



Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Proposed Budget 2025-2028

Witness: The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

Friday, 11th October 2024

Panel:

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

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée of St. Helier South

Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade

Witnesses:

Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central, The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning

Mr. R. Sainsbury, Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.

Mr. K. Posner, Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.

Mr. S. O'Regan, Director of Education

Mr. J. Williams, Programme Director

Ms. A. Homer, Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.

[14:30]

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

Welcome to this Budget hearing of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel. Today is 11th October. I would like to draw everyone's attention to the following. This hearing will be filmed and streamed live. The recording and transcript will be published afterwards on the States Assembly website. All electronic devices, including mobile phones, should be switched to silent. To begin with introductions, I am the chair of the panel, Deputy Catherine Curtis.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée of St. Helier South:

Deputy Porée, and I am a panel member.

Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade:

Deputy Helen Miles, panel member.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Deputy Rob Ward, Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning.

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Rob Sainsbury, chief officer, Department of C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills).

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Keith Posner, director for Improvement and Transformation at C.Y.P.E.S.

Director of Education:

Sean O'Regan, director of Education.

Programme Director:

Jonathan Williams, programme director.

Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Anne Homer, head of Finance Business Partnering for C.Y.P.E.S.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, thank you everyone. Unfortunately, Connétable Labey, the vice-chair, cannot be with us today. We have just one hour for this hearing, so I will start with the questions, which is around the business plans. So, Minister, we note from your letter to us on 6th September that business plans will not be completed until the end of 2024 and published in early 2025. How do you propose robust scrutiny of these plans if they are not available?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

These are business plans for next year, so they will be at the beginning of the year and they will come to the Scrutiny Panel as well. What we are doing in the Government Plan will effectively form what is going on in those business plans in terms of our priorities. The rest of them, as they are published, I am sure will be under close scrutiny. If you want early sight of things, I am more than

happy ... have always been happy to do that with the Scrutiny Panel just as long as you recognise that they are drafts.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

If we could have any information. I think we did ask for that as well because we need to debate these before we have all the information, so if we could have anything that you have got drafted.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

The business plans are indeed business plans in terms of the intentions of what we want to do, which has to come from the department, with the agreement or not with that is a different issue. But, yes, absolutely we are willing to provide anything that we can.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, so if we could write and we can ask for that.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes. Sorry, then also feedback on them That is the important thing. I think we are very open to that feedback and we have acted on ... willing to act on things when things come up.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. About the priorities for 2025 compared to 2024, can you list any changes that are being made, if any, and the impact these may have on current resources?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Obviously, the main priorities come from the C.S.P. (Common Strategic Policy), so they have been slimmed down so that they are deliverable. I believe that all of those are deliverable. About nutritious school meals in every school, which I know will be in place. I can talk more about that if you want to. The extended nursery and childcare provision has a number of pilots in place, so we are starting on that process of implementation after what has been a long period of discussion and roundtables and so on. The increase in provision of lifelong learning skills development is something that has actually become very interesting as it is developed in itself, because the dialogue that started to happen is driving that as well. It is really interesting. I am actually very pleased that I added the lifelong learning to the remit, because I think it started discussions as to where we are going to go well into the future; way beyond me and all of us in this Assembly, to be quite frank. So those are the main priorities. In terms of differences, there will obviously be differences in the capital programme because that has changed and that will change as time goes on. But there is a lot of business as usual as well, which will carry on. The emphasis on support for special educational needs in schools, the implementation of the funding formula for the majority of our schools is quite

important, and that is still embedding, I would say, and any improvements that can be taken from that will happen. But just because we have some priorities does not mean it is not business as usual going on.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. Are there any particular objectives which have changed that come to mind right now?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Not really. Not overall. The overall objective is to provide the best possible education system and access to education for all of our young people on the Island and beyond. Perhaps the one emphasis is it is not just about people up to the age of 18, and we are trying to look a little wider.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So longer term?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

The Government has had to divide the C.Y.P.E.S. portfolio into 2 separate heads of expenditure. Can you advise us if that split has been fairly straightforward?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

When you say "the Government", actually it was a drive for myself to make that divide so that there is more of a clarity.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

That is into Children and Families, and Education will not be in there.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Absolutely, so there is more of a clarity of where that spend is going and also more of a clarity on what we actually spend on education. I would say I think there are some future conversations to be had about education and its funding level, which may have been hidden in the past. I do not want that to be hidden, and then we have to have the intelligent and difficult conversations about how we are going to fund education appropriately. I am more than happy to do that. It also gives a focus, I think, on education, its effective spending, and some of the things that we can do in the future to make what we are doing as effective as possible. So I am happy with that split.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So it is more clarity then. Are there any areas of crossover though where the budget or reporting lines are less clear?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, there obviously will be. There is always going to be something like that. One of the things that we do is every Friday, including this morning, we have an overlap in the Ministerial meetings. We will have 30 minutes to an hour where both Ministers are there sharing any common areas. The provision - my mind has gone absolutely blank - let me think of a good example. For example, the interaction of C.A.M.H.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) in schools might be a good example of that. C.A.M.H.S. really comes under the Children's remit, but its impact in schools is essential, so that communication between the 2 has to be there. But it does mean there is a focus on C.A.M.H.S.; it is a focus on what is happening in schools so you can talk specifically about their role in that area, which I think could be really beneficial into the future.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

