



Public Accounts Committee

Estate Management /

Performance Management / COVID response

**Witnesses: Director General, Customer and Local
Services and Director General, Strategic Policy,
Planning and Performance**

Monday, 4th October 2021

Panel:

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier (Chair)

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

Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville

Senator T.A. Vallois

Mr. G. Phipps

Dr. H. Miles

Mr. A. Lane

Ms. L. Pamment, Comptroller and Auditor General

Witnesses:

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

Mr. T. Walker, Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance

Professor P. Bradley, Director of Public Health

Mr. I. Cope, Interim Director of Statistics and Analytics

Mr. S. Skelton, Group Director, Strategy and Innovation

[14:01]

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

Welcome to the public hearing of the Public Accounts Committee with the director general of Customer and Local Services and the director general of the Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance, which we will call S.P.P.P. to make it shorter. We will go around the table shortly but for the benefit of the public we will set out the reason for our public hearing today. As you know, we are currently having 2 reviews, performance and management, and the COVID response. In both these areas we are primarily concerned and ensure that the taxpayer money is in use for intended purposes. As P.A.C. (Public Accounts Committee) we hold senior officers to account for implementing government policy, demonstrating value for money, effectiveness and efficiency. We have asked both of you today because we want to know how the restructuring of your department, creating your departments - because both of your departments are new departments - is beneficial for the public. We will look specifically about complaints handling with Customer and Local Services and also whether performance framework leads to the improved staff to understand what effect the management of the COVID response had. I would invite now that we will introduce ourselves. We will go around the table. Deputy Inna Gardiner, St. Helier 3 and 4, chair of the panel.

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

Karen Shenton-Stone, Constable of St. Martin and vice-chair of the panel.

Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville:

John Le Maistre, Constable of Grouville, States Member of the panel.

Comptroller and Auditor General:

Lynn Pamment, Comptroller and Auditor General.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Ian Burns, D.G. (director general) for Customer and Local Services.

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Tom Walker, D.G. for S.P.P.P.

Mr. A. Lane:

I am Adrian Lane, independent member of the Public Accounts Committee.

Dr. H. Miles:

Dr. Helen Miles, independent member of the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. G. Phipps:

Graeme Phipps, an independent member of P.A.C. as well.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Senator Vallois, member of P.A.C.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

We will start with questions about performance management. We will look first at restructuring of the department, often called T.O.M. (target operating model), for the benefit of the public. After we will move into performance framework and how you integrate recommendations from C. and A.G. (Comptroller and Auditor General) and the P.A.C. into the department performance. We will start with Mr. Walker, director general for S.P.P.P. Can you please describe to us the full remit of your department, S.P.P.P., how many people work for your department, and the cost of T.O.M. for your department?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

The department itself is in a number of different directorates. It is probably easier if I just quickly run through those because that will also inform what we do. We have a public policy directorate that, as its name suggests, supports the democratic system in bringing forward public policy changes. One that is much in the media at the moment is assisted dying, for example, where the Assembly has asked for work to be done, the Minister has brought forward proposals, and will shortly be lodging a proposition for the Assembly to consider. The public policy work is largely supporting the democratic system in developing and then deciding upon public policy. We have a strategy and innovation directorate. That is headed up by Mr. Skelton, who has joined us online today. That deals with strategic planning, on the one hand, so it deals with essentially the more long-term aspects of strategic planning for the Island. So it will do things like the Government Plan and the Island Plan but also deal with some of the longer-term issues that we have to deal with, such as carbon neutrality, energy, land use, sustainable transport, all of those more longer-term pieces of work. That is, in a nutshell, what the strategy and innovation function does. Then we have a public health directorate that I suspect we will probably come on to talk about a little bit later. But the public health directorate does a mixture of policy and strategy for public health and also public health analytics and some of the important supporting structures. That is headed up by Professor Bradley, who has also joined us online. Then of course we have statistics; so statistics and analytics are really important functions of the independent Statistics Jersey and also the analytics work to help drive forward progress on things like service performance measures. That is headed up at the moment by Mr. Cope, who has also joined us online. Then the department has a number of arm's length functions for which we are the sponsor department. The Children's Commissioner, the Care Commission, the Charities Commissioner, the Official Analyst, a whole range of good and important

arm's length functions, like the Jersey Arbitration and Conciliation Service. There is a whole list, you have seen them in our business plan. We are the sponsor department for those for a range of different reasons. We are the sponsor department for some of the analytical functions because analysis has to inform the democratic system, has to inform democratic decision-making, and so we are the sponsor department for those sorts of functions. But also some of the other functions, like the Children's Commissioner, are seeking to influence children in all policy, seeking to work closely with the policy function. We are the sponsor department because we have a lot of synergies with some of the more strategic ambitions of those arm's length bodies. All of that currently has a budget of about £10 million per annum to do all of the arm's length bodies and the core directorates. I think we are the smallest department in terms of budget, which is what you would expect; small but highly strategic. Then equally there are about 100-or-so people. It comes and goes, like all departments do, particularly in our department because at the moment we have expanded numbers because of expanding the public health function due to COVID. We are often asked to acquire additional resource in order to take forward policy priorities like carbon neutrality, where again we have an expanded team in order to do that. That is very much what tends to happen in a strategic policy department. The numbers fluctuate. Sometimes we can have maybe only about 70 people. Sometimes we have 125. It could go up and down quite a lot.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

How do you evaluate its value for money for this department? It was created, some functions were drawn from other departments, I assume, or not.

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Yes, the department itself was established to lead strategic policy, planning and performance. The reason the department was established originally came out of the due diligence work undertaken when the former chief executive arrived in 2017 going into 2018. That due diligence work identified a number of positives in Jersey, so it identified that we had some very good committed, talented people working on strategy, policy, planning and performance, but equally it identified a number of areas for improvement. So there were 9 sub-objectives, if you like, to establishing the department that we were seeking to achieve when it was first set up.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Since it was set up in 2018, let us say, did you make changes?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Yes, we have made some changes, so when it was first established public health was part of the policy directorate, and pre-pandemic we had identified that we needed to strengthen the public health function. We had started on that process, but of course with the pandemic that has very

much been accelerated. Public health is now its own directorate, which it was not when we first started. Also we have acquired a few more arm's length functions since we first started. For example, the Official Analyst moved from Justice and Home Affairs across to S.P.P.P. That was to remove any perception that there may be a conflict between their role in analysing, for example, drug samples and the role of Justice and Home Affairs in prosecuting those kind of offences and bringing them to court.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Is all policy development across the whole government within your department remit ...

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Not all policy development.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

... or some stayed out?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

That is correct, some of it stayed out.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

What stayed out please?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

At the time, with Brexit coming up, the decision was taken that the economic policy-making and the tax policy-making should stay out of the integrated model, at least until we had got the other side of Brexit. The original decision was to leave the economic functions where they were, which also includes digital, and to leave the tax policy functions where they were. Subsequent to that, I know as you will be aware, a decision was made to set up a dedicated economy department.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Money, it is one of the important things that we do have because we have income, we have expenditure and the policies around our taxation, so we have S.P.P.P. that is setting our policy but not with anything related to finance?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

The tax policy team sit within the Treasury and my team work closely with them. We do work very closely with the tax policy team. For example, people from Mr. Skelton's area will work quite closely with the tax policy team on carbon neutrality and how that is going to be taken forward. The same

with the economic function. You will appreciate that, for example, Statistics Jersey work very closely with the economic adviser.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Why is it not included in your department?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Because the original rationale based around Brexit at the time was not to include it and the subsequent decision was then to set up a separate economy department.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Is it going to be reviewed?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

I do not know.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Thank you.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Just so I can clarify; £10 million per annum for Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance, but that is not the whole scope for policy and planning and performance. If we were looking at it from an accounts point of view and say: "How much does policy cost? How much does planning cost? Is it being effective?" Do you see where I am coming from?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

I do, yes. If you were to look at it thematically you would deduct some things from S.P.P.P. because some of those budgets are for arm's length functions; for example, the Jersey Care Commission. They are not for doing policy and strategy work for government. Then you would add things to it, such as the tax policy team and the economic policy functions.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

We will move to Mr. Burns; similar questions. The same because Customer and Local Services was a new department that was created. Would you please help the public and the committee to make clarity what the customer services are within your department? How much cost, how many people work there.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Sure. The aim of creating Customer and Local Services was to bring together all the customer-facing activity in one place, where we could, so that we could provide a better service and experience for the public.

