainly in terms of housing design and guidance on what future housing looks like. We certainly will need to be looking at that. Clearly that is with another portfolio - under the Minister for the Environment's portfolio - but some of the work

that the recovery group is looking at is what do we do longer term. So longer-term planning guidance and housing design certainly plays a role in flood preparedness and responses as well. The other thing we are looking at in that bit of work is just about data really. What data do we have, what sort of warnings and forecast systems can we do? We are a very small area to forecast on a very defined locality. Trying to forecast weather for a catchment is nigh on impossible for such a small area. But what can we do in terms of our data environment, the census that we have got in the environment to give people more warning? But also agencies more warning so that we can be more prepared. That is another part of that report.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I am sure we will come back to it but we have had 2 one-in-100-year events in 5 years, so I think it is wise that everybody starts concentrating.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Quick question on that, sorry, just before we leave the topic. Is there an argument that, and I understand families will want to go back, of course, but there is too great a risk to put people back into those homes? I understand a lot of work has to be done but, as you have just said, there has been high rainfall and it is more frequent. Until the measures are in place to stop that risk again that it is too great a risk.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I think it is probably too early to say because we are going to be a couple of months before everything is ready for people to go back in any event. There has been frenetic activity., there really has, looking at every possible option. We are looking upstream as well because there is quite a big valley and it is a big catchment area. So it could be the case that you could put another structure further up, which would help to increase - this is a longer-term bit of work - water storage and give us a buffer in the event ...

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Do you think there is the potential for another reservoir to be developed upstream?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

What I am saying is we are trying to look at all angles. Obviously as we research them more and more, the feasibility or otherwise of that will come to the fore. But what we are trying to say, if we are looking at both sides of the wall, what can be done in the event that the water comes over and what can be done going back and what can be done in terms of redesign.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

But those are all long term and residents going back after a few months ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Some, and what I would say about working with Jersey Water as a flood management partner is the fact that we could do some calculations and say we may not have caught one that is as bad as the one day but anything coming up to that level could be caught by having the reservoir half empty for the winter months or something of that nature. What has become apparent, and I think common sense would dictate that in any event, the more you use Grands Vaux as a flood management tool the more you prejudice the supply of water when you start running out in the summer months. I think that is a fairly obvious statement but it may be that we take the decision to do that. We could have a programme that is trying to reduce water usage as well, which would be useful for us in any event. But like I am saying, it is a big balancing act and we are trying to make people do short, medium and long-term planning so that we give as much comfort as we can for people when they move back. The other thing that we must say is I think we need a much sharper flood management emergency plan so that when the Met identifies something that is problematic there is, if you like, a grade 1 to 10 scenario. They push a button and everybody knows exactly what to do.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

I think picking up on the community perspective, obviously Andium are in very regular dialogue with the tenants who have been displaced and the families. I would say probably each of those families have got a different opinion. Some will probably want to move back, some have probably taken options elsewhere.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

But there is an option. If families do not want to move back because they feel this is too great a risk, particularly when they hear that we cannot do a lot about it at the moment, it is a long-term plan, that they do have that option. Just to reassure.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

Andium, I think it is fair to say, have responded really well. They are having very regular dialogue with their tenants as to what options they have got. So either option going back to a refurbished home or going into another property elsewhere. I guess they are very personal conversations, depending on the families concerned. Each one will have ...

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

The question has to be asked, Minister: would you be prepared to go and live in one of those properties after these events?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It would depend on the options that are available to me and I have to say if Andium offered me somewhere else to go and I did not have to go.

[11:45]

But it depends. People like community as well. Sometimes people would put the desire to be living alongside the same people as they were before above the risk of being flooded out again. Really that is very much an individual choice.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

I think it is also fair to say, picking up on the housing, not all the properties in the area were affected as much as others. So some of the homes with a different design, so a townhouse option with effectively a garage on the ground floor, they have been recycled back into use far more quickly than ones with lots more living accommodation on the ground floor.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

Can I just ask one quickly? This is a yes or no answer really. Your recovery co-ordination group, does that include officials from both Parishes?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

It does.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Okay, I will move on to a not dissimilar subject, Minister. We are due to visit your new sewage treatment works very soon. Can you just give us a quick update on the status of the project?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I think we are pretty near the completion. If I can, I will hand over to Ellen because she has a minute-by-minute breakdown of where we are on it.

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

The project is all on track for the new sewage treatment works. It will be complete before the end of the year. So it is now effectively being used. We are getting grey effluent coming out of the new S.T.W. (sewage treatment works). We have just got some final settlement tanks still to build. The U.V. (ultraviolet) process has still got to be built and there are a few other small pieces of construction that are getting done at the moment this year. But it will be complete.



**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

We are looking forward to seeing that very much. We note of course that while we have got a new plant at Bellozanne, the bits of plant that feed on the pump into Bellozanne are now becoming a bit outdated. We just wondered, Minister, do you have a new liquid waste strategy coming out some time soon?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Indeed, yes. That is going to be quite expensive. Correct me if I am wrong, £14 million; I think that is the sort of sum we are looking for and a period of development ideally would be 4 years.

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

There is a very detailed strategy that has been shared with the Scrutiny Panel. I am not saying today but there is a really good presentation that goes through all the salient issues within there. I am not sure whether we could get a separate time with the Scrutiny Panel to do that.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

We have obviously seen that and we have read it. We were not sure if we were at liberty to discuss it in public with you today but we are very happy to, if you want to. But I appreciate that it certainly has enough in it that would justify a meeting all on its own, and we will certainly be looking to do that as soon as we possibly can. It is quite a concern to us that we may have housing projects which we think we are moving forward with, which may be held back purely because the capacity and the drainage system is not there.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I think there is an acceptance that it needs doing in a hurry. But I rather fancy that the money might have to be derived internally. We have got some discussions going on internally about how that might be funded. It may need to be done over a slightly longer period of time because I do not think we are going to be able to get our hands on that much money that quickly. But we will have more to report at some point in the future. Not something I can ...

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

You obviously have not got there yet but surely we get to a stage where the capacity and the drains gets to a point where money is not the problem. It just has to be found regardless. You have to get on because regardless of what happens we cannot have the drainage system failing.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I agree with you entirely. As I say, I cannot use the excuse that I am a new boy but I still only have been here 7½ months so we are trying to get our heads round how we are going to move forward

on that very quickly. I think the plan - once again I stand to be corrected - the team that now work with I.H.E., that are finishing and completing the sewage works, are the same team that we would use going forward. As they move out of doing the sewage work we have got a few months to try and find the initial funding and that same team would then move into doing the drainage works in-house.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

It is a little bit out of your remit but the director general certainly covers this: is there a danger that the capacity of the drainage system might stop some of the housing sites that were passed in the bridging Island Plan from being built?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

The very honest answer is yes. The ability for the infrastructure to handle additional pressure, we are at capacity in our drainage network so I think the positive side of that is that we know what the solution is. The engineering team is working with ... Ellen and her teams have the solutions, so we know what the solution is to increase capacity. They are deliverable solutions for the Island. We need to fund those and get on and deliver them effectively. But, yes, at the moment we have got a liquid waste drainage network at capacity, The other dilemma we have or problem we have is obviously we have an ageing network. So some of the other issues that we have around drainage, rising mains and things like that that feed to the sewage treatment works are also coming to the end of their life and they are beyond the end of their life effectively so they need investing and updating as well.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I am not going to dwell on this subject unless it is really important.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

One quick tiny little thing. Sorry, it is a bit pernickety this. You use the word "expensive" when you described the projects. Are you using the word "expensive" just simply because you think it is a large quantity of money or it is an expensive way to do it? Because I think it is a really important distinction. These things will cost money, of course they will, but there are 2 ways to do it. You can take an expensive option, in my terms, or you can take the cheaper option. So what context are you using the word "expensive" . I know it sounds pernickety but I think it is really important that we get the language.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I understand the distinction and it is the former description that I would opt for. It is just that it is a lot of money. I think it is probably safe to say, and I do not know what to be critical of past

Governments, but I think I.H.E. generally have been rather underfunded for a very long period of time. I think we are picking up the tab for a habit that people may have had in the past of looking at: "I think we can put the squeezes on there and spend the money elsewhere." So we are really having to step up. But I think from the plans that I have seen, what we are doing is a very sensible use of money and the best value for money. I am very comfortable about the spend. I am just quite uncomfortable about the fact that it is a large sum of money needed in a very short space of time. I just want to touch on one other point that I think might be useful. You say will some of the housing developments suffer or be delayed, but I think it is probably safe to say that we can prioritise by virtue of what the state or what the developers want to do because it is not all going to happen at the same time. I think what we would look to do is say: "Where are you developing next?" and we try and follow those developments as they are coming up. We would be working concurrently with those developments to make sure that the developments and the drainage work in tandem and then move around on that basis.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

But it is entirely possible, Minister, if we could find the contractors, that we could be building housing sites all over the Island at the same time?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

The reality is we are unlikely to be able to build everything at the same time. It is unlikely that we would be able to find the staff and teams to attend to the money and the personnel to carry all of that out in a very short space of time.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

The draft Bridging Island Plan identifies twice the number of homes required per year than the previous 10 years. Are you saying the Island does not have the capacity to deliver the homes that we passed in the Island Plan?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

You have very cleverly taken me into difficult territory. I am not saying that. I am just saying that the reality is I think that we should be able to keep ... let us put it on a more positive note, hopefully keep pace with the building programme.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Is it your intention then to allow these developments to go forward perhaps with tight tanks?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

That may be something that we have to look at. Once again that adds expense but I think we have to take each situation as it arises. You probably go down that road if you found yourself unable to keep pace. That would be an option if and when you get to that point, and our hope is we would not get to that point. It is an option, as you rightly say.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I am going to use my chairmanship to draw a line under liquid waste because I want to talk about solid waste. At the last States sitting, Minister, I did ask you a question about solid waste at La Collette. It is clear that not only are we continuing to increase the size of the super-fill for the contaminated waste in the engineered pit but you have indicated that you may be looking for planning application to start super-fill for inert. Can I ask on planning application lines how soon we can expect an application for inert waste and where we are with the application for the contaminated waste because the original one went in in 2016? It came back to the Planning Committee some time ... it would be 12, 18 months ago, was sent back and is still yet to reappear. It would seem like the Infrastructure Department are continuing to operate outside of planning policy and have done for now 6 or 7 years.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Since it was highlighted I know there has been a lot more activity with regard to the contaminated waste. I do not have a full update on that and I am sure Ellen will know precisely where we are with that.