My next question is about those priorities that you have mentioned already, the nursery childcare provision, the school meals for every child in the primary schools, the provision of lifelong learning and skills development; can you inform the panel how these have been costed?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, who is the best person to talk about specifics? In terms of the school meals, I can start easily with that. There was a budget in place for that, which was an estimate from the number of meals we would have been estimated uptaking and the total cost. I think we are pretty much spot on with that in terms of the uptake at the moment. That project should be extended to all schools by the end of this year. I think we have solved the problem with one server, which is really good. There are 54 catering assistants being recruited, and there are currently 16 schools providing school meals. There are launch dates for the remaining schools. So we will know where we are, and we will know what the uptake is, both in terms of Jersey Premium and that cost, and also the uptake in parents paying for a meal, which is pretty good, I believe.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Do you think that all the States primary schools will have this in place by the end of the year?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I believe that is the case, by December. And invite the panel ... I think we have come along and seen one of them in action; Christmas lunch in one of the schools. I will be honest, I was at St. John's school the other day and it was absolutely lovely. The way the schools organised them are

fantastic. I would like to say publicly to the schools, to say thanks for the way that they have just taken on this task and got on with it and delivered. It is really quite an interesting thing to do.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Good. So the way these have been costed, that is nursery and childcare provision as well and the provision of lifelong learning and skills development, that is all ...?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

The nursery one is going to be more difficult to accurately cost because we would have to try out pilots. The whole idea of piloting is to see the impact of that pilot, whether it can work in the setting that it is in, the impact wider and the uptake as well. Because it is difficult to estimate accurately what the need is out there but by taking some pilots on ... so the worst case scenario is we start the pilot and no one wants it.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So you will see what happens with the pilots for that one.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

We have to be realistic about those and be brave enough to say if nobody wants it then we end that as a pilot.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Then the other one was the provision of lifelong learning and skills development.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, there is a budget put aside for that. Some of that is driven by the outcomes of P.12 in the Assembly, so part of my priorities have already been driven by that, which I have to adapt to. We are going to make some announcements soon about distance learning, which will come with a cost. There are some costs in the apprenticeship programme that come from some really practical things. So, for example, the cost of the assessments in some areas ... I was going to say skyrocketed, but that is not fair, but they have certainly increased significantly, and we are going to have to cover those costs if we want to continue with those programmes and extend and target what we are training on the Island.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

We note that the figure for school meals does not increase and remains at a certain amount for the life of the Budget 2025 to 2028. Are you not expecting any increase in this cost?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There are a couple of things in terms of ... because we talked about this the other day because I asked a similar question. Do you want, just because you have got some figures, is that okay?

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

The advantages of the piloting nature of this programme has meant we are ending up on a budget amount that we are confident in. In terms of the model of distribution and cooking of food, in terms of the staffing for the food, we are also looking to introduce next year free fruit for all the Government of Jersey primary schools as well, and we are looking to a free school provision within secondary schools as well. That will be the focus of the team in 2025, once the primary school food has been rolled out. But in terms of, I suppose, budget surety, we have had time to prepare for this because we have been through the different steps, and we have been through small pilots into slightly larger pilots, into an Island-wide pilot to settle on a model. That is why the budget from 2025 remains as it will be going forward. We will obviously need to be looking at inflationary pressures on the programme itself and we will have to look at how we build that in. But in terms of the cost of the programme, that is what we expect it to be.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, thank you. My next question was the funding for the skills provision, which is ... I have got the figure here of 1,158 in 2025. I am assuming that is millions, it is written as 1,000.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

It is the way the data is presented; I totally agree with you on that.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

How will that be spent? What are the actual plans for spending it?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I have got some data on that here. Around £500,000 is involved with the apprenticeship; so the increase in the cost of those. Did you say 25? I have actually got some numbers. Twenty-nine. Give me a sec. I know it off by heart to be quite frank, about £500,000 is regards in developing apprenticeships, but some of that will be significantly used because of the increase in assessments, for example, which are costs that we do not want to pass on to employers because we have not done that in the past. There will be a figure for distance learning that we can estimate, increasing tuition fees and maintenance awards, partly driven by the propositions that have come in the past, will cover as well a significant proportion of that. When you add those up, the estimate is £1.158 million in 2025. I think we need to have some flexibility in that because with student numbers we are never certain about total student numbers, we are never certain about the ... I mean we estimate

inflation and we should be okay with that. But we want some flexibility built in as well. There are always issues over what tuition fees will be and I really hope that they do not increase in the U.K. (United Kingdom). There are some horrible rumours about that, which I think is really the wrong thing to do. If anyone in the British Government is listening; do not do that, it is a really bad idea. There will always be estimates. But what I think would be a very good idea with the panel is as we go through the year we can give you some more accurate figures on where it is being spent, because that also helps us to review where we are. I know Aaron produces lots of data as we go through monthly but it will not all be front loaded. I think we have got to be sensible about ... again it is like this project process; it is a notion of piloting, what is working well, do we need to direct money into that, is that the right thing to do? I am not afraid to make changes if it is not the right thing to do. We cannot just carry on down paths if it is not working. We think this is the right thing to do.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Thanks, okay. I think you have just mentioned student finance, because my next question is with ... we note there is no reference to student finance within the description of lifelong learning and future skills provisions.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That is because I would consider that as business as usual. We fund university places, we have student finance in place. The differences will be uplifts to the income thresholds, entitlement to grants and aligning the value of maintenance grants for cost of living, wage increases. Some announcements we are going to be making soon on that and the detail of that have come. But I do see that as business as usual with any additional costs having to perhaps be covered through by the lifelong learning budget, which is quite important.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Can I just ask a question about the student finance? The postgraduate bursary was first established in 2000 and it has not been increased from the £10,000. Is there any provision in this Budget to actually ... if you increased it for cost of living from 2010, it would be quite a lot of money.