[14:15]

Because the public are giving us feedback to say that it is frustrating ... while everyone loves you work for government it is frustrating to have to go to multiple departments, multiple phone numbers and multiple places, in many cases, to get one single thing done where it cuts across. Our life events, as they were, will touch many different departments so we want to try and make things better. That was the idea behind Customer and Local Services. We are building on the core of customer-facing staff that existed within Social Security, added on other key customer facing teams. For example, the library came into Customer and Local Services, as did the Office of the Superintendent Registrar, and along with some internal functions like the People Hub, which has a very similar operational outlook and high-volume activity. We brought together teams of a similar nature. They were internally customer facing to create Customer and Local Services but we also, in our target operating model structure, freed up money both for savings but also for investment. Investment in areas which the Government did not previously invest in. For example, having a customer feedback function, which I know we are going to come on to later, but that was finding the money to invest in resources, to help us improve and respond to customer feedback. In addition to that, we have a set of the local services function about trying to work with our community and voluntary partners to try and improve both the way that government works with those groups but also therefore the offer and services we can provide to the public. There are 2 good examples of how we have invested into areas and that we have also invested into improving services within Customer and Local Services' part of that target operating model, expanding the opening hours at the library, for example, making improvements to the services that have transferred in benefiting from a better, more customer-focused structure, with perhaps a flatter structure and also more generic roles to allow us the flexibility to make sure we can respond to the public. Those were the key elements of our target operating model. I think that was executed in 2019 and we have been obviously building upon that since and bringing in some additional services along the way. Our structure allows us to do that quite straightforwardly and we will continue to add on, I am sure, additional customer-facing areas as and when the time is right across government.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

How many people work for the department and what is the cost of the target operating model?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

The cost of running the department in 2021 is about £22.5 million, although we do get income, roughly about £9.5 million which offsets that. But there are obviously additional costs on top of that for the whole department, which includes income support, tax-funded benefits, which obviously vastly outweighs the cost of running it. We have just under 300 people full-time work for the department now.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

What customer-facing services are not incorporated in your department?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

For example, the obvious one is Revenue Jersey. I know we have co-located but they have very much responsibility for their own customer-facing teams. Perhaps the tax policy is outside of the structure and it has remained within Revenue Jersey and Treasury. For reasons of international tax compliance, it has remained within Revenue Jersey. They look after their own customer-facing activity. Having said that, they are part of the customer strategy work that we lead and they are keen to improve their customer standards and do a better service for the public. We are working with them on that, helping them move that along.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

In this case, I would like to stop for a minute, because it was brought to my attention that once you update your address with Social Security it is not automatically updated with Revenue Jersey, although we have the same system. Why still no correlation between updates between Revenue Jersey and Social Security?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

There is a "tell us once" programme, that was a few years old now, that would allow change of addresses to be shared around government to ensure the customer only needed to do it once. I thought the tax function was part of the "tell us once" structure, albeit I think theirs is not automated yet because they were moving through their system changes. I think that they are part of that scheme. The ones that we have are updated automatically. I can clarify that for you, if you would like, but I am pretty certain that they are part of that.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

For sure, nine months ago it did not work. Maybe it is happened during that time. We have Revenue Jersey is still a separate entity for customer serving; what else is customer-facing service delivered outside of your department?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

There are some smaller functions dotted around different departments where perhaps the time is not quite right or the members of staff do more than one thing. Some examples, perhaps that may be a student finance in education, C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills). That is something that could perhaps be part of Customer and Local Services but is currently within C.Y.P.E.S., and we may look at helping support that going forward. Within the health service there is a significant amount of generic customer service that takes place around hospital booking, outpatient appointment booking. We have had discussions in the past about could that be done better, would that be done better if it was under C.L.S's (Customer and Local Services) remit and so on. But there has been quite a bit going on in the meantime to do with COVID that has put some of those discussions back on the backburner, and we have plenty to get on with.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

During the COVID we obviously had the people could not walk in because of the COVID; is it now back on track?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

The department is open and people can book appointments to see people face to face.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

But if people are not able to make appointments can they walk in like it was previously before COVID?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

So you can walk in the front door, absolutely, and drop things off and have a very brief conversation but we are based on customer feedback; customers said they would prefer to do things online, customers have said that they ... we surveyed a sample of customers about 3 months ago who phoned us up and we asked them whether they prefer to do things this way or prefer to do things ... would they prefer to come in and see us face to face? 88 per cent of people said they would prefer to pick up the phone whereas they would have come in before. Therefore, based upon on that, I know ... we need to make sure that we remain available to the whole of the public but I think if we are offering appointments, and I hope shortly to be able to offer online appointments, i.e. you can book an appointment online, then we will find that hopefully we can provide the service that is perhaps a better service in the long run for the public.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I think it is more about the elderly population that was struggling with and they used to walk in and get the service. So basically what you are saying now they can walk in, they will have a quick chat, and somebody will help them to make an appointment?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

We can potentially book them an appointment. Potentially you might not want to come in, you might want to just pick up the phone and we can now do most of our things over the phone. That is what that customer feedback that we measured 3 months ago showed us, was that people do want to, and prefer not to come in.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

It is good to have all flexibility. I will pass to Senator Vallois.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

In your response to us in July you referred to the strategic T.O.M. evolution being routed into your business planning and change projects implementation process. What is your understanding of the strategic evolution of T.O.M.?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

We have our structure and one of the advantages of the C.L.S. structure is having generic roles; it gives us a significant flexibility in adapting. If we find that we need to move resources about we now can do. Within our business model we are of course looking at our performance. We are looking at forecasting and looking ahead to see what may be coming down the track. Now I will just say in a COVID environment that has rather blown quite a few of our normal activities out of the water but we still look ahead and try and forecast what our resources are, and we also have a look at obviously clearly what the plans are into the Government Plan and then our departmental operational business plan, and adjust our resources accordingly. That is what we are talking about there, when we look ahead, think strategically what is required and make sure we have the resources in place. If we found that we did need additional resources of a sort that we did not have either job descriptions for or the technical job descriptions for we would seek to change our target operating model effectively. That is all that really is. It is what you would do in any private sector organisation, you would be ...

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I was just wondering with the wording whether it was something that I was not aware, so I just wanted clarification. So that is useful. But in the same response you referred to the ideas scheme that you have, I think it is from your staff. Could you advise us or give us a snippet of what that looks like in terms of who determines the feasibility of the action of those ideas that come forward? Do they all take it forward or is it just some ideas that maybe you, as director general, think are appropriate?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

We run 2 recognition schemes in C.L.S. In fact, pretty much everywhere I have worked I have tried to do something similar. One is about recognition of good things. In our case here it is about people's behaviours against the values of the organisation. Then we have ideas. Because we are keen always to get support and ideas and idea generation and innovation from our colleagues who are at the sharp end of customers; who deal with customers. We have a simple ideas scheme and people put forward their suggestions. Those suggestions are looked at by our customer experience team for feasibility, and perhaps have a dialogue with that member of staff just to make sure exactly what they wanted to do and did not want to do, is that what they meant. Sometimes ideas are perhaps policy ideas, sometimes ideas are simple operational ideas. Obviously we look at those ideas and where we can implement them and if we think we can make an improvement we will do so and celebrate that fact. Yes, we have a steady flow of ideas that come from the teams.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

In terms of more complex changes it was mentioned in your response that it will be fed into a business planning process. Sometimes things that get fed in do not necessarily come out the other end so how is that managed and how do you monitor it to ensure progress, if any progress is going to be taken, but if it is not how is that fed back?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

That business planning process follows the cycle of the government-planning process so that we would need to prioritise. We would have Ministers' ambitions, which will be linked to the common strategic priorities, and then we would have to look at what we maybe wanted to changed in the next 12 months, and that would include perhaps suggestions and ideas from colleagues. We would need to prioritise them because one thing I think that we have learnt throughout COVID is you should not try and do too much all at the same time. That is the difficult challenge we are faced with, having to prioritise to make sure that we focus on the things that will make the most difference and that deliver obviously Ministerial priorities. That is all that is talking about really and maybe those ideas from the teams may be made part of a bigger project or maybe can be done standalone by resources as they come free.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

More of a general question, because I know we are going to come on to complaints later on, but in terms of recommendation tracker that is ongoing at the present time and any recommendations that are made to C.L.S. in particular, is that fed into the business planning process? How does that work? Is it similar to the ideas scheme?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

If there was a recommendation that would involve significant resources then that would be a factor in our prioritisation planning. We would love to do this but actually we need to deal with these things we have committed to, to respond to an audit or a Scrutiny recommendation, then we will need to prioritise those versus something else. We have to try and balance it all of course and also make our rebalancing contributions as well in terms of the overall efficiency of government.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

In terms of how you were sure yourself, as director general, so you are accountable to the principal accountable officer, answerable to us, how do you assure yourself that the recommendations are being implemented? What I mean by that is that monitoring progress; what does that look like and what does that mean for C.L.S.?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

In my particular case, we have a reasonably narrow range of recommendations. I am having conversations with the director responsible and getting good updates on progress and understanding if there are blockages and what we can do about it.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Is it just one individual that you asked to follow the recommendations tracker up with and if so, how do they ensure co-ordination if there is a recommendation from the C. and A.G. or P.A.C. that suggests that it is something you have to co-ordinate ... or maybe you haven't had one of those recommendations but something you have to co-ordinate with another department?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

In each particular case, these complaint handling recommendations are being led by that particular director through the customer strategy board. You have a range of representatives from across all departments sat together trying to deliver customer strategy, of which customer feedback is part of that strategy.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Who determines the effectiveness of that board?

[14:30]

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I sit on that board and Sophie leads it, so I do I guess.

Mr. A. Lane:

I want to go back to the target operating model. For both of you, you formed a new directorate by pulling things from various parts of the organisation albeit, as we have heard, some bits of what you might have have been left behind. In each case, how much have you spent to make that transformation and what can you do to demonstrate that that has been money well spent?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

In terms of making that transformation, we did not spend any additional money. The investment was in time. There was no cash expenditure. It was really about management effort and the time of the staff to go through that process and their engagement and participation. It is an investment in time to move from one structure to another. As you say, that is around realigning existing resources into a new configuration.