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

The planning application was submitted. The planning officers have asked for additional information. That has now been provided so it is all back effectively within the planner's court to consider that application. That is for the hazardous waste material cells.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

What about the inert waste?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I should have mentioned that we will be putting in an application sooner rather than later. I think we have to face the fact that we have not got any short-term solutions and we have precious little alternative other than to look to super-fill where we are.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Is that an acceptable answer, Minister?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes, it is. I have to say I cannot take responsibility for what happened prior to last June. I am confronted with a situation where there are no short-term options and we either bring the Island's building industry to a halt or we face the reality that we have to find something to do in the short to medium term,. We are having a number of discussions about medium and long-term solutions. We are having as many meetings on that as we possibly can to try and make as much progress as we can. I think the super-fill option could buy us up to 5 years, would it be fair to say?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

I think it is worth, in the context of what the Island's strategy has been on inert waste, it has been to expect the private sector to provide that solution going forward. Effectively the La Collette site had a limited life. It was always going to get filled up at some point. So there are other sites in private sector ownership that were anticipated to come on stream. One of them is the big quarry up in St. Mary's. That has not yet come on stream and therefore that ... and that is unlikely to come on stream within, we think, probably the next 2, 3 years. As a result, that puts the ball back in Government's court again as to is Government finding a solution for this again? The strategy we have been working for has been that Government would be stepping away from inert waste filling but I think at this point in time we are going to need to take a step forward again and think we have to find a solution.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

That was going to be my next question because it is clear that where the private sector have the ability to divert us off track from a plan that we might have, that is not great for Government because we made, as we have done, fill up our own site and then find we have nowhere to go, which puts everybody in a difficult spot. Surely the intention had been for La Collette, once it had been brought up to ground level, we would be building on that. I appreciate there are problems with Buncefield and the fuel but it is a suite that needs to be built on and not super-filled ideally.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Absolutely, I could not agree more. I would like to see that as much as you would but the harsh reality is we are where we are. I think we could be up to 5 years before granite products come online.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

We are seeing more successful recycling of products with our government contractor there. So that is a positive. The future of La Collette still is probably waste management. It is a good place to do a lot of things away from residents and that nuisance that that creates. So I think the longer-term potential for La Collette is still for processing of waste, still a good controlled environment with all

the right permits and licences, and it does not pick up the complaints that we get around waste sites elsewhere in the Island.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

We need to move on. The last question I have is that obviously we are going to start clearly super-filling La Collette with inert waste. But at the same time we know with tidal levels rising and sea defences required that Government or somebody is going to have to start securing our sea defences. We will need inert waste for that. How quickly can you come forward with these sea defence proposals so we can avoid tipping a whole load of stuff at La Collette and then digging it out and repositioning it? That seems to be our favourite thing when you think we are now moving west of Albert down to La Collette.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I have to say, if you had not asked the question I was going to make the comment anyway. Coastal defences does play a part. I think the areas, my understanding is we have got granite products possibly. I do not know if Ronez is a possible at some point in the future.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

It might be possible.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It may be possible but that is a long way off. We have also got the Simon Sand area, which we are looking at. That comes complete with a whole load of its own problems. And we have got coastal defences. Those are the 4 areas.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

How much of a priority is coastal defence, Minister?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Starting with Havre des Pas, I think it is fair to say that that is ... in terms of the least input for the biggest output Havre des Pas would be the first place to look because there are more homes on a low-lying area than it is susceptible to target flooding.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I have not seen any proposals but I can only imagine it is going to be hugely controversial. When do you think you might be starting to come to us or come to the public with proposals for coastal defence?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I am probably going to put my foot in it. I would say hopefully later this year we would be prepared to come forward with something. You can imagine there are already plans drafted up and in place but they are not at a point where we can go public with those yet.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

I think it is fair to say in terms of priorities obviously we have had inland flooding with Grands Vaux and that has taken our thoughts that way. We have to prioritise coastal defence and use of inert material for coastal defence in my mind is a better community and economic benefit to the Island than potentially restoring inland sites.

[12:00]

I think we have to have a very live debate with the Island around that. The impacts of coastal flooding with what we are seeing in the climate can be quite big so we have to take that seriously. I think that is where we have to prioritise our efforts.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Okay, I am going to draw a line there.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I will just make a couple of comments. Having looked at the plans I am hoping that the Havre des Pas suggestions will not be too controversial because (a) the protection is required and (b) I think the design that has been put forward could enhance the area. The only thing about that is that in the first instance where you want a big area to use inert material it will not involve a huge amount of inert material. So it does a little bit to keep us going but it is not a wholesale solution to a complicated problem. But it would help.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Okay, well I am sure we will return to that one in the near future. For a quick update on our hospital I will hand over to the Constable.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

The public are clearly interested in what is going on and I am aware that things are advancing in certain areas, particularly at Les Quennevais. But as an overall comment, where are we with regard to the rest, shall we say, apart from the decant of Overdale to Les Quennevais? We have seen criticism coming from other States Members about projects being stopped and so on. What is your

vision of how the new hospital, hospital project, whatever you want to call it, is going to be developed? Are we going to remain in Gloucester Street? What are your thoughts?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I think we are pretty much continuing with the plan that we outlined in the 100-day plan in that there is an intention of using Overdale and Kensington Place. The likelihood is that Overdale will be commenced quite a long way ahead of Kensington simply because of the fact that in a very few short weeks, when the planning obligations are sorted out, we will have a planning permit and we can work backwards with that planning permit. We have all of the consultations already done, so it just means going back to the conditions and people that run the hospital to decide how those adjacencies are going to be divided up and which work will stay at Overdale and which will be put into Kensington Place. In the meantime, by the end of June this year, we have the mental health facility coming onstream. It has been a very complicated development and I think it is going to cost £9 million by the time it is finished. That does buy us a little bit of time with regard to the mental health services because that is going to be a facility that is considerably better than anything we have had probably ever. That does buy a little bit of time on that too. It really then comes down to the division of services between the 2 sites: Overdale and Kensington. The work is underway now to divide those 2 areas. We are hoping to come up with a business plan by about the end of May.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Clearly, you have had landed in your lap accusations of wasting of money. How much money, which has been spent on previous projects, are we being able to use in the present thought process?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

That is a difficult question to answer at this point in time. But we have been asked that obviously by the accountants for accounting purposes but what we are basically saying is we are taking a number that we are going to apply as a temporary measure and when we get towards the end of this year, when we know where we are, we will know how much of the existing information that we have got has been utilised. There are certain things that we do know. We have tried to draw a line from an infrastructural point of view along the main road outside Overdale and say that we are trying to preserve, from the bottom upwards, the bowling club, basically the road infrastructure and rescue the 14 houses so we do not get any demolition. So those things, having been purchased by Government, will go down as an ongoing asset. We are then carrying out some work on the other side of the road on the William Knott Building and the Samarès building to see whether they need to be incorporated. The sad fact is they probably will be to make best use of the site. So there will be some savings there but probably not so on the other side of the road. But these are all decisions that is work in progress, so it is difficult to define exactly what and what will not count as a saving up to this point.



**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Can you just give an indication of the timeline of the opening of the Les Quennevais hospital and then decant from Overdale?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

The opening of Overdale should be in the summer, sort of July-time. I think we are on contract to finish that. In terms of what is going to be decanted, the overall plan was to decant whatever is up at Overdale at the moment. But I think in conjunction with the Health Department, they are looking at some fine-tuning possibilities and one or two minor changes that might take place between now and then. That is a body of work that is taking place as we speak. But the overall intention is a relocation of stuff from there, but it may not be 100 per cent in accordance with the plans that were originally issued. But it will not be a million miles from it. But in fairness to us, that is more a health service exercise than one for us. We do not dictate what goes where. We provide the facilities, they decide how they are going to be utilised.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Just a final one from me. In terms of transport, particularly to the Overdale site when we get to that stage, will we be using your in-house transport team to facilitate that as opposed to employing outside contractors?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Transport to and from the site?

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Infrastructure changes which may be needed to make the sites more usable, more user friendly, particularly with the sharp hairpin bend at Westmount. Is that going to be retained as it is? Or will we have to make alterations to that?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We are trying to make sure that whatever we design on the top of a hill can work with the existing infrastructure. That is the whole purpose of this, to try and avoid the £20 million infrastructural cost. But, as you know, we have a very good in-house team that are going to provide to us on that all the way through the process.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

It is fair to say we will need to keep the separation between the Highways Authority and applicant. So the designs for the revisions of Overdale will be done by the project itself utilising probably

external help. We do not carry that amount of ability within or capacity within our teams. But we have to retain the Highways Authority to comment on things. We still have a statutory role as the Highways Authority. The Highways team will not be designing the hospital project. It will be done by the Hospital Project.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

I am suggesting perhaps do we need to learn from past mistakes and I think that failed. In the last iteration ...

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

We will not legally be able to do that. We will not be able to use our Highways Authority to design the project and then the Highways Authority to then judge the project. They will not be able to be gamekeeper and poacher legally.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Will they be giving advice perhaps?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

They will, yes.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Not that it is probably what I wanted to hear..