[14:45]

But have you got any plans to increase that postgraduate bursary?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That is not a priority we have at the moment. I would love to do that, but that is not a priority we have at the moment. We have got to deal with the distance learning. Again, it was pretty much determined by P.12 as it came through, and we have got to react to that because we said we would,

and we amended it appropriately, I believe. We will deal with distance learning as well. I think we have got some plans coming forward from that which are very good, and also the increases to the thresholds for main grants.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

But no plans for the post-graduates in this Budget?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Not at the moment.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

My set of questions are about the C.Y.P.E.S estates and capital projects. Again, if the Budget is approved you are going to receive £7.79 million in 2025, £3.8 million in 2026, £2.5 million in 2027 and back up to £4.7 million in 2028 for the upgrades to the C.Y.P.E.S estates. So I think the question is: why does the funding decrease so much between 2025 and 2026?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Is this in terms of upgrades? Are you happy for Keith, who has been so deeply ingrained in this that he will give you ...?

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

The main difference between 2025 and 2026 is about the La Passerelle School, which is our major project within this head of expenditure. There is £3 million of value that the school will be budgeted to cost within 2025.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

So why does that represent a decrease then?

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

So the Budget will be ... for 2025, we have put additional funding.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

For the additional and then it is come down for the other ... right.

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Because that is a one-off 2025 figure. The other figure as well, and I know that you have questions about this later on, we do have a proportion of the education network upgrading and Wi-Fi project within 2025. Then it kind of levels out into a similar position year on year.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Are you content that funding is adequate to carry out the necessary, and have you got an additional funding contingency?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I have got to say, whenever you ask a Minister if funding is adequate, any Minister who says yes is not doing their job properly. I would always ask for more money. There is a real challenge in terms of estate spending. We have prioritised ... one of the good things about that £3 million being spent is it means that a project will be completed and there will be a school facility in place. I am really hoping by late October next year, early November and earlier, if it is possible to do that, be up and running, which is something that I am really pleased with. We had a briefing this morning at the Ministerial meeting, and they have worked incredibly well on that. I keep in touch with how things are going, because lots of things go wrong with planning permissions and so on. You never know, but it should be okay. That is really good. In terms of the upgrading of estate, yes, absolutely, there is so much to do across schools, and that will always be the case. We could always do more, I am absolutely certain.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

So is there a contingency in place if this is not enough?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There is always some contingency in place for emergencies. We hope we do not have storms again because ... but if there are then we would have to come up with contingencies because schools have to open.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Thank you. I want to talk about Mont à L'Abbé School. We know that there is overcrowding at Mont à L'Abbé School. We know that it needs immediate attention and we know that temporary measures have been put in place and that is very good, but obviously the concern is that the funding for the changes required to do the major upgrades at Mont à L'Abbé are not due to be implemented until 2026. Your letter told us that that is due to the rephasing of the government capital programme and again, when we saw you at the public hearing a couple of weeks ago, you said that there was an issue with the capital projects. Can you just talk about how the decision for what capital projects through C.Y.P.E.S., the ones that were going to be delayed, were arrived at?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, there are 2. I am sure people will add something to it in a minute, but there is a realism to it. We looked at what projects are actually genuinely ready to go, which projects are there, which projects will be in a phase where we could say right we are going to do that, but there is no planning permission or there are no genuine plans with a timescale that is realistic in that time. If we are not at that stage, I would rather get on with projects and prioritise those that are there. I do feel, and I am sure some will disagree, that there had perhaps previously been a habit for many years I could say in Government to everything was a priority when it came to a capital project. You cannot prioritise everything. You have to decide what you are or not going to do. I believe there was a figure of £17 million put aside last year and £5 million was spent. That is an example of when large priorities are made and money is allocated that simply cannot be spent. I think we can spend money and get projects done now.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

In terms of the prioritisation, you have talked about project management, project planning and bricks and mortar. To what extent did the impact that not going ahead with Mont à L'Abbé would have on children and families factor into this decision making?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There are also contingency plans that we can put in place for the increasing number. One of the possible things that could be not an advantage but a mitigating point about the delay is I think that the plans previously, and you will probably kill me for this, perhaps were a bit small for the school. I think it gives us an opportunity to readdress that. The example being, I think we all wish we would have built Les Quennevais a bit bigger nowadays. Hindsight is a wonderful thing and that is not a criticism; it is just where we are. I think we have got to take the advantages where they are from these projects being delayed. Also, there are some mitigating ... do you want to ... go on, because I can see.

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

I will make a comment, I think Sean might want to come in on the mitigation point. Certainly in terms of the prioritisation there is one thing I would say; C.Y.P.E.S. does not work in just a vacuum. We obviously work with the Treasury, with J.P.H. (Jersey Property Holdings), in terms of making sure that the programme overall for the Government works as well. But the Minister is absolutely right. Although this has been in the programme for a while, there have been changes in thinking in terms of the size of the school, but we still have a lot of work to do to get it ready to start building as well.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

That leads me well on to the questions. So you have got £400,000 in for 2026, is that what is going to include the feasibility work? We are not talking about ...

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

We have already started the feasibility work and we are in active discussions with our colleagues in Jersey Property Holdings about how we can accelerate that as much as we can and do the work ahead of time. That will be spent in 2025, they will also be spent in 2026.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, so the feasibility will not stop in 2025, it will carry through on the 2024 money and then be topped up in the 2026?

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Absolutely.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

And then the £10 million in the 2027 will be the actual construction costs.

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Mainly construction, yes.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you, that is really helpful.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

It might not be wanted ... I mean, everybody wants everything now and I absolutely understand that. I have visited the school - visited lots and lots of schools - and every single school I go to have a project that is the most important thing, and I absolutely accept that.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

But this is a school for our most vulnerable children.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Absolutely, and the mitigating thing, which Sean will talk about in a minute, we are trying to put in place. But the realistic timescale of that delivery, particularly if we can deliver something that becomes more appropriate with time, could be a positive that comes out of that delay as well. We do not want to delay anything, but I think that is quite important. We do not want to build something that is redundant before it is built. I think we are seeing increasing levels of need for all sorts of reasons. Also, Mont à L'Abbé do an incredible job. I have been to visit myself. Do you want to just talk about some of the things? Is that okay?