Mr. A. Lane:

Did you have an estimate at that time?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

No. I think there have been, since that starting position, as well as doing things like creating a new public health directorate and taking over responsibility for the official analyst, things that have changed, there are also things that have happened in successive Government Plans where investment has come in on top of that in order to deliver specific programmes. The Island Plan is a good example of that where the Government Plan process provides additional resources into S.P.P.P. to do something specific on top of what is already there in order to run an Island Plan process. You will find that there is a regular series of that happening because, in a sense, the way we add value into the system is perhaps in a different way to some other departments, in that we are here to serve the democratic system and so if the democratic system wants something doing or focusing on, it tends to provide the resources for us to go and do that. But also in terms of the outcomes that we achieve. I mean the unifying factor across the department is our focus on trying to improve the lives of Islanders. Most things that we are doing are about the future and are about seeking to achieve improvements that either the democratic system or an arm's length function wants to achieve for Islanders.

Mr. A. Lane:

Is there any line of sight from what it costs to run all of that activity before to what it costs to run all that activity now?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Not that I am aware of.

Mr. A. Lane:

Thank you.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I would agree with Tom in terms of that line of sight in terms of the effort. It was predominantly effort of existing resources within existing budgets being applied to try and make our business and department better. In our case we did also make additional savings net of the new roles we created. So there was an annualised saving there that I suppose would have contributed to prioritisation and growth in other areas, as well as the efficiency plans. But I do not have a cost of that restructure. I would say, and I have said this before, that Government has not done in the past an ongoing programme of restructuring and finessing its structures, as you would if you were a private organisation. Really we should, going forward, have built into our day-to-day responsibilities that capacity to be able to change parts of the organisation and make it better and improve and go through potentially consultations and possibly redundancies to improve our structures. That should be something we do as a matter of course rather than waiting for a generational type change.

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Reflecting upon it, I think some of the challenge in trying to provide that line of sight comes out of the nature of the work that we do. If you take a function that should be straightforward, like public health - what does it cost before, what does it cost now - when I think back, the public health function that used to be in the Health Department many years ago included regulation of care responsibilities that we have now separated off to put across to the Care Commission. It included a whole range of screening programmes that are now done within the Health Department as part of their work. Then of course the resources fluctuated, the resource on policy and strategy and analytics moved across. We have expanded it since then, of course partly because of COVID, partly because of the Jersey Care Model people have recognised the need and the democratic system has recognised the need to increase investment in those areas. I think the complexities in trying to arrive at a simple answer to a simple question, probably come around in changing strategic priorities of the people's elected representatives.

Mr. A. Lane:

Thank you.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Thank you very much. Just back to recommendations, I will move to Tom now, if that is okay. How do you manage the implementation of agreed recommendations from P.A.C. or the Comptroller and Auditor General within your department?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

There is a formal process and then there is the sort of dynamic day-to-day process. So the formal process is the one that you will doubtless have had described to you before, which is a quarterly reporting process. That involves me reviewing what our quarterly updates are. There is always that regular formal quarterly process. Alongside that, myself and the Head of Governance in my department look across the recommendations and do the kind of work that Mr. Burns was talking about, in that we do that kind of dynamic day-to-day stuff where we talk to people where we think that a recommendation has perhaps stalled and we need to provide some help to move forward, or where we want to see where a recommendation has got to, or we are not sure that the update has moved much further from before. There is a dynamic thing that happens and indeed just a couple of weeks ago I was sat innocently at my desk doing some other work and a member of my staff appeared because he had been sent by the Head of Governance to discover where a certain action was up to. That action rested with me. It is one I have not done; we will talk about it later. That kind of chasing process is dynamic and live and active. I think at any one time I always have a really good feel for how many accepted recommendations there are which are outstanding and where we are with them. As you know, we use the tracker for both Scrutiny and for P.A.C. and C. and A.G. Of course the Scrutiny side is equally important for my department because we are supporting Ministers and Scrutiny through that process.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Just to check, Head of Governance sits within your department?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Yes, that is the post that we created when we created S.P.P.P. That was because when we looked at the structure ... we did a first cut of the structure and we could see that we were clearly well-resourced in terms of getting the policy done, getting the strategy done. But equally it was clear to myself and others in the department that we did not have anyone to help us ensure that we were doing everything that we needed to do in terms of a lot of the governance things. The challenges there around making sure that the governance and resources, financial resources, human resources, people, information resources, are kept in good shape and also the management of risk. We were conscious that it was something that needed somebody in the department focused on making sure that we were doing everything that we should do as a department, engaging with central colleagues over those requirements, and helping us drive things forward; particularly on the people front, around people, culture and diversity. So we created a Head of Governance role, not as a silo where the rest of us just kind of punt that and do not worry about it, but as a role that drives the department, that drives change, transformation and improvement within the department. I think some of the departments have similar roles. Justice and Home Affairs is a similar role. The Chief Operating Office has a similar role as well. It is quite a common role that you will find. Sometimes

they have different names. Sometimes they are called business managers. Sometimes they are called governance managers. Ours is called Head of Governance.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

In terms of your Head of Governance reporting into you, I imagine, you recently closed as a department a recommendation from 2019 on quality of reporting. Just trying to use this as an example to get an idea. So you talk about your dynamic follow-up actions, which is great. But there was also mention about quarterly reports and departmental operation and business plans, all those types of things, but they have not been produced yet and the recommendation has been closed. How does that fit with understanding how that tracking works?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

The recommendations tracker, as you will know better than most people, is a highly dynamic thing. Recommendations come in. They get addressed. They go off again. New recommendations come in. It is a constant position. I would be amazed if any day I ever get that down to single figures even, because Scrutiny is working, the C. and A.G. is working, you are working, it should be a constant dynamic of they come in, they go out, and then what I am managing is the prioritisation between them primarily. Sometimes we get a new recommendation come in, which is really important in terms of either continuous improvement, i.e. it would represent a big improvement, or it is really important in terms of covering off a high risk. So we would probably do that first. We do not do it in order.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

In terms of the prioritisation, I just want to understand this properly. But is every director general, whether that is sitting at an executive leadership team or whatever that might be, having discussions around prioritising recommendations made by the C. and A.G. and P.A.C.? Or is it just within individual departments?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

It depends where you are in the process. I think that when a new report is received one of the improvements that has been introduced, as you know, is that is now considered by E.L.T. (Executive Leadership Team), which is an improvement over the previous practices many years ago. Now the whole of the executive leadership team has an opportunity to discuss a C. and A.G. report or a P.A.C. report. Quite often that is the first place in which you get a feel for relative prioritisation between the different things, that discussion, being able to say what are the most critical things here. Which are going to deliver the biggest improvements? Where are the quick wins that we can just do very quickly? Which are the highest risks? I think once that is done and then different risks are assigned to departments, that kind of sets the template potentially until something else comes along.

I think if we had a really pressing and important recommendation from one of the recent series of C. and A.G. reports around the COVID response, that would probably get done earlier than some of the others because we are in the middle of a live COVID response. Potentially that could be more impactful. The other things will still get done but obviously because it is dynamic and because the resource that is responding to it is fixed, i.e. the officers, naturally you are looking at that constantly to ensure that you are doing things in the best possible order to deliver the most benefit for the public.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Very quickly, because I requested an update from the recommendation tracker prior to this public hearing and I look through this and I am not sure what is correct because there is a recommendation, at least on my end; it is 15 and 16. It is around a code of practice for future S.T.A.C.s (Scientific and Technical Advisory Cell) and both of them are interconnected but one of them should be delivered by now, September 2021, and another should be delivered by September 2022. I was not sure if it is overdue; both of them, or it really needs the one year to deliver with them.

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

The code of practice for S.T.A.C. is the action that rests with me that I was being chased for the other day. So, I have put aside next Friday to do that work. That one is just with me and I have just had other things happen in relation to the pandemic, so I have not got to it yet.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Fair enough. It means the follow-up recommendation which is next for this, it is improve the records - it is basically I have 15 and 16 - is the same day just in 2022; was it a mistype?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

They are linked, are they not?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

They are completely linked because recordkeeping requirement to be included in the code of practice but it is one year difference between them for delivery.

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Yes, that is probably just an export error.

[14:45]

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Okay, so it is 2021?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Yes. It is one of those things that will definitely get done this year. Again, it is one of those that you make a judgment over. A code of practice for S.T.A.C. is going to be really important but of course it is never going to be as important as, say, actually getting the vaccination programme running.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I completely understand and I agree. But I am using this as an example and we, as P.A.C., considered so we have a target date and the moment the target date passes does it become red or maybe it is better, it is easier, that you have one chance to reconsider the date and update us, but at the moment its date was twice updated to a realistic one it has come up red because we feel like there are so many ambers and reds there.

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

No, when the fine member of my team reminds me that I need to update it with the new timetable then I will definitely do that.

Mr. A. Lane:

Can I just ask on that, is there any follow-up, anywhere else in the organisation, other than someone in your team reminding you? Do you get something from the chief of staff asking why this is overdue and what is happening about it? What is the mechanism?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Yes, you can do. You can do sometimes; you do not always. But yes, sometimes we get questions that will come out either from the chief of staff or the chief executive's office that will ask where something is up to. Sometimes we will get a query from a Minister as well, because perhaps it is something that a Scrutiny Panel has raised on the Scrutiny side of things, because they are aware of a C. and A.G. recommendation and are interested in where it is up to. Yes, you do get that.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I think we get that also now in the quarterly risk report that goes to E.L.T.

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

We do, so anything that trips into red becomes a risk discussion.