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I was going to just ask a couple on that topic. Can you say that there will not be any changes to the road structure? Somewhere I head a phrase “smoothing out of the road”, so are we looking at some changes, some work on the road structure around by People’s Park on the way out?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I am happy to take that; it is a controversial one. We are looking to minimise to the greatest extent that we can any infrastructural changes to the road network.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

But there may well be changes because they will be necessary.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I mean there may well be some minor changes but we are not looking to do anything substantial. That is the whole point of this exercise. As I say, I cannot sit here and say we are not going to

change anything. There might be some changes and we are going to make them as minor as we can.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

The second one in your Ministerial delivery plans, with the hospital project, or whatever it is going to be called, the by when indicative phrase delivery to 2031 to be confirmed subject to feasibility studies. Is 2031 the date you are looking at as the earliest, latest, median?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

That is difficult to be drawn to a precise date. What we are trying to get ourselves into a position really is that we start treating health facilities as health facilities rather than one great glorious facility that does everything for a period of time and then confronts the Island in 50 or 55 years from now with exactly the same problem as it has had now where you need to renew everything all at once. Because that is a huge financial burden and it is an environmental burden. On 45 square miles that is going to be every bit as difficult next time round. It could be that the mental health facility that does stay at a distance and we will provide some facilities as we are doing with Les Quennevais on alternative sites and we have 2 sites delivering healthcare. It would be nice to be in a position where we have periodic either a restoration or replacement on a systematic basis where we can make a continual level of investment in healthcare facilities going forward. Each time we renew it is an opportunity to bring that block up to latest standard and best practice.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

There will be a number of different sites.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes, this whole business of having one site, it just becomes more and more and more outdated until we get to a crisis point. Then, as I say, we relive all of the misery that we have had over the last 10-years. So I think there is an opportunity in what we are looking to do to balance some of that off and make it more manageable from an environmental and a financial point of view.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Finally, on this one, Minister, may I just ask from your point of view, given that elections over the past 2 iterations have been a problem and both those iterations have failed due to that, what do you see being achieved during your term of office?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

My aim is to have as much done at the end of this term as to be able to say that it is then irreversible. Construction actually happening at Overdale and similarly at Kensington Place because we are

looking at the possibility of a couple of other requisitions in Kensington Place to maximise the floor space that we have got available. We have got, as probably everybody knows, sitting right in the middle of Kensington Place the Energy Centre. The truth of the matter is that before you start any serious planning there you have to be in a position where you know that you are going to move that. You need to know where you are going to move it to and you need to have started moving it so that you can run in tandem with the sort of 2-year gap between the 2 bits of work going on. Yes, we are going as quickly as we can and we want the whole thing to be irreversible. That is the object of the exercise.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Okay, I think we will call it a day on the hospital for now, Minister, because we want to ask you some questions about another building not very far away on the other side of the Parade. Deputy Ward has some questions on the new office.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Minister, in your response to the panel's review follow-up questions you stated that the establishment of a single facility in St. Helier on the Cyril Le Marquand site would vacate sites with land value of £22.7 million and generate revenue. Once the move into the new building takes place can you detail what will happen to the vacant sites?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Not with any precision because those are discussions that are happening as we speak; a discussion that happens within I.H.E. and within Future Places. So I do not think there is any sort of hard and fast ...

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

It is fair to say we are coming over a number of sites. Some of those are sites that we own. Some of those sites are sites that we lease in currently. The buildings that we vacate that we have leased in, they are not in our ownership but we ... that we would no longer lease them. For instance, they will go back to the owners. We have a range of other sites that we are coming out of. Some are older than others so some we may look to recycle back into the market and rent out ourselves to bring a government income and some may well be regenerated for other purposes. We probably have a mix of all 3 of those on these vacated sites?

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Would they be sold? Are you looking to raise revenue by selling because you only get the opportunity once?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

Ideally, those sites which are rentable straight to the market we would seek to retain ownership but rent. I think that is a solid proposition for property to fund future property investment that we need into our building stock. Those sites which are past their useful life, the conversation would be whether we pass those over to one of our arm's length bodies to regenerate for housing, for instance. There is a mixture of both of those.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

But you have somewhere a list of all of those sites that you are ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

They are all under discussion. We have discussed them already.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I think it would be useful for this panel to know about that at some point.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

We are really clear what services are moving in to be allocated against new office H.Q. (headquarters) so there will be a list of sites which we are vacating, which we can share with the panel.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

What is the date for that move? Do you have that yet?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

Yes, so the building is due to be completed July 2024 and then we go through a series of moves into the building so that it becomes operational autumn 2024 effectively.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

In the review of Government Plan, you stated that the financial case and the full business case and specifically the financial benefits of which the Council of Ministers approved the project are presently being reviewed to reflect the rising costs since April 2021, all the sorts of things that have affected other decisions that have obviously been made; changes in the values of land, events since the appointment in 2021, i.e. reviewing the projects itself. Can you update us on this funding strategy and the financial benefits that were reviewed and what was the outcome of that review, of the strategy around the office building? You obviously were looking at that again.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

The purchase or otherwise?

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Well, yes, for what I would call a rather convoluted set of options that you have. My cards are on the table, I did not think it was a good idea but I just say that personally.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

And I put my cards on the table and say I had absolutely nothing to do with it. But we are where we are. But my understanding is we have got an option to buy. I think it is over a 3-year period.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

Yes, I think in terms of savings to Government it is worth saying that the business case has been updated to mainly tackle a number of things. One is rising energy costs, so going into a more efficient building actually saves us more money than where we are currently in our estate. The original business case assumes certain services were going in. A couple of those services are not going in for operational reasons so we have had to refresh the business case. It is still saving Government a substantial amount of money every year, up to £6 million a year revenue is still forecast, and I mention energy costs as a good example of how we have had to update some of the costings around our savings. Energy is now a lot more expensive than it was. Going into a BREEAM excellent building, it is going to have an A-class energy rating.

[12:15]

It will save us more money on our energy costs, for instance. That is one example of some of the updates to the business case that has taken place.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

In terms of the options that you have, because one of them is to carry on renting for a certain number of years and it goes back to the builders who are ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Safe to say that our intention I think would be to purchase at the end.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

It is under the agreement. We have a contract for the contractors to build it, they are incurring the cost of construction. We have a 3-year election period during which we can elect to buy the building off them or we can continue as a Government to rent on an annual basis. That decision is not with us yet but that starts sort of 2024, once it is completed.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

My understanding is that it is at a given price. The option to buy is at a fixed price, and I think it is safe to say that we might be into different territory now, I do not know, but the last time I looked the finished value of the building had gone up quite considerably so it would be, on paper at the moment, to our benefit to buy it subject to those values not changing substantially between now and the purchase time.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Who pays for the fit-out? Do we pay for that?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

That is part of the construction. Tim might be able to ...

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

Yes, the contractor basis. The contractor will deliver a turnkey solution next year that we will move into and we will rent it or we will buy it, but at the moment all the costs of the project, including the fitout, are carried by the contractor. It is worth highlighting the point that the chief officer made that the price was set 4 years ago, so there has been a lot of movement in between, which is to our benefit.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Who will be paying, therefore ... the contractor will pay for the Ministerial chairs. Those of us old enough to remember will recall there was much controversy over the provision of very comfortable chairs for the Ministerial suite on the 9th floor.

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

We are in the process of going through a chair selection bid at the moment. There are a number of task chairs, office chairs, that are around various points of the office estate that the team will choose and whether you are a Minister or a civil servant you will have your posterior parked on the same chair that will have been selected democratically.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I am tempted to ask, Minister, that you might be brave enough to go to a public consultation to see which sort of chairs the public would like you to sit on. **[Laughter]**

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I will come back to that because I do have a ...

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

There is one final, really important question from me, is to say: will the decision be made before the end of this term?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Regarding the purchase?

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Regarding the purchase.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I think contractually that would be a requirement.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

Yes, within the contract we have a 3-year election period but I think the advice that we would give Ministers is an earlier decision would be more sensible than a late decision.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

In any event, I think the decision would have had to have been made before the end of the term because I think the option runs out almost concurrent with the election itself, and if there was an intention to buy we would have had to put ourselves in a position to know how we are going to do that long before the time runs out. So the answer to that, I think - working it back from the date - would be that the decision would have to be made in this term, yes.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I have one final question, Minister. It is interesting, I was under the impression that all government services would move into this new building. Can I ask your director which departments have elected or decided that they are not going to go into this building then?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

Yes. Firstly, it is an office building so the majority of office dwellers within the ring road, within St. Helier, are aiming to go in. So we have 2,000 staff aiming to be ... that will be their headquarters where they work from or where their home base would be. The Government employs probably about 7,500 so we have a number of other people here in our employ not in offices within the town. So some of the services that are not going in ... I will give one example, Customs and Immigration. While they are located in town at Maritime House they will be for operational reasons operating out of a different site. So that is just one example. It is generally those services which have more of a



... they have an operational reason not to be there or the client group they are dealing with is not appropriate to be dealt with in an office setting.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

You gave the impression 10 minutes ago that there were some that were destined to go there who have since decided they are not.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

Yes, when the project was first conceived things such as Customs and Children and Adolescent Mental Health, for instance, were both services that were on the list to come in, and I think through conversations with those departments and clarity about how those services are delivered and how they want to be delivered in the future, those 2 services, for instance, have come out of the list and they are going to be provided in different locations. So mostly this building will cater for office-based services. So just as a department ourselves, we have some staff going in but we also have a lot of operational staff who are not going in. So the regulation teams are going in, the property teams are going in, some of our natural environment staff may come in, but a lot of our operational folk, a lot of our staff are more operational so they will not be in.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Okay, thank you for that. We are going to move to sustainable transport. The Constable has some questions.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Yes. Minister, can you provide an update on how work is progressing with regard to the sustainable transport roadmap and are you still on target to deliver by mid-2023? I think I will align to that the cycling strategy.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes, my understanding is that the roadmap will be ready for publishing possibly by June. Would you say that was an accurate enough estimate? Yes. So it will be completed by then. It is probably a bit later than we were expecting because we are pretty heavily under-resourced.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Leading on from the last subject, the town offices, with significant numbers involved, access to that building is probably quite fundamental in terms of the cycling strategy which the Constable of St. Helier regularly reminds us about, or the absence of it. Will that be adapted to suit that building?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

There is going to have to be some adaptations because there is an enormous number of ... I think it can facilitate ... is it up to 2,000 in total?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

Up to 2,000, yes.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

1,500 desks, I think, for 2,000 users.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