Deputy H.M. Miles:

No, that is absolutely ... I am just conscious of time.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So just for a minute or so.

Director of Education:

We have had meetings most recently this week, is myself with the headteacher of the team. As the Minister has said, the design brief we have given to J.P.H. will be for a bigger, better Mont à L'Abbé at the end of this. We have done considerable work with mainstream schools that used to have additional resource centres, A.R.C.s, remodelling them to provisions and setting up new nurture provisions - primary and secondary - that will meet the needs of children who may need Mont à L'Abbé at some point.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Yes, but not have it at the moment. Okay.

Director of Education:

But not have it at the moment. So plans are in place. At another time we can elaborate on.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

We will be really interested to hear that moving forward. Thank you?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

We want to get that right.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Yes, I understand that. We have just touched on the extra £3 million for the expenditure that is going to be allocated to La Passerelle, but it was not a project that was detailed last year. So can you just explain to us how that project has been prioritised?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Simply, I will say for my priorities there is an incredibly obvious need. There were children who did not have a place to be educated and when you put that together with the fact that we have a site, we have a place, we know what we are going to do with it, we have also got the additional ... what is the other building called? I always forget the building that is attached.

Director of Education:

The Lodge.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

The Lodge as well, which does not need as much work as we thought we would, so it will be quicker. In fact, indeed, it may be the first thing that is ready, so it can provide some really specialist support in particular areas. I think the impact of that build on a cohort of young people that are not accessing education at the moment is significant, and there is a timescale where it can be done. I am not criticising anything that has gone before, I am looking ahead and saying it would be nice to be able to say something is completed and in action within a year, and that is really good.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you. My last question, this Gas Place school project is no longer going ahead until 2027. How is that going to impact your overall budget for education given the very high volume of children in town schools already?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I agree. Again, there is a realism to this as well. We do not have planning permission yet. We do not have the land. That has not been sorted out.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Is it likely to start in 2027?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I really hope so, and I am pushing. I would rather come back to the panel with that, actually, rather than saying anything publicly now because I have not had the meeting yet. It is next week, I believe.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

And if you can get it sooner will you up the priority list?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

If we can get that sooner, I will do everything in my power to get it sooner. I am not being funny. I brought the thing to the Island Plan 4½ years ago, and it has been a trigger for me for years. I am sure the department, before I was doing this, was sick of me going on about it. But yes, absolutely. But again, there is a reality here. I could sit here and say, yes, we are going to promise to do this in a year's time. It will not happen in a year's time because we do not have planning permission and we do not have the land yet. Those things need to be sorted out. I think they could be sorted out relatively quickly - whatever relatively quickly means in terms of planning on this Island - but relatively

quick because I think there is a drive to do that. I think, importantly, the argument over whether it should be there has been completed. That is really important to me.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Thank you very much.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Thank you. Thanks for asking actually. It is nice to be able to talk about it.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Minister, the critical Wi-Fi infrastructure project has funding of £840,000 only for the year 2025. Do you feel this is an adequate amount of funding?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think from where we are, this will produce the upgrades that we need.

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes, there is money being spent in this year as well. This is obviously the 2025 Budget, so there is an element being spent this year. The total budget for the upgrading work, the implementation part is £1.3 million.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

So are you confident that that budget will complete all the necessary works for that year?

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes. I have been speaking with our colleagues in Digital Services who are leading this project for us. They are confident in terms of the allocation of the budget, yes.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There are 3 phases to the work, and the third work, which is a network, part of a new wide area network design, a new W.A.N., I believe they are called - thank you for my technology there - by quarter one 2026, hopefully. But I do not know if timescales are different in the digital world. They might be.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

In the event that the project goes over budget, over the timescale, are there any contingencies in place to deal with those events?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yesh, to put it simply, Deputy, it is so important in a modern world of education that we have to get this completed and done. I think that has a priority that will work.

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

So I would just add to that. In terms of contingency, where we are in that position, it is similar to the school meals. If we are in a position where you have got inflationary impact or there is a problem where your cost is over your estimate, we have a really tried-and-tested process with the Treasurer and with the Treasury Department on how we might meet that demand because it is an unexpected pressure. That is where the department is able to seek a letter of comfort or direct funding and our experience has been positive in terms of where we have had those issues. We have had that previously with school meals. It would be the same for the Wi-Fi pressures if we get an expended consequence of cost.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think it would be fair to say that there is quite a bit of learning that has gone on from some of the projects in the way they have been implemented and the notion of piloting, see how they work and expand them when they are working. I think that is a good model for ... well I think it is a good model for government, if I dare say, piloting and expanding in a controlled way so that you know actually what your costs are, and your estimates are much more accurate then. I think that is a very good way to do it.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Okay, thank you. We understand that the capital expenditure for field development and play space has been delayed until 2028. Could you give us a bit more detail on why did that happen?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Again, this is to do with some of the projects as well. So some of the projects that we are talking about, and I will not say about specific ones because I do not think it will help the situation, but effectively we do not have the land. There are still negotiations going on about the land itself in order to increase access to fields. There are always difficult negotiations going on about the cost of that and whether they are relevant costs. Personally, I do not think it should take that long to adapt a field once we have got it in place.