Mr. A. Lane:

Before I start on the performance framework question - this was an area that is seemingly of quite some interest to the public because we did have a number of questions submitted, which we have tried to weave in where relevant to today's hearing - I am interested in how you take the corporate priorities. The things that you are measuring in the strategic framework, and drive them into department objectives. Could we start with Tom?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Yes. So we have, as you are aware, in the strategic planning framework the kind of big, golden thread that goes from Future Jersey into the Jersey Performance Framework, into the Common Strategic Policy, into the Government Plan and then into the departmental plan, and then from the departmental plan that then goes into My Conversation My Goals. So that is the essence of the golden thread. The important bit for the departmental perspective is of course the Departmental Operational Business Plan, because that is where a wider group of things come together to set the objectives. You will have seen that in our departmental business plan for 2021. We have got things that flow from the democratic system through the Common Strategic Policy into the Government Plan, into things that we need to do and get done to support the democratic system and what it is trying to achieve. But you will see that is also the place where things like Our People objectives come in. So the things for us that came out of the Be Heard survey that we want to act upon, the things for us that have come out of the COVID experience that we want to do in terms of our people, our culture, the way we run the department, all of those also come into the Departmental Operational Business Plan. That is really helpful because then that broader set of objectives can then feed into, for example, my personal objectives - that I agree with the chief executive - which will be partly around delivering the things that I need to deliver in the Government Plan, but also the things that I need to do in terms of culture, diversity, the wider objectives for my department.

Mr. A. Lane:

Where in that process do you step back and just sense check against broader public service objectives?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Which objectives have you got in mind there?

Mr. A. Lane:

Whichever ones you are referencing. The question is you have taken the strategic K.P.I.s (key performance indicators), you have got some sort of process to drive that down into a set of departmental objectives that you are running. What is the sense check to what that means for the public in terms of what your department is delivering?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

I see what you mean. Yes, so this is where we track back to what each of those things is doing in terms of improving the future lives of Islanders. You will see that when we talk about what we are going to do on climate change or on sustainable transport we always link it back to the outcome that we are seeking, that that would contribute towards. You can see that through the plan. It is in the way we lay out the plan, so each of those actions ...

Mr. A. Lane:

The plan being your departmental business plan?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Yes.

Mr. A. Lane:

I think you captured the end of the golden thread, which is cascading this into the My Conversation My Goals system. What proportion of individuals in your department will have a line of objectives recorded in that system now?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

I think we are up in the 90 per cent zone.

Mr. A. Lane:

With a target of 100 per cent, presumably?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Well, of course, you have seen that in my plan as well. In the 2020 business plan we talked about starting to improve the way that My Conversation My Goals is embedded in the department. That is an objective again in 2021, so you have seen in the people section of my business plan we have an objective to try to embed that even further, so that we are really embracing it. For us, that is not just about the numbers, the proportion; it is about the quality. So my senior team, and I think yours as well, are participating in a pilot where we are trying to have better conversations about performance. Perhaps an example of that, so we have got an objective that says we need to enrich the way that we do My Conversation My Goals and so, for example, the senior team had 2 facilitated discussions about what for S.P.P.P. really great management and leadership looks like. We have used an external facilitator so that I can participate in that alongside my directors and my heads, and what we are trying to get to there is not just: "Have you done it?" but the quality of what is done. What does really fantastic performance look like at leadership level in S.P.P.P.? We are having that conversation because we are trying to enrich the process.

Mr. A. Lane:

How do you get confidence that that has gone throughout your organisation?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Throughout the department?

Mr. A. Lane:

Yes.

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Well, it has not and that is why it is an objective in 2021, because I know that it requires all of us to do more work on it. That is not something that can be driven in an autocratic, top-down way, because then all I will get is 100 per cent. But 100 per cent of what? What we are trying to do ...

Mr. A. Lane:

So how will you know that has happened?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

We will know from my people; we will know from what they say in the next Be Heard survey. We will know from the feedback that they are giving to their colleagues, to their managers, from others. We will know from the work that they are doing, engaged in various working groups on the kind of culture, the way of working, that they want to have in their department. A department belongs to its people and so it is ultimately the people who determine whether that is a rich process or not.

Mr. A. Lane:

Okay. I do not know if this touches on the same thing, but your departmental business plan did talk about having an independent assessment of improvement. What are the plans for following through on that now?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

It did, so when we wrote that in December 2019 we were full of hope and optimism that that was a good idea and that is what we would do. Obviously then 2020 happened and lots of our 2020 plan was not implemented, including that, because 75 per cent of the department were working on the pandemic at some points through 2020. We led the public health pandemic response, so my department was very much on the front line of that. That was one of the things that we thought was a great idea, but we did not get to do in 2020. We have not reflected that again in our 2021 plan because we want to focus on other things and to consolidate a lot of our work on how the people

feel, how they work within the department and to some extent what you might otherwise call the recovery phase from having been on the front line of the pandemic for so long. I still think it is a great idea. I think when we came up with it back at the end of 2019 and put it in the 2020 plan it was a good idea. I suspect we will come back to it in the future.

Mr. A. Lane:

If I could put the same questions to you, please, starting with the corporate priorities being cascaded into departmental objectives and perhaps if there is anything different in C.L.S.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, I support everything Tom has just said. I think the advantage that I have is that because we have a customer-facing area it is much easier to have measures such as customer satisfaction and customer effort that can filter through, irrespective of what the strategic priority is, into people's objectives and we can roll that up. One of the things I think is a positive movement is increasingly more departments are having those sorts of measures across government. I think that is a helpful test in terms of the public's view about government services and the public's view therefore about the service and value we provide as a government to them, and they are comparing us against their ongoing experiences, not just comparing us against each department. That is a positive thing. Absolutely on a quarterly basis I stand up virtually now in front of the department and provide them with an update about how we are doing across the government department, the bigger ticket items in terms of performance, projects, progress and what is coming next. All of that backs up the conversations they are having about the important work they do and their performance with their managers through My Conversations My Goals. We have generally been one of the departments leading on completion of appraisals and the like and I think we are not far behind 90 per cent, as Tom said. Just as important as My Conversations My Goals is of course a thorough induction for people so we also make sure that when people arrive they understand this no matter what time of the year that they get induction to what we are trying to achieve and how it links together and how it links to States Members and Ministers and so on.

Mr. A. Lane:

To Tom's point, in his response, how do you go beyond just the pure number of people having objectives to make sure that the quality of their conversation is there?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, we equally have the Be Heard survey results, which will provide us with a good update. We set an objective to try to improve engagement and My Conversation My Goals is an important part of that engagement process. Clearly if we are just ticking boxes we will not do very well when it comes to that engagement.

Mr. A. Lane:

Okay. Are you confident that the Be Heard survey will have the right questions in it to let you get that information?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I think it will definitely feed into that. There is an opportunity for bespoke questions. I cannot remember them all off the top of my head but there is an opportunity for bespoke questions. We included questions on customers, for example, across government, and that was very revealing. There is opportunity to make sure we can burrow down on the My Conversation My Goals, but I think that is already in the core set of questions about whether people feel they are having quality conversations with their line management and how good they think the line management is.

[15:00]

Mr. A. Lane:

Will you be looking for help, an independent assessment, of how you are getting on?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Beyond Be Heard?

Mr. A. Lane:

Yes.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I was not especially considering that at the moment.

Mr. A. Lane:

That is fine. Tom has dropped it. It was just whether you were planning ... sorry, wrong phrasing. Going back to business plans again, there was something in your 2020 business plan about the training strategy, where you wanted to push something through to improve the performance of officers. Can you talk to us about how that has gone and whether that has continued into 2021?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

We have always been a believer in investing in people and investing in training, and that has proven to be a good strategy. We have continued to invest where we can. 2020 of course was a poor year for being able to send people on courses and experience things off-Island and the like. In reality, not as much training took place in 2020 across all areas, so that was a shame. We have tried to

pick that up of course in 2021. We have put people through external leadership training where we can and we continue to do that. All of that feeds into performance and our experience of line managers. Generally speaking, I am very pleased with the quality of line managers that I have in C.L.S. and they are a prized asset around government.

Mr. A. Lane:

Given its importance, why did you drop the reference to the training strategy in the 2021 departmental business plan?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

We did put a lot of people through leadership training and we started it in 2020.

Mr. A. Lane:

I see, so you had effectively completed enough of it to not make reference?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes.

Dr. H. Miles:

This is directed at yourself around complaints handling. When you came to see us in May you said that you were working on implementing 17 recommendations from the C. and A.G.'s report on the handling of complaints, including 9 that were behind the target. Can you give us an update on that, please?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes. First off, in the Comptroller and Auditor General's report there were 19 recommendations. I think we did one of them almost straightaway and one of them was transferred to another function, so that is where we get 17 from. I am pleased to say that we have closed 11 of those. There are a further 4 pending closure and therefore we will have 3 outstanding.

Dr. H. Miles:

What are the 4 that are yet to be implemented?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Those 3, if you have got the report in front of you, are numbers 3, 7, 10 and 6. Number 6 is the one that was transferred; 6 was the one about volunteers, which people in Corporate Services are having a look at, because it is perhaps a much wider issue in terms of the volunteers that government have and it is perhaps not only just about complaints handling but also other training.

Dr. H. Miles:

How can you demonstrate that there is learning from complaints generally?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

The recommendations and the customer strategy work that we have set out on have set up the structures that we need to be able to make corporate improvements to the way we handle customers. That is also therefore a good vehicle, the structures are in place, to allow us to start to be able to learn across government from customer feedback, both good and bad. We are starting to have those structures, we have those structures in place and we are starting to see the potential for those lessons to be learned to come through. There are some examples, fairly low-level examples, of where that has already happened. For example, we have had some feedback around our customer forms, our online customer forms, and feedback from one of those issues has been able to be stretched across a host of other forms as well. That is an example. It is fairly low-level. I hope going forward we will start to see bigger, more meaningful lessons learned, that will start to change the way we work in a more meaningful way. We have the structures in place, but what we do not yet quite have is a system in place to allow us to be able to identify that without the need for human intervention on every single complaint that we get. We are getting more complaints now, which is a good thing. I know that may sound counterintuitive, but it is a good thing.