I think the first comment on that would be that the staff going into that building are already coming into St. Helier, so already based here, so it is a change of I guess the last 100, 200 metres of their travel rather than the travel into town. But the building itself does require a travel plan before occupation, so that is something that we, as a Government, will need to produce in terms of how people are travelling to the building. It is a facility that has staff changing, a lot of locker facilities, cycle facilities for that, so yes, we have to dovetail that thinking into this building but also our wider conversations.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

So cycle storage or cycle facilities you mentioned, does that include storage? Given that an electric bicycle can cost £2,000-plus these days, people do not really want to leave them on the street. Are we able to provide secure storage for bicycles?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

So the building itself has space for changing and showers and lockers for staff. It does not have extensive cycle storage as have some in the vicinity, but we will need to utilise existing infrastructure. As I said, a lot of our staff are coming to St. Helier anyway so it is that last 200 yards.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

There is a much higher concentration of utilisation on that corner than there was hitherto so the adjacent area needs to be looked at very carefully and will be.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Certainly, I think your predecessor in office had visits to Holland, I think, where their projects were noted and maybe we can do something better there.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Well, we are working quite closely with the Dutch and we have another visit to ... one of their senior representatives was over just before Christmas, and we have a return visit to them to look at 3 or 4 various areas that tackle various elements of cycling and sustainable transport.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Well, we look forward to seeing the report in June. Just while we are on transport, the vehicle testing centre and the Vienna Convention, where are we? What are we going to do? What are our obligations I suppose is probably a better ...?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Hot off the press, we had a fairly rigorous meeting yesterday afternoon on that subject, and I come at it from a slightly different angle to all the professionals in that I have been actively trying to slow things up, but the practical reality is it is going to take some time before we can get to that in any event. It has been made totally clear to me that over the course of time we do have to comply with the Vienna Convention and I think some of the thinking is around how swiftly we start introducing more costs for people. My questions are: to what extent can we fetter that over the course of time and possibly even renegotiate? I think we have some very favourable terms. I think the normal testing process in the U.K. (United Kingdom) would be annual and our team very cleverly negotiated a one year in 3 situation. A lot of the questions are when we finally get to the point where we probably have to comply is that going to be done by the private sector or is it going to be done by Government or a combination. We have been going through all of those details and it really was quite a rigorous session yesterday. Because as far as I am concerned, I want to make sure that if we do go down this road that we have proved that we really do need to do it. I am a bit more convinced than I was but I still have a degree of scepticism. There are 2 elements. One is compliance, and I do not think we are under a huge amount of pressure but I know others would have something to say about that, but compliance will be required. The other is, and it is a more sensitive one, the safety element and we are trying to get more data together to work out what elements of safety may or may not be tackled by virtue of an inspection process. Because it is quite widely known now that we are going to employ 2 safety officers to co-ordinate road safety to reduce the amount of accidents and serious injuries we have. I had a meeting with the police chief yesterday. He showed me the amount of serious injuries that we get in the course of a year, and deaths sadly, and if we can take some of that misery out and what we do here results in helping that, then ... but we do need to quantify that.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

The site location of a potential testing centre was put into the bridging Island Plan as being the field next to the airport. Does that still prevail?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I think that is unlikely, yes, and what came out of yesterday's meeting is that we are going to take a more comprehensive look at La Collette. There might be some possibilities of co-locating other areas of work that we do into a new building, which will make some savings and free up other sites. So this is early stages and what we are trying to do is take the most comprehensive view we can about consolidation and compliance, timing, all of these things taken in the round, to come up with something that if we do do it, it makes good sense and some of the funding can come by virtue of consolidation and freeing up other sites.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

When you mention either Government run or private, what does the private industry think of which way they would like it?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

My understanding of the consultation that has taken place is there is no great appetite. I think it is fair to say there is not a huge amount of appetite. It does worry me that people are, for perhaps wrongheaded reasons, turning down the opportunity of possibly making some money from it, but looking at it, there are a number of different things to take into account here and one of them is efficiency. You know that if you have a single building and it is purpose-built and you have incoming points, outgoing points, and you can run it such that the kit that you have is in constant use, then you are getting a hell of a lot better use of your capital investment than if everybody starts investing and competing with each other and you have lots of machinery. I come from the agricultural industry where we had stop digging orders and we had thousands of harvesters working 3 hours a day. It was a complete waste of time and money and it needed to be rationalised. So we might take the view that we go straight for the most efficient option in the first instance. That also keeps the cost down. So, as I say, lots of work going on in this area but we are looking at it very, very rigorously because I think we are quite fortunate in a way that we come at it from 2 different angles. So I think whatever we come to is going to be the result of a very, very rigorous process where we have taken everything that we can into account in terms of getting value and including as many elements as we can at the same time.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

As a final question, Minister, you do not appear to be in any great rush to resolve the issue of the Vienna Convention, et cetera, but surely there must be a time by which we must have made a decision. We cannot go on for ever the way we are.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

My understanding of it, and I want to always stand to be corrected, but my understanding of it is so long as we are continually showing to be making progress in that direction, within reason, then we should be on fairly solid ground. We are already doing quite a lot of testing and I think we can step up the testing for larger motorcycles, which takes us another step down the road. So I think we have to look. I think there are a number of other areas signed up to this and a number of them people are making progress at different paces.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I ask the question not so much as an Island driver, more so as a person who takes his vehicle to the European Union. My concern would be that at some point in the future the E.U. (European Union) decide that we are now outside of Europe, we are signed up to the Vienna Convention, but if somebody in France, for example, was to take exception to the fact that we are not making as fast progress as we should, I would be very concerned to think that Island drivers could be discriminated against.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

So would I. I think the team will bear me out. That is one thing that I have been fairly hot on all the way through this. I think that would probably be the guiding principle. There are 2 arguments. I think the average speed ... the computer in my car tells me my average speed is 16 or 17 miles an hour and I do not see a huge need for this but it will need to be done. I know that when you go abroad cars are travelling at 70 or 80 miles an hour on a motorway, and I think that we have an obligation to make sure in the not-too-distant future that the cars that do leave here ... we have gone into that as a staged process and then, of course, you get things like human rights come up as an issue: we cannot do that because ... and these things are probably quite true.

[12:30]

So there is a lot of complexity in there but the governing factor from this probably will be that if we do stretch things it must not be to the point where we jeopardise people's ability to put their car on the boat and go to France or to Europe. I think that would be a break point and we do not intend to get to that.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Do you not see an advantage in allowing the private sector to be able to conduct testing to those clients who wish to have their car tested to be able to go to France without any difficulty and pay for it?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes, and that is something that we have considered, too, but then it comes back to the argument: do you let somebody go and invest in something to fulfil a market for a very short space of time, then cut their legs off by putting a government facility in that you are going to try and make as efficient as you can? But they are all things ... so it is a hot topic for us and it is receiving a lot of attention. So we will be making progress. I rather suspect if we roll in all the things that we are trying to do in terms of consolidation we can move as quickly as we can, and we are still going to take a while before we get there. So I think it is going to be a self-limiting process for us, but please do not think it is being ignored or treated lightly because I think everybody will bear me out, it is receiving some pretty focused attention, yes.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Okay, we are going to move on to the Minister for Infrastructure's favourite subject, the one that keeps coming back ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I have lots of favourite subjects.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

... every August, sea lettuce and coastline management.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

Over to me. Minister, in relation to coastline sea lettuce management, in your letter to the panel received on 1st September 2022 you mentioned that the department was looking into potential disposal opportunities. As the Island prepares to enter the warmer months, is there any further update on this?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Right, I am going to have to raise my hands and say that since September I have not had a chance to have a closer look at this, so apologies for that. I know that other more competent people will, so I am going to hand over to Ellen.

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

I think certainly for this season we will be doing what we did last year, so trying to put as much sea lettuce as when we collect it on to land. We were very successful last year. I think we put about 5,500 tonnes of sea lettuce on to land and again we will be managing that with our contractors. It is very challenging with the tides and getting on to land and picking sea lettuce off, but I think we did as good a job as we were able to, considering the circumstances last year, and we will be looking at repeating that again this year.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

What sort of percentage is that? You know you said so much tonnage, but what sort of percentage are you talking about? When I look at the beach, how much of that lettuce are we moving?

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

What we are trying to do is clear the top parts of the beach, certainly where there are concessions at the top and where people go and use. Obviously, we cannot clear the whole beach. What we try to do is when we can get on to the beach - because you cannot in the afternoon when it is a hot day and there are lots of people and the public - when we can get on to the beach and the tide allows that, we go through and clear that top area and remove as much sea lettuce as we are able to, as long as we have the land bank available to put it on to. We did an awful lot of that last year, certainly in August.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

In terms of a day, it would probably have a couple of hundred tonnes a day, 200 tonnes a day can come off, but I think our estimate is that there could be up to 9,000 tonnes at any one time in the bay.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Is that with water or without water? Because obviously the water content is significant. I mean, is it ...?

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

That is with water. Because of the timescales you do not have an opportunity to drain all of that or compress that in the same way. So you are picking it off the beach, it is draining out and then going straight on to land.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

What percentage of that is water do you think? Obviously, there is discussion about water content and getting it ...

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

I would say there is a significant amount of that is water, 80 per cent, but I could find out for you.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Yes. Can I just ask, in terms of the sewage treatment works, are the improvements there going to have an effect on the nitrate level in the bay, do you think?

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

We are obviously looking and always trying to lower our nitrates but, as we have discussed before, there are already nitrates in the bay and nitrates all the way out to France within that water, so it is not going to have a significant impact when we are looking at the general nitrates in the bay. I think the seaweed issue is here to stay at the moment and it is trying to look at the best way that we can in trying to manage that and make it as least disruptive as possible.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

But is it not stimulated by nitrates, not only from Bellozanne and from the ...

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

Yes, from the runoff from the streams, yes.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

But at one point it was thought it was about 50:50 and I just wondered if the improvements at Bellozanne may have a significant effect on reduction of sea lettuce in the bay, depending on temperatures, of course.