[15:00]

These are the type of projects whereby I would say they have to move and they have to get somewhere. I would like to see a number of projects ready to move forward with at a stage so that

should we be able to find money with a capital project, because perhaps something else has not worked because there are always issues, we can use that money. Effectively, what I would like to say is whatever money we have got each year I want to spend it on a capital project. I think previously it has been held and then it is lost because of the nature of our finance law. I would like to make sure it is spent, if we have got projects ready to go. That does not mean they need to prioritise. I think it is a more sensible approach to having so many projects on the go.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

So this particular project is not so much about financial strains, but more the fact that you have not found that particular land that fits the project?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I would say it is a bit of both. I am not going to stay here and say it is not a financial constraint. The financial constraints are an issue and if we had more money I am sure we could do more. But there is also a reality to it in terms of we might come to a point where if we had more money we would not be able to spend it anyway because we have not got the purchase of the field and we have not got the negotiations right. We do not want to overspend either on things.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I was just going to ask, are none of these possible projects in that category going to be available - the land and that - ready before 2028?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Well, 2028 is 3 years off. I hope they will be available by then because work needs to be done, but it does depend on external sources to some extent because we are negotiating over land, some of which might be used for housing, and then we get an offset of that land, a piece of that land for the school. That happens quite a lot. It happened in ... was the field in St. John or was that the Parish?

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes, St. John.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

St. John, for example. That took quite a time. These projects do take time. Yes, love to speed them up and if there is anybody out there who wants to offer some land to schools and we can speed that process up, please do. You are more than welcome to come along and do that because we will absolutely welcome that. But yes, 2028, that is where we are.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Thank you for that, Minister. We note that the feasibility work for certain projects such as music development will not be progressed in the Government Plan for 2025. How is that decision being made?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Are you referring to the Jersey Music Service.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Yes.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Again, that is one of the priorities which has not made it to the top of the pile, I am afraid. Do you want to say something about that.

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

I would say, again, it is a bit of a realism where we are with the programme. If there is not funding within the plan to develop the project further, we will not be concentrating feasibility funding on projects at this stage. That is just a reflection of the programme.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

So have you taken into consideration the impact that this will have for the young people and the consequences of not having that that activity?

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

So we have a team at the moment who are looking at facilities for the music service. We know those facilities could be better and there is pressure on those. They are actively looking at other options over the next, I suppose, medium term and then the Minister will need to be thinking about the next iteration of the capital programme going forward and whether new facilities or upgraded facilities or a different model for those facilities is going to be introduced.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

That would be interesting to see.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Sorry to interrupt you, but I think as well that some of these can be dependent on other areas of government and the decisions made, for example, around the Fort. Whether if the Fort is developed and facilities become available there are other areas of the government estate, for example, if things become available. I have always thought we have lots of buildings and it has become available ...

it needs to be a bit more joined up. We are looking for somewhere for the music service and there is a building that suits that purpose that is not being used. I do not see why it should not be simple in Government to say: "You know what, that is a really feasible option for us which is affordable sooner than we thought and let us get on and use that." The music service will still be in schools. The vast majority of their work is out in schools. Peripatetic music teachers - is that still the correct word; I have got the word out - out in schools, because that is the nature of music.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Where do the orchestras meet at the moment then?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

They are still at the Fort.

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

We are looking at putting them somewhere else.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There are spaces. So I have seen up at Les Quennevais School, Haute Vallée I think have been used before. There is an event - unfortunately I cannot attend - that is going on.

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

St. James has a space.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

St. James has a space. St. James's space is very good, actually. There is a good stage there and the set-up and the P.A. (public address) is good.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Okay, thank you for that. The panel recently undertook a visit to Highlands College and saw that there are challenges within the building - quite a few of them, unfortunately - that makes certain areas of the building are now closed. However, there is no budget assigned for refurbishments and upgrades to Highlands College until 2026. Would you like to give us a bit more detail on the reason why that is happening?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There are a couple of things there. There is a role for Jersey Property Holdings in those repairs, which we have to look at more closely, and what they are delivering. I think that is an issue that we need to take on board. It is also the simple fact that the plans for a new campus, I think it will need

some repairs that were never done because that never happened at the campus, which is a real shame, and Highlands is in the place. There are some contingency funds for the repairs when they are needed, but I think also Property Holdings need to take on their responsibilities as well, and we are talking very closely about ... are they called K.P.I.s (key performance indicators) or what are they called? No, they are called that ... the S.L.A. (service level agreements) and whether or not they are appropriate for what we want. I think that is one of the things. I do not know if anyone else wants to say something about Highlands and what we are going to do there.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Okay, maybe I can ... anyone?

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

All I would add is that it is a major, major programme because it is a huge facility and it is recognised that we need a new facility. In essence, we are quite limited around what we can and cannot do within the site, but there is maintenance allocation for capital.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

Thank you. Could you also please outline how C.Y.P.E.S. and I. and E. (Infrastructure and Environment) are collaborating and what discussions have taken place with regards to prioritising?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think one of the problems we have had with C.Y.P.E.S and Education in general is understanding education. If you are running a programme of repair, if in this building the window breaks you can put a board over it and it might take a long time to do. If you are in a school and a fence blows down, which is access to a road, that is an urgent repair. Now, it may go on the list but I think the urgency of that has sometimes not been understood and therefore schools go ahead and repair it themselves using their budgets. So I think there has been a confusion over what we are doing. I think the conversations over the service level agreements will address that. I think that is one of the, if you like - what is the phrase - the fine-tuning, is perhaps a good phrase, of the way in which the services that we get for Jersey Property Holdings could be more directed to the genuine needs within Education as an estate, as an entity in itself, because it is a specific entity. We are looking after children, and there are some things that just have to be done. I think that will help us and those are the ... I would say that the main discussions I want to have is increasing that, and understanding the necessity of some of the repair and the speed and the access to that, in order that facilities can continue. That is some of the main areas. Also, that is about the way things are prioritised. But then, of course, I would say it is a priority for Education. Again, I would not be doing this role if it was not.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

I mean, Highlands College does a lot of multitasking, does not it?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Absolutely.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

So what is your assessment of the sustainability of Highlands College as a building for the future learning and development needs? We talked about maybe possibly it needs a new building, but ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