Dr. H. Miles:

What are the general, common themes of the complaints?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

So far this year the top 3 are really quality of service, issues with individual experience in terms of the person they are being served by, response times, how fast government are getting back to people and consistency of provision of information. There is a good chunk of human element in many respects into that, and so there will be, I am sure, some bigger themes around how we can improve the skills of our people across government. We do not have those concrete examples yet to share, but I do hope they will come through soon.

Dr. H. Miles:

What sort of impact do you have as C.L.S. on improving the performance of complaints handling in other departments?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

We are driving a strategy board, which is where a lot of the discussions will take place. E.L.T. and Ops Co(?) get regular updates in terms of complaints performance. In the first half year's

performance responses we were very pleased that not only were customer complaints published for across government but also positive customer compliments as well as customer satisfaction, customer effort and customer sentiment. To start to have those measures published I think is a good demonstration of movement forward in trying to have all government departments focused on what our customers are telling us, and how we can make things better.

Dr. H. Miles:

Who chairs your customer strategy board?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I will chair that board and there is a cross-section of people.

Dr. H. Miles:

From all of the directorates?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes.

Dr. H. Miles:

Does that include the non-executives as well?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I do not think it does.

Dr. H. Miles:

So if somebody wants to make a complaint about a non-executive department?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

They can, yes.

Dr. H. Miles:

But that is not handled ...

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

We would see it come through on the results. I do not think on the customer strategy board there was a representative from the non-executives but there is on E.L.T. and there is visibility there.

Dr. H. Miles:

So it would miss out that level and be escalated to E.L.T.?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, so where everyone is virtual these days it is not quite like looking around the room and thinking, but I do not think there is, no.

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

One of the roles I used to do was chair the non-ministerial forum, and when I was chairing that over the last year or so, colleagues from Ian's department who are leading the strategy have been to talk to the non-ministerial departments on a few occasions to try to work out the best alignment between their existing systems, handling things like judicial complaints, and the more generalised system that applies across the public service, so the dialogue has happened.

Dr. H. Miles:

Has started, okay, thank you. Have you had any internal reviews of your current complaints system to ensure that you are on top of all the complaints, obviously outside of the health and community service ones?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, so a customer feedback manager has been chasing up complaints that are overdue. One of the things we are about to implement is a follow-up to each complaint that is resolved, so the customer will be asked about how that complaint was resolved and whether it was resolved to their satisfaction. That will be a very key measure for us going forward in terms of whether a member of the public feels satisfied with the outcome of their complaint.

Dr. H. Miles:

Will that be a blanket survey or will that just be a dip sample?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

No, it will be for everybody.

Dr. H. Miles:

Across the board?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, I think that will be very positive in terms of completing that complaint handling process and then allowing us to be able to act upon how customers feel about that complaint handling process.

Dr. H. Miles:

Okay, so how can you be confident that all the complaints are handled in accordance with corporate processes?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I think that the current checking by the customer feedback manager gives us a level of satisfaction. I do not believe that all complaints are currently recorded. We have the online portal, the central online portal, so customers can give their complaints through that method, but I cannot say for certain that if someone works up to a member of staff or over the phone and says that they are unhappy about something I cannot guarantee that every single complaint is currently being recorded. I can say that the numbers of our complaints are increasing, and therefore I have greater confidence that they are being recorded. We are doing further advanced complaint handling training and further work around publicity internally around complaints. I think we are planning to do it externally as well, so that will be helpful in terms of trying to make sure that all our complaints are recorded in the first place. I do not think they are at the moment.

Dr. H. Miles:

Do you do any work to disseminate feedback about the complaints policy to the general public?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

We have done. We have publicised the launch of the customer feedback policy and have regularly done some social media since to make sure that people are aware of it and the fact that they can complain online, and obviously also pass compliments about the experience that they have received.

Dr. H. Miles:

Thank you. I am going to hand you back to the chair now.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Briefly in terms of a supplementary to feedback and complaints, in terms of being able to identify that I can go on gov.je and look at you referred in your response in July about the customer satisfaction, so not all departments are recognised but C.L.S., as a perfect example, is recognised. There was a drop from one quarter to another by roughly 4 per cent in terms of customer satisfaction, but there is no description or explanation why that is the case, yet if I look at J.H.A. (Justice and Home Affairs) or I look at Treasury there is an explanation in the notes. Can you explain why that might be, and whether you would consider including that material so people understand?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, so I think you are referring to the customer satisfaction and there is a note on there referring to why our target is higher than the rest of government, but there is not a commentary on there about why the performance has dropped. I think that is your point.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Yes.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I think that is because overall the idea of this performance report is that we would try to have minimal comments where possible unless there was an issue affecting the result. In our case our customer satisfaction has dropped, albeit on a much higher number of surveys.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Okay, but there is no issue affecting that?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

The things that would affect that would be the basket of either the service that people are receiving or the basket of measures that makes up the surveys. In quarter 2 we started to offer up telephone surveys as an automatic option for customers when they phoned us, and therefore that would have changed the balance of our basket from having email responses versus telephone responses. Now we have a lot more telephone responses.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

In terms of customer feedback and complaints are you the lead director general for dealing with these areas, or is the chief executive officer the one who is holding the reins and making sure that all departments should be looking at feedback and complaints?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

We lead the customer strategy as part of the leadership team, E.L.T., and I report to Paul. So the conversations I have with the C.E.O. are around my responsibilities. Paul is very passionate about trying to improve services for the public, so he has been very supportive in encouraging the improvements across all departments.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Before we move to the COVID response I would like to check with the committee if there are any supplementary questions around performance.

Mr. A. Lane:

Mr. Burns, you expressed a concern that perhaps all complaints are not being recorded. Are there any specific areas that you are concerned are being missed?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

No, I think there is a general practicality of 7,000 people working for government, and do all 7,000 record complaints in the way that we would like them to? I do not think that all 7,000 people probably are, and that is just a reality of having a large workforce in multidisciplinary areas, and that sometimes people do not recognise something when it is a complaint. There are some very obvious examples of where somebody can still act upon someone's complaint, but not necessarily think it is a complaint. Not everybody starts off a complaint by saying: "I wish to complain." It is not as easy and as flagged as that, sadly and just because something has not arrived in time, that is still an opportunity for feedback; that is still an opportunity for service improvement, but they may not have mentioned the word complaint.

[15:15]

Mr. A. Lane:

So if there was a concern about recording, what are you doing about that?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

We are continuing to promote this internally and to encourage and support people to follow the complaints process.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

We are going to move on to questions about the Government's response to the COVID pandemic and of course there is a crossover with performance-related issues. We want to understand what effect the management of the COVID response has had on your teams and what lessons you have learned, and what improvements might be made to areas such as the public health function. I think you said earlier in the hearing that 75 per cent of your department worked on the pandemic, so the first question is what new roles and responsibilities did you each undertake to help make the response to the pandemic?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

We did create some specific interim and temporary roles to boost the resources, so for example within my department we have got an Interim Director of Public Health Policy and Strategy, Mr. Khaldi. Some of you will have seen him on briefings. That is an injection of additional capability in order to help us through the pandemic as an interim role. You will have seen also we created things like a Head of the Vaccination Programme, which never existed before, so you have seen Becky

Sherrington talking to people about vaccination. So those are examples of new roles that we have created in order to help us manage our way through the pandemic. As you reference, we have also expanded the public health directorate in a more lasting and enduring way, and that is because we recognise that more generally we need a stronger public health directorate if we are going to be able to realise all of the benefits intended from the Jersey Care Model, but also we need to strengthen specifically things like the health protection function, which clearly needs to be stronger going forward. We have also strengthened public health analytics, so you will see the output of their work, things like their weekly estimates of the R. number and other analytical products that they produce. We have got more communications resource, because there is a lot more communicating with Islanders, and we have got an arrangement with some expert behavioural scientists, because working out what we might do to nudge people into behaviours that help their fellow Islanders has been important through the pandemic. We have got an expanded public health directorate, some of which will go on to be a permanently expanded directorate, because we recognised pre-pandemic that we needed a stronger public health function, some of which is just for the pandemic. Then also the final thing I would highlight is some of the statutory roles. As you know the Medical Officer of Health is a role that exists in law, and throughout the pandemic at all times we have made sure that there are 3 people designated in law, so at the outset we had Dr. Turnbull, Dr. Muscat and Dr. McInerney round at the hospital. Nowadays we have Professor Bradley, who is with us today, Dr. Muscat and Mr. Armstrong. So at all times, to ensure that we had resilience, we have ensured that some of those statutory roles are well-covered and that there would always be good cover available, because the statutory role is embedded in a lot of the legislation. It is inconceivable that you would leave yourself in a position where you could not enact something because somebody designated an M.O.H. (medical officer of health) was not available. Then other roles like the Medical Referee, who oversees cremation authorisations, again that was something that earlier on we strengthened, and so now we have Dr. Southall, who does work in that area, whereas previously we would have just relied on Dr. Turnbull. That is the third area that I would point to where we have created new roles or replicated roles for resilience.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I do not think we have any specific new roles. What we have had is an awful lot of the team on secondment, covering different functions for the period of that particular project and we have backfilled or provided more secondments where possible. We have been lucky to be able to have a lot of real-time development taking place throughout the pandemic, as we wrestled with handling things like the co-funded payroll, and Spend Local and so on, all those initiatives that C.L.S. have handled.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

For the benefit of the public, can you please explain who is responsible for monitoring the performance of services established in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as the COVID helpline, track and trace, and enforcement teams? Who is responsible for monitoring?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

There have been, I think, regular updates in terms of performance provided to Ministers over the last few months, in particular. Prior to that there was a flow and tempo to this and there was an awful lot of C.A.M.H.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) in the first place and there was a bit of a lull and there was more. We have been providing regular updates to Ministers through C.A.M.H.S. about any issues to do with performance throughout the period. The COVID helpline falls directly under C.L.S. and we work obviously really closely with track and trace. Performance of the helpline would therefore be reported to me and in our regular internal meetings where we have been looking at business continuity issues those sorts of issues would be escalated if there was a problem with one or more services. I cannot remember what those meetings were called now, Tom.