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

It may do but there are already lots of nitrates within the bay from the sea to St. Malo and all the water that is there any way from when they have done the monitoring and testing before. So as you are going out, I am hoping that as we put less nitrates and the nitrate management that the Environment team are doing and working closely with the farmers, that should have an impact, but again we will see that through the testing that the Environment team do in that space.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

The previous research showed that the nitrate levels are pretty much even all the way out into the Bay of St. Malo. It is not just St. Aubin's Bay which has it, the sea has high nitrates in the entire Bay of St. Malo.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It is my understanding that if we had no nitrate runoff at all there is a chance that we would still get the same amount of sea lettuce as we are doing because of the nature of the problem right the way through that part of the channel.

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

Depending on the temperatures at certain times of the year.



**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Yes, I appreciate that, having lived with it, but we do not see it in the other bays. The concentration or slight increase in concentration seemed to be one of the stimulants for the sea lettuce from research I had seen before, and clearly a lot of work has been done on the outfall to Beaumont and through farmers adopting different principles, but I was rather hoping that this large spend we have had at Bellozanne might do something to mitigate the effect of sea lettuce in the bay. So I would be surprised if it does not, put it like that.

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

I am only going from what the scientists say on that side, but there are nitrates already within the bay and it is also, as we know with St. Aubin's Bay, it being shallow, with the sun and the heat and the impact that that has, it is like a perfect breeding ground for the sea lettuce.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

I agree, yes, indeed. Maybe the science has changed, of course, in the past few years. That is possible, too, yes.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

I think it is important to say that the new sewage treatment works does not have a denitrification plant on it, so that is a potential addition to the sewage treatment works. That would be more capital investment required.

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

Certainly, with the new plant as we are running it now we are seeing lower levels of nitrate than from the old plant that we had before, so that is really positive as well.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Good.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

Anything else being considered?

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

There is looking at different machinery to be able to compress the seaweed and suchlike, but just because of the scale and the amount of tonnage that we are dealing with, that is not practical within the timescales and the windows that we are working with.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I have to say, I am sorry, I use that bay a lot and it is unusable for a lot of the summer, absolutely unusable. There are a couple of tractors picking up the ... you know, it is like an impossible task, but surely it is just a question of a commitment to increasing the removal because it is not useable for the majority of the summer. I think leaving one of our bays in that condition is just not the right thing to do at all.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It is tricky because it is producing industrial levels of sea lettuce that you are dealing with and it is very intermittent, is it not? Depending on the weather you can have a huge amount in ... managing that from a practical point of view, from an investment and a personnel point of view, is not easy. It is worth having a closer look at it and you are welcome to come down and go through all of the details, and that is probably the best way of doing it, to look at it in more specific detail, because it is a management ... from what I have seen, a management nightmare. It is not a click your fingers and I will just stick a few tractors down there. It does not quite work like that.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

No, I am not suggesting it is but we have known about it for a long time. When you said you were successful last year, you may have been successful with the amount of tonnage you removed but you were not successful in having that bay as a useable form. The smell was quite significant at times as well around that area. So I do not think we should be using the word "successful" in terms of management of that bay when it simply was not. I think a lot of residents around that area will agree with that.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Subjective things, success. I think what I would like to do genuinely - obviously you are very concerned about this - is to invite you to have a look at the detail and if you have any suggestions as to how we might do it differently, but like so many of these things, it is easy to look from a distance and say: "That should be clear." When you get into the management of it, it is not.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

No, you are simplifying what I am saying to you and that is not what I am saying. I am not saying it as simple as adding more tractors. However, what I am saying to you is it is not being successfully managed so it can be used as a bay for a large proportion of the summer for people who need that for recreation. So, therefore, a new look needs to be had.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

As a statement of fact, I cannot argue with it, but it is a difficult ...

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

From an officer's point of view, we know that this problem has been around for a long time and I think we have looked and explored every option. We have gone to France to look and see how they manage it. We have looked at barging sea lettuce out to deep sea. We have looked at different ways of putting it on to land. We have looked at whether we could be using it as a product. But it is just that timing window of what you can do to pick it up and just the pure volume of that sea lettuce is a real challenge. I am happy if ...

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

Just on the final part of that, is there a limit to how much or how many people you are getting that will take it to how much you can take off, or are you taking ... have you got enough distribution to be able to take off as much as you have the window to take off? Does that make sense?

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

Yes, but it also presents other challenges. As much as we are taking the sea lettuce off the beach, then that also creates odour issues on the land in the area where it is. So then you get complaints from those neighbours and residents if it is not used and fertilised and farmed in straightaway. So it is a constant juggling act of trying to see what and how we can prioritise it.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

As already stated, you have people using the beaches. There are times when you can take it and there are times when you cannot, and you have to fit all of those things in. It is not just the collection, it is the whole process.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

To be honest, when it is covered in sea lettuce you do not have anyone using the beach because it is quite dangerous. It is slippery, it stinks and it is full of flies.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes, but what does happen is that the efforts are made to clear it from the top down, so the first thing you do is make the top part of the beach utilisable. As I say, it is a very, very complicated one and I think it would be very, very helpful if you would spend a couple of hours going through it and, as I say, it would help for you to understand that it is a very complicated problem that has received an awful lot of ...

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I will stop sending emails with pictures of it.

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

Send them to me.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

We could certainly see if the panel could come down and have a visit. That might be ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

That would be great if you were able to do that, yes.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

Shoreline management plan implementation. Minister, can you provide us with an update on the implementation of the shoreline management plan, please?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Are you talking about coastal defence sort of shoreline management?

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Yes.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes. Well, we have sort of touched on this already, have we not, the principal area being Havre des Pas and secondary to that St. Aubin's and West Park? It is probably fair to say that in terms of the use of inert waste we come back to West Park as being the biggest possible opportunity, but once again that is a very, very sensitive area. The extent to which that is done is going to be controversial. But is an area that is going to require ... and it came as some surprise to me, but towards the waterfront area an uplift of size at 3 metres plus is going to be required to stop the town flooding.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

Yes, I think it is fair to say the team who have looked ... within the epochs or the phases that we have to look at in terms of shoreline management there are various priority projects depending on which phase we are looking at. So the team have that work in train in terms of where are the priorities. Clearly, the south coast hits a bigger priority. It is lower lying and it is more inhabited so we have that work in train. Yes, Havre des Pas, St. Aubin's Bay, St. Aubin's and unsurprisingly everything to the south of the Island that is the lowest level is a higher priority, so we have that work. As the Minister said earlier, we have to now start to consult and socialise that work with the community, with the States Assembly Members, to understand what is acceptable and also how we deliver that funding but also practically.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

Just finally, because I know we have obviously spoken about this before, but what can Islanders expect in the next 12 months, anything?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

In 12 months? You might see a plan within 12 months. You certainly will not see anything physical happening within 12 months, that is for sure.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

What level of funding do you think it is going to require?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It is a very long term. What was the timing factor that we looked at for this? It is generations ...

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

Part of epoch 1 is part of the shoreline management plan that gets us to 2040, and as Andy has mentioned, there are probably about 10 projects along the south coast and going around to Gorey within that period. Some of that is significant funding depending on the size and the scale of those projects. The Minister rightly said about Havre des Pas is probably one of the top priorities. We will be looking to go out to consultation on that certainly this year. We have a detailed presentation which goes through the funding on that and, again, conversations with the Treasury about how do we manage the funding in order to protect the Island for those future years. I think that those are the conversations that will be had this year.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

When you use the word "epoch" that is really long term, is it not? Wow.

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

Yes.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

Yes, some of these solutions could be quite large in nature and quite large funding as a result. Some of them are single digit millions, some of them could be tens of millions, just to put it into context.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

I think we are done on that.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Okay. Where are we with shoreline encroachment policy, Minister? Obviously, a controversial subject from 4 or 5 years ago, but are we moving forward with that?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We are. We have our first really serious discussion coming up for that on Friday. It is an important issue to me on a personal level. That is one of the things that ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Right, we will stick that on the list for next time.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes, that is fine.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Can I just come in quickly on that one? We spoke obviously about the east coast principally during the debates we had in the States on that in the last term. There are other areas; because I know it particularly well, St. Aubin's is an area that has got ignored somewhat. Can we get a more detailed report on some of these areas, which I know we got to a certain level, particularly with the east coast ones, and what was an encroachment and what was not? Are we in a position to identify exactly what are encroachments in other parts of the Island?

[12:45]

I speak particularly because there were on the beach down there wooden posts which were put in in the 19th century, I suspect, as a mitigation measure. They have all fallen down. Is it Government's responsibility to replace those? They are not on private land. Or are they on private land? Owners will argue either way. Can we establish a policy? I have to say there has been correspondence for some years on this.

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

If I may, I think that this is going to fall out of ... we have heard of the requirement to respond to flooding. I think the previous examination of the foreshore has been from a slightly different context and I think that the review that we are just about to enter into will give us a much better idea of how that future policy needs to be enacted because it will be looking at the protection of the land as opposed to just the ownership and individual development.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

So maybe now is an appropriate time for owners to write in and communicate their concerns to the department. Would you say that?

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

Absolutely, although we do already have, as you allude to, Constable, a number of documented items, but certainly if people have concerns then they should raise them.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Okay. I just have a couple of very quick questions about plastic, Minister. On 21st January we came to the end of the 6-month period whereby single-use plastic bags had to be used up. Do we have any plans to go out there and check that people are not using single-use plastic anymore?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We may do but I could not tell you. So, have we any plans to look? It is something I do not ... I am not aware of any.

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

This does not quite fit under my remit but ...

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I was about to ... I looked at this and I was wondering ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

What do you know about checking up on plastic bags, Mr. Scate?

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Who would check?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

I think that is a matter for Trading Standards, so that is where ...