It does. Highlands College still delivers a remarkable number of courses. It has, I think it is 418 apprenticeships at the moment, including higher apprenticeships in the facilities that it has. It delivers level 3 courses across the piece. It delivers access to education. It delivers higher education. What they do at Highlands College is work miracles with what they have got in terms of intelligent timetabling and rooming, et cetera. Yes, of course, what we need to do is try to increase access to that and repair. We need to also look, I think, at other buildings around the Education estate and how we could ... one of the things I talked about recently is further education and higher education and the way in which we need some sort of hub for bringing all of that together so you have that life of a student. One of the things that could ease the burden - that is the wrong word - to the provision up at Highlands is to provide that hub and free up some spaces there. So we do need to be intelligent in the way we do that. One of the things that we can do is, as we move into the new building at whatever it is going to be called, Union Street, that is it - 1 Union Street I think it is called - that will free up the Education building. Skills Jersey can move into there, so they have got one door, and that frees up spaces perhaps that we can use as well. I think what we need to do is look intelligently at our estate and then when the pinch points really come we may be able to assist with that. I think that is something we need to look at in the future.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

The only thing I was going to add was after our site visit, we found that the areas of the building where the technical courses and vocational courses take place, they are the ones who actually needed more attention.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, absolutely.

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

We are really trying to provide that sort of learning skills for Jersey people, so that would be a priority.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Absolutely. I think it is time we revisited some of that to see what we can do urgently. This is about this priority that I am talking about with Jersey Property Holdings maintaining ...

Deputy B.B. de S.V.M. Porée:

That will be a priority.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Particularly, I think, and again that is the advantage of having in the C.S.P. some stuff about ... the things about lifelong learning, about apprenticeships and about training on-Island. I think we are starting to ... it will inevitably take time, but I think we are starting to recognise as an Island there are some really key areas there for the Island as a whole. Perhaps we are seeing more the importance of Highlands now and its value, which is good.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

We have to move on.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

My questions are very much around education, employment and training, so they may not take long to answer. Part of your legislative programme, you have highlighted updates made to the higher education order. I think we talked to you about this on the 19th. Can you confirm if that work will be funded through the C.S.P. priority funding or lifelong learning and skills development?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I imagine that is more business as usual, is it not? It would not be either. Any legislative change that we are looking at it ... it has been an ongoing process.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Specifically around the distance learning and the grant boundaries.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Change to the legislation should not be massively ...

Director for Improvement and Transformation, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Are you talking about the resulting costs from the change in the legislation?

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Yes.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Okay, sorry.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Sorry, I was not clear in the question.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

When you talk about this, I genuinely think about ... well, because we have been so involved in what we are actually going to produce, I get a little bit focused in on that. Yes, it will be linked to that, but we are going to see about how we are going to get that legislative change and what we are going to do. We have talked already about the higher education changes and distance learning, that will be costed; that is included in the C.S.P.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

The grant thresholds, is that?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

But the grant thresholds presumably will be funded out of your business-as-usual funding or is that coming out of C.S.P. as well?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There is a gap, is there not, depending on the level that it goes up from? Do you want to explain this rather than you looking at me saying: "Go on, Rob, mess it up"?

Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.:

No, you are doing very well. I was willing you on. Yes, so the money that is in the C.S.P., £613.25, £600-odd, about half of it is around changes to the student finance funding for various elements. There is distance learning, there is the grant threshold, so that is just really people have ended up with lower grants this year than last year because their wages have gone up due to inflation. So although we put the grant up, people still came away with slightly less. The minute we get the order through, that will be readdressed and put back on to a proper footing.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

So that is where a lot of the costs will come from.

Head of Finance Business Partnering, C.Y.P.E.S.:

That did need extra funding because it is going to be fairly significant.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you. You mentioned in your letter to us as well that you are undertaking a number of training provisions and tracking systems to help address the gaps and improve outcomes for young people who are not in employment, educational training. You have said that further work is going to continue into 2025. Can you just give us a brief overview of that work and how it is likely to pan out during your term?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, this is about - and do jump in if you want to add something - joined-up systems as much as anything, about sharing information on young people so they are identified quickly, the risk of not being in education and training is identified earlier, so there can be earlier interventions. Do you want to, because I have lost the page?

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Page 25. We did get some funding in the previous Government Plan for this.

[15:15]

As the Minister outlines, we have effectively brought together Skills Jersey, Highlands College and some dedicated roles within the Youth Service. They have taken a different approach to tracking and trying to focus where we have got young people at risk of not being in education or employment. It has been quite successful. The identification of the young people has been the biggest positive. We have worked with C.L.S. (Customer and Local Services) to be able to get the data and the team have been able to target their focus much more. I have to say Highlands have been excellent in what they have been able to do because they have provided the biggest access point in terms of apprenticeships or other vocational options. It is an improving position; it has been part of the previous Government Plan, it has been really fruitful for us. There is much more to do and we know that in this space.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I think as well that one of the reasons, and it is sort of linked I would suggest, that we prioritise La Passerelle because we had some young people who were really not accessing education where we want them to. So improving our facilities can have knock-on effects elsewhere which are really

positive. We do not want people not in education, employment or training because the long-term impact of that is significant because at some point we are going to have to pick that up.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

When La Passerelle opens, will your intermediate unit that is up at Highlands at the moment close or will that be maintained?

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

The P.D.C. (Professional Development Centre)?

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Yes.

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

They will be working together. Ideally we want to bring it all together so that you have got La Passerelle?

Deputy H.M. Miles:

So the P.D.C. budget will not be affected by the development of La Passerelle during this term?