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

I think broadly speaking you have got different departments taking on responsibility for the operations of different aspects, so as Mr. Burns has said, C.L.S. operated the helpline and did a wonderful job of that and looked after it and made sure it was performing, then if it came under pressure generally we would know about that quite quickly. Islanders would generally let us know. Generally the Islanders would be letting me know before even we had had a chance to discuss it, usually that morning. Again, then we would have to make adjustments to policy and practice over in S.P.P.P. where necessary or adjustments to the helpline. Things like track and trace and enforcement teams were obviously the responsibility of Justice and Home Affairs, so J.H.A. would operate those services. Again, if there was a difficulty generally Islanders would let you know. From our perspective in S.P.P.P. sometimes we would specify operational requirements as part of the policy, where we had a particular interest. Something like COVID test turnaround times is a great example, where with Ministers setting the policy they would also set an objective or an ambition which then colleagues in Justice and Home Affairs would advise whether that could be met and how confident they felt about that. Then the day-to-day stuff, you can see that in the COVID statistics, you can see whether tests are being turned around promptly. When things stop happening promptly, again Islanders are usually the very first to tell you, and we have just had an incident of that, and you can see how it works.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

In this case the situation that happened over the weekend with testing, whose remit is it?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

That will be Mr. Blazeby in Justice and Home Affairs.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Justice and Home Affairs?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Yes, so he would have supported the team over the weekend to fix that problem and to get it sorted, which he has now done and we are now back up and running.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Have you documented lessons learned? What and how have you documented them?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

I suppose there are 2 separate questions there, perhaps. I do have reflections on lessons learned inevitably and I am happy to share those, if you would like to hear them. Equally, I think that in practical terms a lot of the lessons have been learned as we go. We have had ongoing scrutiny throughout the whole process that has generated lots of helpful thoughts and suggestions and feedback. We have had the Comptroller and Auditor General's reviews, which are still ongoing and are partway through a series, but as they go, they also generate interesting lessons and then, of course, we have your own review. Again, we are not through the pandemic, but as we are going, you will be looking at what you think we can learn so far. I would say that we were very well-blessed with thoughts, feedback, ideas and lessons as we have gone along, and there is quite a rich picture of reviews and recommendations that have happened so far. I suspect there will be more to come because some things will necessarily wait until we are out of the pandemic to look backwards. Other things will happen while we are still working through the pandemic, so that we can pull out the lessons. I think in terms of the lessons learned process, there are a lot of them; they are well-documented and we have got them from lots of interesting sources. Did you want my own views as well or do you want that later?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Let us see if we have time.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

If I could just add, within the executive leadership team we also spent some time reflecting, I think it was last summer in that nice lull, about how we responded to the pandemic and what lessons were learned from there. There was a leadership team reflection at that point and, likewise, I think each of the initiatives and projects, as they have come up for closure, there has been certainly in some of

the projects that I have been responsible for, like C.R.E.S.S. (COVID-19 Related Emergency Support Scheme) for example, where there has been a lessons learned reflection, so we can perhaps feed into the next phase or the next initiative.

Director of Public Health:

Can I make one very quick comment? Sorry, I cannot put my hand up, I do not have that function, so it is Peter Bradley, we are also continuing to learn those lessons as part of our processes. I think some of the lessons are very clear and they have largely been implemented because they need to be recorded, so if you like we do not lose that learning in the future.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I was just going to literally ask about measuring that by: "I have learned a lesson. Here is the issue. Here is what I have done to improve it" but in terms of monitoring progress, the measuring of that, in case there is another pandemic or a public crisis in the future.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I think Tom's reference has been a fairly wide level of scrutiny about what the Government have been doing, so there will be recommendations there that we formally recorded. From a lower level down, if a project is closed and we have a list of recommendations then those need to be shared, and not necessarily recorded in the same way perhaps as a tracker but at least shared and discussed. That is what we try to do with C.R.E.S.S., following the C. and A.G.'s recommendation with Ops Co.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

How have you monitored the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on departmental business as usual activities and the disruptions to it?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

I can have a go at that first, if you want.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I am happy for you, Tom.

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

At the outset back in February, March time when something was happening in Wuhan, that was clearly going to have an effect upon us, we had that first meeting of the Emergencies Council and we had our first positive test on 10th March. At that point we decided to prioritise the pandemic

response, so within S.P.P.P. keeping Islanders safe, protecting lives and livelihoods, finding the best balance of harms, was what we had as our top priority.

[15:30]

That was number one, but what we also did at that time was to identify work that was either on a statutory or otherwise fixed timetable, so things like the Government Plan, the Island Plan, the climate emergency, Brexit, getting a census done. So we had a list of things that we knew we would have to keep going with, that we could not just stop and then in 12 months' time pick up and hope that it would all be okay. We had a number of officers left on those functions in order to make sure that, when the rest of us emerged from those first waves of the pandemic, then we could just slip back in, pick up where they had got to and keep them going. That kind of decision-making was critical to both being able to do the work that we did through the pandemic in saving lives but also at the same time ensure that we have had a Government Plan, that we had an Island Plan, that there is a response to the climate emergency, that we did deal with Brexit, that a census did happen. So that was the process. Then the consequences of that were a series of reworked policy schedules, because a large number of staff were working on other policy areas and moved across to assist with the pandemic or agreed to hold the fort on something like the Government Plan, working pretty much on their own for however many months. So those reworked policy schedules were then discussed with individual Ministers, so that they understood what the consequences would be. Then they were discussed overall with the Chief Minister, so that he understood what S.P.P.P. was going to do and what it was not going to do. In doing that, you could argue that a whole load of things were dropped. Yes, they were and it was right to drop them. They were the things that we had to drop so that staff could focus on getting the pandemic under control, getting the right advice to Ministers, working with Dr. Muscat and health colleagues, and doing the work that we needed to do. You have seen that work its way through the Annual Report 2020, which explains those things which needed to be deferred as a result of that process. Then also in the Departmental Annual Report for 2020, more explanation of what is needed to be deferred because the teams have either been a skeleton crew on something, or have had to go and do other things, like getting the vaccination programme underway or getting us on- Island testing, whatever they are needed to do. You can see that is still working its way through the system. The Mid-Year Review 2021 for this year, you will see in there, there are still some things that are still catching up from that decision-making that we needed to do. As ever with those things, you hope that you make the right decisions. You have used the time and the people to best effect. Looking back, I think we did make the right decisions. We did set our priorities. Hopefully the proof is in the pudding, both in terms of where we are on the pandemic, the vaccination programme and other things, but also in the fact that some of those other big-ticket items, like the Island Plan and climate emergency, are still on track and making good progress.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Thank you. How did you compensate for staff seconded to other departments to aid the response effort?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

I had the opposite experience. I had staff seconded to me. So I coped very well.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

So did I. It was a good example, because Government really did consider what the priorities were. Moving staff from closed sport centres or from areas such as Skills Jersey, which potentially could not see its customers for a period, on to support the helpline, was a sensible and appropriate thing to do to make sure that we could still provide services to the public. There is then an opportunity cost the longer that goes on. The health line, for example, is now resourced by staff who have been recruited especially for that. That shows the immediacy response and the willingness of colleagues across government to help out and support and prioritise activity and support the public.