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Yes, in which case it is ... okay.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

Yes, we may be off the hook in this meeting.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

In all fairness, Chairman, I happen to know that Trading Standards has been very good and have been round commercial premises. I am aware of that.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Should have told him before he asked the question.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I did wonder but I just needed to check that it was not your remit, Minister. So we will move on to staffing.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Minister, we are aware that your department has faced some staffing and recruitment challenges. Can you update on how the work is progressing to fill infrastructure-related job vacancies across the department?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

That is going to vary from section to section. I do not have anything prepared to give you an up to the minute ... I mean, we can look at the various sections and each one can report on their updated situation.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Do you have an overall figure of vacancies?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

I think we are still hitting it on average across the department up to 20 per cent vacancy factor, both existing and some of our new jobs. I think it is fair to say we have had money through the Government Plan for new things, but if I look at our staffing budgets we are certainly above 10 per cent spent on staff. That is our baseload. I think if we factor in new jobs and those jobs that we charge to capital, we are certainly heading up towards 20 per cent vacancy in some areas. So, you know, we have been doing a lot of work on recruitment this year, this past year, so we have seen some quite successful ... our induction sessions that we run through for I.H.E. are full up every month and we are seeing a lot of new people join us. We are seeing a lot of new younger people join us, trainees, apprenticeships, and so on and so forth. We do still struggle to fill certain roles, but we have quite a big presentation I am happy to share with the panel in terms of what our numbers are looking like across different services.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**



I suppose the question that follows from that that is important is whether it is affecting service delivery, the staffing rate is affecting service delivery. Are there areas where you think that might be the case, that your vacancy rate is really genuinely affecting the service that you can provide?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

I think the honest answer has to be yes. I think we have a lot of people who go above and beyond the day job, their normal day job, to make sure services are provided. So I think what we are seeing is a lot of pressure on our staff to do more and a lot of our staff are incredibly dedicated to the roles they do. So they do go above and beyond. They put that extra hour or 2 in, and technically they maybe should not be doing that but they are. I think a lot of our staff are doing a lot more work possibly than they should be, but then they are quite passionate about the roles they do for the Island. So we certainly see a lot of pressure. I think the other thing is that some of the I guess things that we would like to do, the new things we would like to do, just take a little longer because we just do not have as many people in post to do them.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Nothing is broken but everything is under strain, and that is a general comment I think that probably describes it quite a lot.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

How much is contracted in to cover for an inability to do it on-Island? Clearly, does that cost offset the shortfall in staff spend?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

It can do, yes. Some of our services are contracted out because that is how they are designed, so some of our cleaning services, for instance, would be an example. We are trying to recruit permanently because that is the best sustainable thing for us as a business to have staff here and growing and developing for us. There are certain pockets in the department we frankly cannot attract people so we do have to look for contract staff. Sometimes we cannot find contract staff either. So, yes, it is very mixed. In some areas we are buying in staff; sometimes we cannot buy in staff. We have some specialisms so we have had to do that, for instance, in the energy plant recently. In our other portfolio, in regulation, we have had to buy contract staff in, but that is assuming we can get those staff because that is also quite a challenge as well.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I think that is everything, Chair.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Okay, we will move on to ...

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

My favourite subject.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

... an up-to-date subject, Minister, Fort Regent.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

Yes.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Oh dear.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

Obviously, the ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Do not worry about it, I have cancelled it, it is all right.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

Yes, and everything else.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Of course. [Laughter]

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

In your Ministerial plan obviously things were ongoing with the Jersey Development Company, but obviously in recent days following a written question you have said it has been put on hold. What now?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Well, I do not know that we have ever ... it is the press that have decided to use the word "hold".

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

Okay. Where are we then?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

All that happened is that when the Government changed we were presented with a report that had been commissioned previously, which was quite comprehensive, and it was suggesting that building of a hotel and a casino and a number of other wonderful glorious things and asked the question very directly: is this going to make money? The answer was without a casino it is going to lose quite substantially and with a casino with a fair wind it might break even, and all of this was costed before Ukraine, inflation, cost-of-living crisis. I think we very swiftly came to the view that in the new economic climate what was planned there really was not ... unless somebody was going to chuck a whole big pile of money at it, then it was not going to work. So I think we took the view that we needed to come down to earth a little bit, recognise the new climate in which we are working and try and take a sort of feet-on-the-ground appraisal. So what we have decided to do initially is to carry out a comprehensive condition survey of the building structurally and in terms of the roofing. I think the roofing material ... was it 30 years that it was destined to do and it is now at 55?

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

Exactly.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

So I think we are in trouble. There is asbestos everywhere. The electrics are completely shot, as is the plumbing. The water supply had Legionella problems. You name it, everything is well past its sell-by date, so the place is in a muddle. So what we want to try and do I think sensibly is find out ... get the condition report, then we can sit down sensibly and say: "What are the key expenses to get the thing wind and watertight again and then what are the options that we can do within the realms of what we think are affordable?"

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Do we not have a condition report, Minister?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

No, because we have had trouble finding anybody. As I understand it, it has taken months to find somebody to do the ...

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

It was a general condition survey that was done. I think it was maybe 2015 perhaps, I am not sure, but there was a general condition which highlighted the asbestos, the electrical systems, but what we have not done is a detailed structural survey of the roof, and the survey that was done at the time was a standoff visual inspection. We need to actually get into the structure. We need to do a little bit of testing of the mechanical joints and fittings to understand if we are going to use it can we

use it as it is or what needs to be done to give us a life expectancy. So it is the roof, the structural elements of the roof, that we need to have a detailed look at.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I just think it is difficult to make any sensible decisions whether you know whether the structure itself is safe or not, whether you need to be removing the structure, whether the structure has another 50 years' life in it. I just think you need to take a sensible approach to what are we dealing with in the first instance and what are the options, what are the principal cost options to give us a steer as to what is feasible and what is not.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

But we do not need to do a full condition review, Minister, if we know that the electrics are shot and the plumbing does not work. What we need to do is to look at the ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

When I talk about a full condition review it is ... yes, perhaps I have not explained it properly. A full structural review, let us put it that way. We already know about the internals. It is the structure and the roofing that we are looking at now.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

I seem to remember that recently there was a Legionnaires issue and I had a feeling that was dealt with, because that put a stop to certain activities but ...

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

There were fire safety issues as well which were dealt with, but again they are very much sticking plasters. So it is a mitigation for a particular issue. We put the sticking plaster on and another issue emerges. So it is whack-a-mole, trying to get us into a position where we can or have been able to use limited aspects of the Fort, but if we are going to go forward we need to have a clear understanding of what the possible uses might be. We are aware it is a fantastic open space and it would be a shame to lose that in terms of performances or general use, but before we can put our hands on our heart and say: "This is going to be part of the future" we have to understand is it safe and, if it is not, then what does it cost to get it into a safe ...

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Are you saying none of those things were done before when they came up with the previous plan? Because it was not the same department that would have done it.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

When you say “previous plan”?

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

The Fort Regent plan that they have as a plan.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Are you referring to the piece of work that was done by S.o.J.D.C. (States of Jersey Development Company)?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

The work that was consulted on in 2021 said, for instance, assume the roof structure would be removed, as an example. The issue we have had with the Fort is it is an enormous bit of real estate with a number of complex issues. The Government, this Government and previous Governments, have never had the extent of capital needed to invest in that itself as Government. So the previous project was very much about attracting private investment to regenerate it for us and what were the conditions that we would need to create to attract private investment. So one of those is improve access, undertake some of the basic building works, the plumbing, so that a blank canvas could be produced. One of those other big prerequisites was not to have a municipal public leisure centre running from there, and hence we are moving sport out of the Fort into purpose-built facilities. Sport struggles in those spaces because it is either too hot, too cold, water ingress leaks, showers facilities, changing facilities can be on/off because of building issues. We have also got competing spaces as well, so we have events going on there that need to be set up and then sport have to be collapsed and vice versa. So sport was a big obstacle. Not in the last Government, the Government before that, we had some private sector investment feedback that said we would be interested in investing in sport but we are not running a sport centre for you. So that has always been a bit of an issue from an investment perspective but it has also been a practical issue in the sense that it is not a proper sport location. So we are still on with the decant of sport into proper facilities but the debate we now have to have is what is that commercial reality post-COVID, post ... well, we are still in the Ukraine war but in terms of what that commercial outlook now looks like, the cost of borrowing has doubled compared to the plans that were previously looked at.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Is it more likely to be sold off as an asset?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

It is a big asset. I would not imagine the public would want to sell it or the Government would want to sell it.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

No, absolutely not.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

It is a public asset so I think we just have to strike that right balance about getting a degree of investment there. If we do not get investment privately it will sit with the public purse to invest and I do not think we have that much money.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

If we do not have any money to spend on anything at the moment, can we still regard it as an asset? Surely it is a liability.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

I think, yes, certainly it is in use so we are still actively using it. It certainly has liabilities; I would not disagree with that. There are a number of liabilities in the estate as a whole, health and safety liabilities and building ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It is fair to say and you can assume that it has been a liability from the time that this Government in the late 1960s decided to put a roof on it, if you do not mind me saying. This is nothing new.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Are you saying that sport will not be back there?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

We are actively decanting sport out of the Fort Regent. So Springfield gymnasium is under way, so the Active gym will be located into Springfield.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

You would not want to put sport back there in the future?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

All of the advice we have had over multiple years and multiple Governments is that a private investment into that facility would not take place if they were being asked to run a public leisure centre.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

So the report that the sport Minister said that he vowed to bring sport back to the facility is not the case?

[13:00]

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

I guess there is a difference between private sport and public sport. So our public sport facilities we are still in the direction of decanting from that facility.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

You have to make a ... I have just come from a 2-hour meeting where we have all just been at, where we were going through the active sport facilities that we have in place and that we have planned, and it is fair to say that over the course of time and going forward there is going to be some superb ... there are some superb facilities in place now that were not previously and that is going to be extended over the course of the coming years. So I do not think we have to look at Fort Regent as being completely pivotal to sport and I do not think we can write off the fact that some sport may at some point in time go back to the Fort, but it is not as if ...

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

We have added a sports club into there recently, which is the special gymnastics club. We found a home for them temporarily.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We have to be clear that sport has not suddenly been folded up. I know we see headlines with people being interviewed that were in Government before saying it is the end of sport, but it very much is not the end of sport. There is a huge amount of effort and a lot of investment going into ...