Chief Officer, C.Y.P.E.S.:

No.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

There is a budget already for those students.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Yes, there is.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Just to me it is not spent well because it is more expensive when you do it in a more disparate way. That is not blaming anyone, the facilities are not right. We are trying to put that right.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you. Talking about apprenticeships, can you give us your assessment of the current system for apprenticeships?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

In terms of accessing them or what is running?

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Of the work that is being undertaken or to be considered.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, there are a significant number of apprenticeships going on at the moment. Significant numbers in different areas. For example, there are 127 electrical apprenticeships going on, 44 plumbing ... I will not go through the entire list. I think there is a real flexibility in apprenticeships and I think the work they are doing there is very good, and we have had some really good communication with them. The way they are working with Skills Jersey is also very good; to identify and to get people on to apprenticeships. There will always be problems with finding enough ... well I do not know about enough, but the right apprenticeships, the right person and matching those people and keeping them on there. There is some work that we need to do in the coming months I think in terms of how the living wage and so on affects apprenticeships and what that will do and how we support that and how we encourage people into apprenticeships that we want on the Island and skill young people up but also older people. I think they are very successful. I think they are very good. I think they are delivered well. When you did your tour you may have seen some of them going on. I know I went up there when there was an inter-island competition going on, it was really effective. Could we do better? You can always do better but I think it is about targeting what we need on the Island. I will say one of the things actually - I am sorry going on a bit - we have to also define apprenticeships a little more clearly because there are some very technical apprenticeships that have a different certification to others and I think we have had a blanket idea of just an apprenticeship. I think we need to be really clear as to what we mean by that. Is it a programme of study that leads to very distinct stages of qualification as you go through? That is a genuine apprenticeship. You have got level 1, level 2, level 3. I had a meeting the other day with the construction sector and it was a really interesting conversation with a guy who knew ... I thought I knew about levels in education and exam boards. The levels, as you are talking about electrical apprenticeship for example, are phenomenal; the different range of things that have to be done. I think we need to really define those carefully as well.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Can I just add in quickly before you say your next question, Helen? Do you have any advice for those young people who cannot get a placement as part of their apprenticeship?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Go and speak to Skills Jersey. Go and make an appointment with Skills Jersey and get involved and let them do their job to help you with that, because that is precisely why they are there. I am hoping one of the things is to have that one front door and they can really start to know about it. That would be my first advice, is go to Skills Jersey.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. Thank you.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Thank you, I have finished my questions.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So I have questions now about early years. We received a submission from the Jersey Early Years Association where they have stated they believe that the models for early years are incompatible. They state that: "The private, voluntary and independent sector is entirely dependent on the creation of fee income with no other revenue sources while the public sector is government funded with, depending on policy access, to seemingly unlimited resources." How would you address this potential disparity? How would you address the concern?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Well, there are a couple of things here. The N.E.F. (Nursery Education Fund) funding is a government fund that goes to private nurseries as well, so there is access to funding through government funding in that way. School nursery places that have always existed, I do not think they are a competition. I think we have one sector providing in different ways and we need all of those sectors to be working together and to be compatible with each other. I think these juxtapositions that being set up, I find difficult because what we are trying to do ... well, it is 2 things. First of all, the C.S.P., the first thing on the C.S.P. is the development of nursery places. There is a recognition there is a lot of work that went on on the roundtables previously and up to 2 years of work in saying the provision that is needed. One of the things identified there, and stop me if I am wrong, guys, is - Jonathan, you have done a lot of work on this - is the need to extend provision, particularly 2 to 3 year-olds and the recommendation from that panel was to do that as quickly as possible and the way in which we do that may well use government resources. But that is not in competition with the

nurseries that already exist, but it complements and helps support parents and children to have a nursery place.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes, I think from my memory of their letter to us was that they were concerned about losing the placements of the older children and that that would affect their ability to continue.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

This is exactly why we are running pilots. Pilots are run to see the impact on the wider sector. We are very aware and cognisant of the fact that a significant number of children go to private nurseries. It would be completely counterintuitive to do anything to lessen those places when we are trying to increase nursery places. What we have to do is we have to work really carefully, pragmatically, trying pilots out as we go to see is this the way to increase those places? We have spoken about increasing 3 year-old provision in schools. I have also said, what about if we increase 2 to 3 year-old provision in those schools because it is more expensive for nurseries because of the ratios, but we have those facilities there. The other thing you need to remember is that schools have a great deal of flexibility in their resources. They have those buildings and they have those spaces. The example of what is happening at Dover and with the J.C.C.T. (Jersey Child Care Trust) is a specific need being met for young people who cannot access nurseries because of those needs. That is an excellent pilot because it shows a number of things. One, addressing the needs of those young people; second, how an outside provider can work within a school environment to provide nursery provision where it is needed; third, what are the implication and knock-on effects on that into the wider community and the wider sector? That is exactly the reason that we are running the pilots elsewhere in Plat Douet.

Programme Director:

Dover and Trinity.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I hope that what we can do is get to a position where we can meet the needs in terms of nursery provision in a flexible way, and if you like, consolidate what we have already and provide some security into the long term for all the sectors involved.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, that is good. Their submission also states that Government is the regulator for the private sector as well as being ... that they feel it is competitor. Do you see this as a potential conflict of interest?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Well, again, I do not see it as a competition. I think what ... perhaps the only competition ... the language around that of competition, I would suggest it is about the provision. If there is a recognised need for provision, we are going to use the resources that we have as Government to try and extend that for parents to have nursery places. I think the notion that we are trying to put other people out of business is simply not the case. It is not about nationalising the nurseries. I mean, I had a Deputy come to me and say: "I understand you are going to nationalise all the nurseries and give them 30 hours free for 2 to 3 year-olds." I have never spoken about that, simply undoable, simply not in the plan and, most importantly, it is not going to get the provision that we need across our sectors. There are really good nurseries out there. I have been visiting lots and lots of them. It is really pleasing to see, a lovely place to go. Exhausting, I do not know how people do it all day, but a really good place to go. We want to support that in the best way we can. Whenever you implement change there will be concerns, but every time we have discussed these concerns I believe we can move forward, and that is where we need to go.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. What studies have been undertaken to ensure that any potential demand for more nursery places for the 2 to 3 year-olds will be accommodated?