The Connétable of Grouville:

It clearly made sense to take people who were working at closed sport centres, but the Planning Department was very hard hit in their compliance and planning applications. The department is still suffering from that. Is that something you would regret and perhaps look at again?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

That is a different team. The planning side has 2 different teams. The team in S.P.P.P. that do the Island Plan, do the strategic land planning for the Island. Then there is another team in the I.H.E. (Infrastructure, Housing and Environment) that do planning decisions. It is that team that really you are talking about. That team contributed a lot towards things like the track and trace effort. When Justice and Home Affairs and I.H.E. were putting together a contact tracing service for the very first time, lots of people from the regulatory functions went and helped out.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Whose decision was that?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

That would have been Andy Scate.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Who decided to move the people from those departments?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Yes, because at the time of the pandemic he would have been responsible for the contact tracing team, because contact tracing is traditionally done by Environmental Health. Environmental Health is a regulatory function within I.H.E. The fantastic staff that formed the start of that team were environmental health professionals. But there were not enough of them, as you can imagine. So they needed to be added to quickly by colleagues around them. The colleagues around them were the other regulatory functions. So in that instance it would not have been Andy moving people between departments, that would have been him moving people within his own department in order, overnight, to create a contact tracing team.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Thank you.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I will ask Mr. Burns the question regarding the response to report COVID-19 related to the emergency support team. I will take you to page 19. The C. and A.G. recommended that business cases for new schemes should be clearly documented as a level of risk appetite and its consequences, specific risk relating to value for money, fraud, corruption and resourcing and delivery, the purpose of eligibility criteria, including details of how compliance with the criteria will be monitored, and scheme success and evaluation criteria. How has this been embedded in the future C.L.S. practices?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

There were 2 recommendations from that report; the first one you have read out there. That, I am pleased to report, was a recommendation that was accepted by the treasurer. The idea of that is he is going to add that into both the Public Finance Manual but also the regular and future public finance manual awareness sessions. That is how corporately we will address the issue. Your question is specific to me, of course we went over the C.R.E.S.S. report quite a few times with the C. and A.G. The team looking after new projects are very aware of the content of that. We certainly have discussed it and will seek to adopt. The really valuable lesson learned for me was around risk appetite, because if you are happy to accept a high level of risk and you can document that and prove it, it potentially makes progress a lot easier if you are working to the same risk approach. Whereas if one part is trying to work as normal and the other part is trying to be seemingly gung-ho, it can create tensions and potentially not the best experience in terms of getting something delivered.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

With hindsight, what would you do differently now? Can you give a specific example?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Specific with C.R.E.S.S.?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Yes.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

The risk appetite there was that this scheme was there and was meant to provide very quickly some support to people who could not get back home, could not leave the Island and did not have work. So, for example, there we were trying to apply some existing controls to make sure the scheme was fair, almost to the penny; similar in mindset to income support. Whereas if we had taken a slightly bigger risk and rounded things up it would have made it easier to administrate, given it was a manual administration as well. That would have been easier for the public to understand as well and would have probably allowed us to focus on other things. But there were some sound principles there trying to apply the same logic to listing business as usual for which we have a low-risk appetite. When on this one, if we had just agreed what that risk appetite was it could have made life easier. That is the example there. The second recommendation there has 2 parts to it. I have certainly, as I mentioned earlier, shared the lessons from the report with Ops Co. The third part is that that training awareness we mentioned in the first recommendation will make reference specifically to the C.R.E.S.S. scheme and the C. and A.G.'s recommendation.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I will take you now to another report by C. and A.G. connected to the comment. It is about procurement and supply chain managing during the COVID pandemic; page 2. The synergy concluded the Government should re-evaluate its future procurement strategy to ensure value for money continues to be achieved. How will this affect your department?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

That goes back a little bit to the speed of movement and risk appetite. The aim of the Public Finance Manual is to ensure value for money and ensure that appropriate use of government funds is made. The speed of movement, potentially, can mean that you need to perhaps create exemptions or maybe even do things in the wrong order, which therefore is breach. It is an interesting consideration as to whether or not we can find a way through. It is almost as though that missing ingredient in some respects is that the speed of movement may be required ... does the Public Finance Manual allow that to happen? The truth is it does. In the examples that we have had, when we reflect back on them, yes, absolutely, we have been able to stick to the Public Finance Manual and stick to those relevant exemptions and the like. But it could perhaps be made easier in the future. We did not

have an issue adhering to those processes throughout various schemes. Having said that, of course, some of them are still being reviewed by the C. and A.G., so she may have a different view shortly.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I am not sure if you had the time, but just on Friday I sent the follow-up - I realise it is really short notice - about £395,000 that was spent on admin cost. My question was, because I was not sure, if you could provide the breakdown of the figure and how and where if it was elements to procurements, if it acquired, was exempt?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes. You are referring there to the Spend Local campaign?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Yes.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

The example there, perhaps, is a good one. Once we had identified there that there was no on-Island supplier who could support us with the prepaid Mastercards or prepaid debit cards - they happened to be Mastercards - we needed to find a way of making sure that we could demonstrate value for money. But at the same time perhaps a tender process would be not the right speed to go through a full tender process. What we did, having had a good discussion with colleagues in Commercial Services, was we used the U.K. (United Kingdom) Government's approved list to find any supplier who could deliver this service. There were 5 suppliers on that list. We then had conversations with those suppliers.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

With all 5 suppliers?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes. We were able, therefore, to go through a quote process and establish that there was one provider who was not only financially the most advantageous but also could deliver 100,000 cards at short notice. From that perspective, I am confident that we did complete a value for money review and obviously had an exemption in place to ensure that we made sure that we were compliant with the Public Finance Manual requirements.

[15:45]

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I sense sometimes when we have an emergency that we have to go towards the exemption if the £100 was an emergency one that we could make it shorter.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

The time here was the window that we were pushing against was the opportunity to inject fiscal stimulus monies into the economy at the end of the season, i.e. September to October. That was established as being the ideal opportunity to do this. If we were to do it later than that then you were up against spend that is always going to take place at Christmas. So it was the dead 6 weeks or 7 weeks between the season ending and half term. There was an urgency to it, to try and make sure that we could meet that window, as per economic advice.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Thank you. Did your department run any procurement for your department or it was dedicated to others during COVID?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

I cannot remember running a procurement. Maybe at the very outset we perhaps ran a process to procure some testing kits, right at the very, very start. Mr. Skelton was involved with that. I am trying to remember if that was run through our department or through a different department. In any event, it ran to regular Public Finance Manual requirements. Even at that very early emergency stage, when we were trying to buy testing kits from all around the world and there was no real supply, we were working to business cases, procurement exemptions and the rest of the documentation. We were well supported by the Treasurer and the Commercial Director and I remember we did a lot of late nights and weekends in order to make sure that we had met all of the requirements.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Just to go on to the Scientific and Technical Advisory Cell, normally referred to as S.T.A.C. What lessons have been learned from the operations of S.T.A.C. during the pandemic?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

That is a question where I will bring in Professor Bradley to talk about that mostly, because he is the current chair of the S.T.A.C. By and large the interesting thing about S.T.A.C. is it has been operating as an emergency scientific advice structure for nearly 2 years, which I cannot remember ever having to do before. Generally emergencies come, you might have a water pollution incident or something similar, where you need scientific advice as part of the emergency, and S.T.A.C. is created as a one-off. It might meet 2 or 3 times and then the emergency is over and you move on. Having S.T.A.C. meet for the thick-end of 2 years is really quite different. That is why you have seen

the Scientific and Technical Advisory Cell has been through 3 iterations, because during the different phases of the pandemic it has needed to bring different expertise around the table. It has needed to give different advice or it has needed to do something different at each stage. Then also one of the interesting things about having a Scientific and Technical Advisory Cell in a small autonomous jurisdiction is most of the research and scientific knowledge is generated elsewhere. It is generated in the scientific community in primary research by large public health institutions, by leading academics but, of course, all of that needs contextualising for Jersey. In other emergencies the science tends to be quite established, so on a water pollution incident the science is quite settled, you know what to say to the scientists, the scientists come in, they give you advice in handling the emergency, you know where you are. This is very, very different because, of course, the scientific knowledge has developed what knowledge there is as we have gone along. That means that there is a bigger role for S.T.A.C. in locally determining both what they think that means, because there is never a settled position on the science - the science is essentially a debate - but it also means that then: "Okay, so I understand what I think that means, but what does it mean for Jersey?" This has also been quite different from other emergencies that I have been involved with. I do not know whether, Peter, you wanted to add anything, as you are chair of S.T.A.C.

Director of Public Health:

Yes, thank you. I very much agree with what you said. S.T.A.C. has shown itself to look at the data and the evidence - by that I mean the research - in a way that gives independent public health advice. That has been very important because that is a part of but not the totality of the decision-making process. Clearly there are other things that need to be considered in the context of Jersey. I also agree that S.T.A.C. has been through various phases, which has required different expertise to come in and for S.T.A.C. itself to be reconfigured. That flexibility is something that we have really learned. There are clearly lessons here for the future as well, in that we do need to have a very robust process to manage any future events, whether they are of the nature of a pandemic or whether there are other emergencies. They do tend to continue for very different time periods. That is what I have picked up from the short time that I have been chairing S.T.A.C.

The Connétable of Grouville:

What progress has been made in the introduction of a code of practice for the operations of S.T.A.C.?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

The code is the thing that we touched upon earlier, so the action is with me. I have it scheduled a week on Friday to do that. Again, it is a great example of something that, because S.T.A.C. in the past has only existed for 2 meetings and then has gone, the need for a code is not something that would have arisen before. But having experienced a S.T.A.C. in an emergency that can extend, it

is a really useful recommendation that we put in place a code. Then that code can also become part of the standing structure. So even when this S.T.A.C. has finished its work in the pandemic and in 2 years' time we have a completely different sort of emergency and we need scientific advice, then the code will be there and it will endure. So that will be helpful once I have done it.