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

No, but we are talking about Fort Regent, that is all.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

... facilities outside of Fort Regent.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Can I just ask the Minister, over the last few years, a lot of money was put into rejuvenating the gardens at Fort Regent? There are extensive gardens running to the east. Do you anticipate continuing to pump money into that to maintain it to where it is currently or will it be left to go again?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Well, we have had a tour of both the inside and the outside at Fort Regent. I think the external areas lend itself to being - if you take it right the way down to La Collette - a superb piece of green space for people in town and for people at Havre des Pas. What I would say is I would not be looking to spend too much money. It would be very tempting to say: "Right, we are going to get some access to it and we are going to landscape it all, all around the fortifications, and it could be very lovely." You have to bear in mind that if you are going to reroof that building and you are going to start sticking cranes all the way around the outside to take the roofing off and put it back on again, get the building wind and water tight and do the structural work, once that is done, then you go around the outside and do the manicuring. I think it would be putting the cart before the horse to go and do something that you are going to go and undo in short order if and when you redo the building. Yes, I would say in the longer term, that lends itself very, very nicely to be some good open green space from one end to the other.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

In your plan, you said you were going to commission a strategic condition survey. Could you give us an outline as to how long that survey would take to complete and when you anticipate being in a position to share the findings of that survey with the panel?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

An exact outline, I will have to handover to Tim.

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

It has already started. We have had a couple of pilot locations that we have looked at and we had a vote of money into the Government Plan this year that we are using. The intention is that by the summer, we will have completed the survey in order that we can start to put that together with the information you may have seen. We are doing a survey of staff and the public at the moment to get feelings about the buildings that are currently in use for government services so that we can start to shape the next Government Plan with what we are going to do in terms of the future estate and start to shape those buildings that we would look at. This plays into the Future Places Group that the Minister mentioned before so that we have a much more comprehensive view of the government estate and how we can develop it in order to meet the new green spaces up at the Fort and the public realm of works in town so that we have a much more co-ordinated view of what work we are going to do, when we are going to do it so that we can get it funded, get it scheduled and deliver something.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**



Can I ask, while we are talking about the public buildings and some of the projects, will the Jersey Music Service be getting a new space? There was money put aside for it but it appears that that is one of the things that is going to be looked into again.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

My understanding is that is on hold for the time being.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

Yes, it is still in feasibility so, again, it goes back to the terminology about projects being put on hold. That project does not have a site. That concept, while it is in the Government Plan, we have a number of projects in the Government Plan without sites so they will not become projects until we have gone through feasibility, found a site, got a design and got it into delivery. So at the current time, Jersey Music Services still are located at the Fort. Until there is a defined and agreed site for them to be relocated to, a project will not commence so it is still in feasibility.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Okay, but money has been allocated to it.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

Yes. I would comment that sometimes we allocate things in the Government Plan prior to a site even being identified and I think we need to do more on feasibility for projects.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

What about when you do identify a site and you allocate money?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

Yes, if we have a site and the sponsoring department ... so we do not run that service. We would then get tasked to deliver that project once the concept has been agreed by the client department and we then become the contractor.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

You can deliver the youth facility in the centre of St. Helier then because there is a site and there is money but I will come back to you on that.

**Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:**

Yes, that is fine.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Buses, Minister. It is nice to see another trial of an electric bus; the second one that we have had. The Constable has some questions.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Yes, Minister. We understand that you have extended the existing contract for a couple of years. In a letter to the panel which we received on 1st September, you stated: "The new bus operator's contract will reflect the findings and recommendations of the emerging bus service development plan and this plan will be published before the end of 2022." What is the status of that?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Well, it is still a work in progress and in terms of the completion date, Andy, have we a final completion date for it?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

I can tell you about the contract but we will probably ask Tristan to answer the question, if you want to just come to the table.

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

The bus development plan remains a work in progress and, in some respects, it is a document that will always be in progress because it is always finding and new things are going in there. We are expecting to have a draft over this quarter that is being developed by S.P.3. (Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance) for us and that looks at, in particular, where bus services might be directed best to reduce the Island's carbon footprint where you can most readily get cars off the road, which is one of the things that they are examining with a view to doing some trials from the carbon neutral fund on that proof of concept. So things will be happening ahead of any new bus contract being introduced, so the findings will both inform the specification for the new bus contract but they will also inform work that is going to need to be undertaken in the interim period.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Over the progress of the present contract with LibertyBus, does the department have any thoughts as to where there may be changes to be introduced into a new contract in 2 years' time?

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

We have not developed a specification for the new contract yet so all of that really remains a policy under development but certainly we will be looking at how we can, once again, increase bus usage. Bus usage is on the up but there are certain groups of people where the levels are still lower than pre-pandemic such as O.A.P.s (old age pensioners). We need to understand why pensioners are not using their concessionary fares as much as they once did. Then there are things like the school

bus network which would need review as well and how that integrates into the scheduled bus service.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

There has been discussion regarding hospitals, and particularly Les Quennevais Hospital, as to how we might enhance bus routes from other parts of the Island rather than just the town. In practice, it was suggested some of these circular routes could incorporate that as a stop. We did have circular routes. Were they successful or why were they discontinued?

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

We have the circular routes still operating which serve St. Mary's, St. John's and I think as far as Trinity Zoo, so the circular concept where you have one bus going clockwise and another bus going counter-clockwise can provide a good service in the right locations.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

So could that incorporate the new Les Quennevais Hospital in a circuit?

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

Well, I think Les Quennevais Hospital is able to be served by the number 12, which goes to Corbière, which will go directly to the doorstep of the hospital and be able to turnaround in there but it is also already very well served by the number 22 and number 15. Number 15 is every 15 minutes on weekdays and so the area is well-served. I accept that the bus stops are not immediately outside but there are services that do go into the new hospital site.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

It is certainly 10 minutes' worth but I think the question really is more towards someone who perhaps lives in Gorey with an appointment at that hospital. How do they get there easily?

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

So we have done trials in the past where we have had buses that have gone directly from east to west. Unfortunately, it was very hard to keep them to schedule because of the amount of delays and friction that can occur going through town either through the tunnel or down Hill Street, and so that was problematic. However, we are looking at peak hour services that might be able to do that type of thing.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Is the recreation of perhaps the old number 1 route from Gorey to Corbière insurmountable or is it restricted due to the road works in the east of the Island or is there a way around it?

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

Yes, you would have to change buses. In order to provide the kind of capacity that we do out west, we are able to run standard size buses such as the double-decker buses. You just cannot run those out east. The roads are not wide enough.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Is there an option then? Is there a solution by running smaller buses on a cross-Island route to overcome that issue?

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

I think a lot of this is conjecture and things that we looked into but what you get with smaller buses is less capacity and then there becomes issues with economy and the number of buses that you would need to run to provide an equivalent capacity. I think for much of the Island's services, the hub and bespoke sort of design of the Island's network works relatively well. When we ran the cross-bus services last time from Le Marais up to the airport, it was surprising how few people wanted to do that particular route. Now of course there are transfer tickets and so people can get off one bus and on to another.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

I know my colleague over there, I am sure, is going to ask some questions.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Can I just double-check: we have extended the bus contract for 2 years, is that right?

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

That is correct, yes.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Until when?

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

We basically have a 2-year plus one option on the tender process. I will not go into the details of that because it is a bit complicated but we could give a briefing at another time. Basically, we are expecting the new contract to be awarded in July 2024 with an 8-month mobilisation period.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Jul 2024 is the new contract. At what point would we need to indicate to LibertyBus that we were not going to renew it? There must be a period before July 2024 where we would have to make a decision.

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

That is the point. It is that 8-month mobilisation.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

So it is 8 months after July 2024.

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

Yes, that is when a new operation would start.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

So at what point would we go out to tender?

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

It is going to be 2023.

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

Yes, it will be 2023.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

So prior to that, will you be appointing a staff member to manage the tender process as was done in the past?

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

Yes. We are all engaged with it at the moment, so it is basically a similar routine as in the past.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Yes.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Can I ask if you have noticed any differences now that we have new owners for LibertyBus? Is there any noticeable difference?

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

No, not in terms of the operations at all. These transitions have been very smooth. The new owners have great expertise in electrification so they have been very helpful when speaking to them about that and understanding more about the processes and the best way to configure your fleet and to transition your fleet to an electrified service.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Can I ask how the trials went with the electric bus?

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

I could not tell you. I have been given an update before I came here but I believe they went well and the bus performed satisfactorily. I have not heard anything to the negative.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

In terms of financial transparency with the new operators, there were concerns over the financial transparency with LibertyBus and I think they were not quite as forthcoming with where all the money went than they might have been. Do you intend approaching the operators in a different way or are you expecting different, shall we say, feedback from them?

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

Well, it is an open book contract so the provisions of the contract remain the same but of course the new operators are a private enterprise and money that they receive, which is theirs, goes immediately back to the shareholders or is invested into their services.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Clearly, one of the obligations of the operator was to provide the buses. Do you see the existing fleet lasting for another 2 years without much injection of new vehicles?

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

Yes, the existing fleet will continue to provide the service. We will not be buying new buses at this point.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Well, I expect the existing extended contract is providing for school buses as well. Will you be continuing with the same design of contract in 2024 as we have at present?

[13:15]

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

That remains to be seen. That is the type of thing that we are examining at the moment as part of the bus development plan and as part of our own understanding of operations. We are reviewing the whole service of what has worked well, what has not and where there might be further innovation in the future.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

So if we are not replacing any buses during the time period of this current contract, what is the point in trialling an electric bus then?

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

So as part of the new contract, obviously we want to move towards an electrified service so, as part of that, we need to conduct trials to understand the kind of range you get on Jersey roads, their fit on the roads and we are researching the market as to what buses are available.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

So who does that work? Yourself or LibertyBus?

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

We are doing it in conjunction with LibertyBus.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

You do not know how the trial went?

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

Me personally?

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Yes.

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

No, I do not but, obviously, our transport manager who is looking at that, working with LibertyBus and meeting them on a weekly basis would be able to say that. I just was not expecting that question, so I wish I was informed.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Could we get an update on that? Thank you.

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

Yes, that is no problem at all.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It is safe to say that, at some point in time, that report is going to get your way and you will get to know. What you said is you did not spend a fortnight riding around on a bus because you had other stuff to do.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Could I just ask one thing about when you renew contracts? They have flexibility so, for example, someone mentioned to me about the school bus service being a separate service, completely separate and run independently for different motives. In other words, so that children's default position is to get the bus to school and not be driven in and take a lot of traffic off the roads in the morning which would make a huge difference to our transport in the Island. Is that the sort of thing that could be considered? In some cities all over the world, you see the great big yellow carrier buses. Obviously not those buses as they would not quite fit our roads.