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

In terms of numbers?

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes, so that they can actually get their places.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

You mean how do we know those numbers? Sorry, I am confused.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Well, you would have to know the numbers, any work on what you think the numbers will be and what is available.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Jonathan, if you say something about estimates and numbers, and I will give my view on that afterwards, because I think you have to get the estimate where we are now, and I will give you a view on that as well.

Programme Director:

I guess we are into several different phases to get to that end point, where that end point is something that we are confident in is a number required, a new space is required. So, we know in talking with settings that waiting lists are in place. We know from petitions that there is a demand for more places and for further choice. We know directly from parents that to be the case. We did the first survey of earlier settings about this time last year and that indicated there was a gap of somewhere between 350 and 400 places between those filled spaces in 3s to 4s and those filled spaces in 2s to 3s. It would be wrong simply to jump to the conclusion that that therefore is a number but you start to get an indicator or indication of what the range might be. But we absolutely need to do more work and one of the things we can do while the pilots are in place is also do market testing. We want to speak to some parents, we want to get a greater understanding of demand so that we can then fix on a point which enables the Minister to talk about in the event that we move towards a universal offering. This looks like the demand today. This looks like the increase in demand, and therefore we can understand the financials more clearly. Maybe the final point on this is also coming back to one of the opening principles the Minister has outlined, which is in anticipating that by putting more money into the sector creates more demand. We want to do that in a way and at a speed which aligns with the capacity of the sector to fulfil that demand. We know from elsewhere, if a load of money goes in and it stokes up demand but the places are not there, that creates all sorts of upset and concern. So principle to align the increase in demand and supply as best possible together.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, and I think this is the thing, there are a number of variables in this. If you want a precise number, and we know where that is, that is going to be almost impossible for ever. There are so many variables. We talk about demographics dropping, but demographics started dropping about 4 or 5 years ago, but there is still significant demand in nurseries. We have migration to the Island, and migration is changing, so it would be more families with children. One of the things that will sell Jersey to people coming here as we move into Pillar Two taxation, for example, is good nursery provision, good education, good health. Those are the 3 real indicators for jurisdictions where people want to come and stay there. So that nursery provision needs to be in place. By using the sector that we have much control over in Government, we can have that flexibility. There will always be a range of places needed, but what I would like to see is have the provision put in place to have a secure provision across the sector without massive waiting lists so that parents can access, but the notion that there is any idea of putting the sector out of business that is already there is simply not what we are intending to do because it is completely counterintuitive to the outcomes that we want. So that balance will always be there. Sorry, just to say one more thing. In schools, for example, it is a lot easier for us to scale down - that is the word I am looking for - and scale up provision. We do it all the time with year groups. You may have a 2-form entry, go down to one form entry. You do not demolish the school, you just have one form entry and then when you are ready for the bump coming up again, and there has not been the drop we thought there would be,

there are still significant numbers. I know we are aware of numbers dropping in the future but I have said a number of times we need to be very wary of that, so that provision is there. There is flexibility within our system to do that if we have a stable force elsewhere.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I just wanted to add as well, we also have had a submission from the Jersey Association of Child Carers who have raised a number of concerns about the plans and one thing I just wanted to ask you about quickly was this adult-child ratio. In school nurseries I think it will be one adult to 6 2-year-olds whereas in privates it is one to 4, and if a childminder, it is one to 2. So there is a real disparity there and I wonder if you can ...

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Do you want to give the correct numbers?

[15:30]

Programme Director:

The quotation of one to 6 was a misunderstanding of a discussion in a P.T.A. (Parent Teacher Association) meeting on provision one of the pilot schools. It was referring actually to the older age group but I think, Minister, you met with the chair of the association of childminders since that submission and that has been clarified, is my understanding.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

I am arranging a meeting, which will be about 6.15 in the evening because they are childminders all day, so that we can meet in person to talk to a number of childminders about the concerns that they had over those ratios. In schools, in terms of ratios, you have to think that there are buildings within much larger buildings, so other people around is one thing. There has been traditionally an issue over the fact that you have a graduate teacher available, so that might change the ratios. I am quite happy to bring ratios down in schools if we can find the staffing because of what is best for children.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Just to make it clear, is that not the case that ... so the adult to child ratios in the school for a 2 year-old is not one to 6?

Programme Director:

No. What was happening in a particular school is the number of entries to the school nursery for the next school year had dropped to 18 children. There was a teacher and 2 adults and that is one

to 6, but that is not happening because the staff are being used in other parts of the school. So it was just a misunderstanding of a conversation. That is not the ratio.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

What is the ratio?

Programme Director:

The ratio for 2 year-olds is being worked up now and is the same across the sector. So we are only piloting this work so there are not published criteria that say a 2 year-old in a school, because we are only piloting that work starting on Monday.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

Yes, absolutely. I have not seen the submission from the childminders on your website yet, I apologise for that. I have spoken to them though after they submitted it. One of the issues said was around access to the N.E.F. for 2 to 3 year-olds, whether that would happen for childminders and the answer is simply, I would say, yes. But we have to develop that N.E.F. model for 2 to 3 year-olds anyway. But one of the things, we have a lot of learning from the N.E.F. model from the 3 year-olds; again learning from what we have done previously.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay. Well I think that is all our questions and we have just gone past 3.30.

The Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning:

That is timing and a half.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Thank you very much, everyone. That has been really interesting. thank you.

[15:32]