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

So in terms of that last mile from ... the school buses run something like that at the moment.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Yes, they do.

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

So each link on the network is designed to go as close to students' homes as possible with the data that is available and then takes them directly to school and then in some schools, like Les Quennevais for instance, they are served by another 15 scheduled buses as well. It is a double-edged sword. What that means is that students do not have to walk far to catch the bus and then get directly to school. On the downside, it means some students have very convoluted journeys and very long journeys. I think it is that that we want to see if we can address to get a better balance and I do not think it is a school bus for everyone in the future. I think there might be more efficient ways of transporting people.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

There is also a big fix cost of running a separate service with separate fleet that is used for an hour in the morning and an hour in the evening.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**



It is a genuine question but, obviously, would you say that the fact that lots of young people now have a pass which is affordable has made a difference to them using the bus? I think I have seen a lot more young people on the bus.

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

Certainly the data is that there is much more use by young people of the bus service.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Do you see it going back to Connex days? A certain company in March, was it, they were integrated with a taxi service so the taxis can cover the last mile? Is there any future in developing that principle over here?

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

Connex never did that.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Not here but they did in their other operations.

**Head of Transport, Highways and Infrastructure:**

Demand responsive travel is something we are certainly interested in. We have looked in the past at that last mile by taxi but it does not make economic sense. Taxi drivers would not earn enough out of it and it is not an efficient use of the vehicles, but it is revisiting that whole thing is the type of thing we are interested in.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

We will move off buses. A couple of very different subjects and quick questions, Minister, before we tidy up. I just wanted to ask if you could outline how you, if you do yourself, deal with the procurement process and tenders when you go out to contract for fencing, turfing, security cameras or anything around the education estate, for example. That comes, I guess, under Property Holdings but how is that tender process gone through and how are we making sure we try to prioritise local companies over U.K. companies.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I have to say, hands up, procurement is an area that I have not looked at, at all. It is something that we have to put in our agenda to make sure that I do in pretty short order.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

Or, Tim, if you want to talk in more detail about how Property Holdings work.

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

I think so. So we have a list of approved contractors that are arrived at through discussion with the commercial team and the Government and also we have a process under the Corporate Programme Management Board that tells us what we have to do and how we have to go about it. Effectively, there are sort of benchmarks of value of work, and depending on where the work sits on that depends on how many contractors we approach, how we go about the procurement and where the sign off levels are. There is, in keeping with the Public Finances Manual, a rigid process. So if we need to replace fencing, then we will approach the list of our contractors that we have and if we get sufficient responses, then we will go through a tender process and it is not always best price. There are a number of criteria depending on the job that is in hand. If we do not get a sufficient response from our list of contractors, then we would go to a local bulletin inviting interest for the work and there is, as I say, an open and transparent process for determining who gets the job. We chart the contractors that have been successful and we try and spread across a list of contractors and we are in the process of making sure that we do that before we proceed.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Is there any priority given to locally based contractors as opposed to U.K.-based?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I am quite happy to intervene there and say that I have made a claim right the way through and everybody here is aware of the desire to make sure that everything that can be placed locally is being placed locally. So that is something that we have introduced and I think that is fair to say, as a department, it is something that we probably do by and large as a matter of course more than most departments in any event.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Last question on this subject. It is a very quick one. If a local contractor was unhappy about the outcome of a tender process, where do they go to seek remedy?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Well, I have had people write to me with that and we try and sort that out internally.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

Yes, so any decisions on tenders would need to be documented. I guess the first point of call would be our commercial services team or indeed the project team who has been running the project.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

People do feel quite at liberty to send me emails complaining.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Just an add-on to that, we had a difficult time in the procurement of the sewage treatment works process. I think we lost 2 contractors on the way. What can we do to avoid that happening in the future? I am looking to Ellen now because she probably knows about it more than anyone.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Keep doing it yourself.

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

I do not know if I am the best person to answer now after it has happened twice to me. What we try to do is all the due diligence on the companies so as companies are going through to tendering, we obviously look at their financial history, look at where they stand within the markets and, again, you can do all of that work and it can still go wrong just depending on what has happened within the industry at the moment. So, again, for me, it is keeping a watching brief of certainly those big contracts and having a contingency plan. I think that helps us on the sewage treatment works. I think we have learnt from lessons if things do go wrong what can we put in place to be able to deal with that quickly. Again, we talk about the S.T.W. Again, within the contract there, we have protection for local suppliers to make sure that if the company was not paying them, then the Government of Jersey would step in and it would be tied into that payment so there are things that you can do around there with regards to the contract.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

So I suppose I have to ask: are you satisfied with the existing contractor and that the contractor will finish the job?

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

Well, we are the contractor so we are running the job.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Yes, absolutely. Good.

**Director, Operations and Transport:**

Yes, very pleased with them.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

Yes, we took over as principal contractor on that role and we are then engaged with all the subcontractors effectively. I do not think we had much option but to do that for that project but, as Ellen said, we work really closely with the commercial team and there is a lot of diligence around company health that goes into some of those tenders, but even despite that, you cannot predict sometimes what happens, and we saw that with the S.T.W. project.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Just to stray back into the hospital, is this the model you hope to follow with the hospital project?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department:**

We are not anticipating being a principal contractor for the hospital project. We would still look to procure that out into the market, yes.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It is just worth saying all credit to the team to have been able to step in when the thing went wrong midstream, take everything over and run the whole thing themselves. It is not widely known but that has been carried out in-house. An £80 million project. I do not know if you have been to see it but it is phenomenal and a great credit, thanks due to everybody. They have done a damn good job.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

The last heading, Minister, is Future Places Group. Can you just outline for us very briefly your involvement in it, please?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Well, like the other people that sit around the table, I also sit around the table possibly with a slightly greater interest because a lot of the properties that come up for discussion are sitting within the I.H.E. portfolio. So it is safe to say that before things get to Future Places, we have discussed things in advance of that. Is the question just related to my own involvement because my own involvement is I do not get any particular weighting in advance or in preference to anybody else? So I just sit there as a standard member.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

I have to say the panel have received some correspondence and it is outside of your remit but can I ask you the question? Is there any way through Future Places that you can pressurise Ports of Jersey to get on with La Folie? The site has been unused now for more years than we all care to remember.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes, I have seen the plans for La Folie and, in and of themselves, they seem like a coherent set of plans. I am going to say something that might prove controversial. I think that we had a tendency in the past that Government did everything and it was not deemed to be right so we put everything into our arm's length organisations and it strikes me, with some of them, they seemed to go off at a slight tangent and there is not enough crossover built in between Government and the arm's length organisations as to how they function. So on a personal level, I would say it is still relatively early days for me but I am not completely content that that works as well as it might, and I think we should perhaps revisit it in more general terms as to how the aims and objectives of a private company tie in with the aims and objectives of the Government overall.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Yes, so greater shareholder representation.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes, and perhaps a more integrated approach to what does and does not happen on those sites. I just see airports and ports as being a very key part of our infrastructure and they seem to be completely devolved. I look at boats and planes and that is a key part of our transport and I just wonder if there might be a way of reappraising that and perhaps restructuring it to get a slightly more cohesive outcome. So as I say, the very initial comments - and I do not have enough detailed knowledge to be making suggestions as to how that may or may not be done - looking at it from the outside, I think we recognise that all is not perhaps what it should be. I know La Folie is a symptom rather than a cause of that.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Well, that is a very interesting concept, Minister, because I know certainly from this side of the table when the public asked us questions about property that is owned by arm's length organisations and people say to us: "The States own 100 per cent of this company. How can you not steer it greater?", it is difficult to answer sometimes but I am sure you are right.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I think one shining example of one that works extremely well is Andium and we have seen Andium perform brilliantly over the past 8 or 10 weeks when there have been disasters. I turned up at the Town Hall at 7.30 on the morning of the desperately unfortunate explosion and people from Andium were there with flasks, covers and blankets for people. They have really done a sterling job and they seem to be very much closely tied in with what we do. If you go to Jersey Water. That is another one. That is an organisation, as I say, that has done a grand job of delivering water but I think that is now going to have to come back into a closer co-ordination with Government and I think perhaps Ports even more so, yes.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Presently, the Government representative on Ports is the Minister for Treasury and Resources, am I right?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

That is correct. The sole one. Jersey Water and with Ports, I think the sole representative from Government is the Minister for Treasury and Resources.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

He is on all of them, is he not, as shareholder representative?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I just think that is a little bit light really in terms of it is not just about the finances. It is about the operational and the desire that ...

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

It is about the return, is it not?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes, well, I think it has to be about a bit more than return.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

I totally agree.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It has to be about objectives and making sure that the objectives of both parties marry up. As I say, you will have to forgive me, these are very initial thoughts but they are thoughts that we can be looking to develop over the course of time.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

Thank you, Minister. Well, I think that is a really good place to finish our meeting.

**Deputy R.J. Ward:**

Can I just say one thing? I have just had an email: "Guys, I would love to ride a cycle." I just want to ask when the Ministers we are going to see them on their bikes? Especially Deputy Ahier. I cannot wait to see him cycle past my house.

**Deputy S.M. Ahier:**

I am more of a walker than a cyclist.

[13:30]

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I do cycle occasionally. Well, I will make a statement. We have changed the Highway Code to make sure that there is an order of priority and I think there needs to be quite a lot of work done to encourage people to have a culture change that when we say: "A pedestrian comes first and the cyclist comes a close second, that we mean it and people understand it because, for me, the cycling ... I come through Five Oaks with school traffic and it is taking my life in my hands. I should not say this perhaps but, at this point in time, I would not be encouraging too many kids to cycle to school down that road. I just think we need to get that culture change in place and that is something that we are going to have to focus on.

**Deputy S.G. Luce:**

We are going to stop there, Minister, because if we start talking about it we are going to be here for another 2 hours. So I thank you and your team very much and we will see you again soon.

[13:31]