The Connétable of Grouville:

How have the minutes and the records of S.T.A.C. meetings been improved and why was there such a delay in their publication?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

The minutes of S.T.A.C. are prepared by the States Greffe. They are done professionally by the staff in the Greffe, the same as minutes of this committee, the same as minutes of C.O.M. (Council of Ministers). That was something that we introduced quite early on. In the past you would not normally do that. What you might do is just do what you do in an emergency, which is you record the decisions and the essence of what is being advised, for the public record, in case there are future inquiries into what happened. Normally the record-keeping coming out of S.T.A.C. would be very minimalist in the way that it is out of gold command or silver command. After the first couple of meetings of S.T.A.C. we decided that we needed to bring in the professionals and to get the support from the States Greffe to fully minute, because we could see early on that there would be interest in who said what and what was discussed and the richness of the discussion. So our first improvement early on was to make that change. If you look back there are 2 or 3 minutes at the very start that were done by officers in the room acting as executive and then from thereon in they are all full minutes done by the States Greffe. Again, that recognises the difference in this emergency, in that the knowledge is contested, is not settled and was emerging as we go. Having a fuller record of what the scientific advisers made of the incomplete and sometimes contradictory evidence available to them was quite important.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Do you think it led to a mistrust among the general public that the minutes took so long to come out, that they thought: "They are hiding something"?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

I do not know. You would be better placed to answer that and speak on behalf of the public. The reason that they take time to come out is really around the double process for issuing them. The first process is whether they are a true and accurate record. The States Greffe prepare a draft. That goes back to subsequent meetings. It might be the meeting after it, it might be the one after that or the one after that, depending on how busy they are, where just like any committee they will review their minutes and determine whether they are a true and accurate record. Once it is determined

that they are a true and accurate record, then we send them straight over to Scrutiny. So they come across to all of the Scrutiny heads straight away once they are agreed in that form. Then the publication happens once the chair determines that there is no risk to the safe space to S.T.A.C. in them being released; that generally means that live policy issues probably will not be published. When the Ministers have finished receiving the advice and have made a decision, probably a couple of weeks later, at that point then the minutes get published. That is that really important thing where the scientific advisers have to have that safe space in which to debate, agree, disagree. If that is breached then it probably means that they will not be giving Ministers the full benefit of their objective advice as they see it.

The Connétable of Grouville:

We are getting short of time. We know of at least 2 occasions where there was a difference of opinion between the Government and S.T.A.C. One was where S.T.A.C. had advised the wearing of masks mandate should be extended and the Government did not take that advice. The other was during the Christmas period around the number of people gathering, where the Government changed the policy without S.T.A.C.'s opinion. Do you think S.T.A.C. should be able to comment publicly where there is a difference of opinion at the time?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

On masks, I do not think there was a difference of opinion. This has come up a few times, so I have looked at this fairly forensically. The consensus advice from S.T.A.C. was around strongly encouraging the wearing of masks not enshrining it in legislation. In one part of the minutes, Dr. Muscat talks about it being enshrined in legislation, but that was not the consensus opinion of S.T.A.C. So Ministers followed the consensus opinion of S.T.A.C. in that instance. Then there was the inevitable time period that once S.T.A.C. had advised that wearing of masks should become statutory, there was then a process through which that advice was conveyed to Ministers and then the drafting was done. The law drafting was quite difficult. Again, it was not a delay in the law drafting office. They were fantastic. But it is not an easy thing to draft in law. So it took time. In that instance there is the popular perception and what you find when you look forensically through that record and see who advised what and when. Then the Christmas discussion was an iterative process. It went backwards and forwards from S.T.A.C. to Ministers and back again. Eventually the position was settled. There is one set of minutes where S.T.A.C. members question whether they have had an opportunity to have an input to it, but then if you read on you will see that it goes back to S.T.A.C. in subsequent meetings and they do have an opportunity to have input on it and then they provide their advice, again, if you follow the trail through. Your broader question is: should S.T.A.C. be free to comment if it wishes to? Mr. Armstrong as chair and now Professor Bradley as chair are always free to comment. I cannot tell the Medical Director or the Director of Public Health what to say. Their independence as Medical Officers of Health is enshrined in legislation. It is their

view, that is what we employ them for. They will make their own judgments as to whether it is constructive or not to make public comment on something.

[16:00]

The Connétable of Grouville:

Thank you.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I am mindful of the time. Would you have another 5 minutes or do you need to go?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

I am okay, I guess it just depends on the questions.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Just to have a quick clarification from your previous question, you said 80 per cent of the people preferred to have a service over the phone, Customer Local Services, just double-checking, how many people were surveyed? Do you know the number?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Yes, we surveyed 250 people in one day and they were people who were calling us. I can send you through the survey results if you like but we asked them the question: are they happy with the service, et cetera, and would they have done this through La Motte Street previously or come into La Motte Street previously? Of those ones 88 per cent say they were happy to continue.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

You served it on the people who called?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Some of the people who called would have previously called us and therefore their feedback is very helpful but not relevant to the question. But these are people who called us up whereas they would have normally come into the building.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I think we will get the number of the people to see the Island-wide opinion?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

What is important about that group of people on that particular day was that they are people who wanted a service on that particular day. Lots of people have views, and they are important views, but they may be based upon services that they might want to experience in the future, as opposed to the service now. That is an example and we will be testing it out going forward. The other important survey was back in the end of 2018, there was a survey done with ComRes that was Island-wide, done by an outside agency. That gave some very clear direction that people wanted to be able to transact with government online. The figure was either 75 or 83 per cent. It was a very high number. Government, therefore, has the opportunity to put more of its services online. That was prior to the pandemic.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I am just asking the question as chair and as a Deputy of a district with parishioners who talk to me, it would be really helpful to have some type of understanding from an overall sample population. Personally I would like to go online, but I am not the representation of the general population. This is where we would need to see what is 88 per cent.

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

We do have more formal feedback through the work with our communities and voluntary sector. We have different clusters covering things from financial hardship through to mental health and so on. We have feedback as well from those groups. I would very much like us to be able to have appointments to be bookable online. That would allow people to be able to select their appointment and have more control. At the moment, people can book appointments. They can come and see us face to face. People are doing that. Also, many people who phone us up for an appointment can find out they do not need to come in because we can just deal with it there and then on the phone for them. That is a very positive step forward in terms of being able to give support to people straight away over the phone. Of course, there will always be deeper conversations that need to take place. Having a personal private appointment is something that people were asking for prior to the pandemic. We found that we could not deliver it then, but we can now deliver it. So that is good news.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Thank you. A very quick follow-up; a freedom of information request recently was published that £90,000 was spent on the testing for the construction industry employees, which was spent from public money. Obviously we do not know exactly how much was spent on other industries. It was a decision that was implemented as a policy. Was it a policy developed by your department to pay for industries and not ask, for example, the employer to pay for the testing?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Probably more of a question for Justice and Home Affairs than me as I am not aware that Government has made a decision to charge people for testing.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

No, people did not charge, we paid. So basically the construction industry who come to the Island we paid.

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Yes, what I am saying is I am not aware that there is any decision been made by Government to charge particular groups of people.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

So we pay for all people?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

As I understand it. It is a question for Justice and Home Affairs, but as I understand it, everyone gets testing for free.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Yes, I will go to Justice and Home Affairs, we will drop it there. It is a policy because the question ...

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

I imagine when you pose the question it is probably one of Ministerial policy, which is a decision that people should have free testing in Jersey, whether that is arrivals or workforces.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

No, but was it developed by your department as a suggestion?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

The logic is the other way around. Ministers decided that testing would be free.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Would there have been at any point, if a decision had to be made, to go to competent authorities or Emergency Council in which your department would have had to provide policy advice because of certain things happening? So you would have to bring in construction workers for the Nightingale, would that question come up?

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

If there was a proposal to introduce charging for certain groups of people, whether they are key workers or arrivals or whoever they might be, then I would expect Ministers to ask for advice. At that point, I expect that we would provide public health advice on whether we felt that would either increase or decrease the testing and whether that was critical or not depending on the phase of the pandemic. Our interest would always be in the public health outcomes of any charging mechanism which is proposed. You have seen that with things like flu vaccine, where we have proactively advised in favour of the free provision of flu vaccine for a second year for certain groups, because of the public health outcome that Professor Bradley and his colleagues are trying to achieve. Yes, we would certainly advise where we think there is a public health outcome at risk or which could be achieved better through a different approach to charging.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Thank you. I will check with members of the panel if there are any other questions.

Mr. G. Phipps:

I just had one. Given you 2 individuals are very connected with the public, you have mentioned your mandate and that: how would you assess the mood and the general feeling of the public at large today, and having gone now a few years through the T.O.M. and through all the changes and what is happening, what is your view of the progress towards customer satisfaction of the public at large with the performance of the Government? Can you make any comments about that?

Director General, Customer and Local Services:

Government has responded well to the pandemic. That is a very positive outcome, in terms of livelihoods and well-being of Islanders. We are still in the pandemic and Government is trying to, therefore, deliver a number of things at the same time. People's views of Government have remained remarkably positive in terms of customer satisfaction. Effort and sentiment have remained pretty strong. From a pure customer satisfaction ... the first part of your question was going somewhere else, but going back to customer satisfaction, which we can comment on, yes, it has held up well, given that Government has been trying to do multiple things that perhaps it did not intend to. It is positive. We are clearly not perfect and I do not think anyone is suggesting that the services that we provide are all the time absolutely spot-on, because that is not what the public are saying and we need to do better; always try and improve. Just like any organisation, we try to improve at all times. We have a way to go, but we have done a pretty good job. I am certainly very proud of my team's involvement in supporting the public throughout the pandemic. We have done a very good job in terms of our response. Similarly across the whole of government, we should be very proud of the many people who have stepped up to the plate and have really delivered for quite a long period through the pandemic.

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

My reflection on that would be that generally I find that Islanders are very focused on the outcomes. Obviously they do not want the public service to get in the way of achieving a particular outcome but they are very focused on the outcome. Throughout the pandemic they had an outcome that they needed us to deliver. My perception is very much the same as my colleague's, the public service stepped up. It showed all the benefits of agility and flexibility, which arguably comes through the improved culture, the improved structure, all of that ability to be more agile, to be more flexible, to redeploy resources in order to tackle the highest priorities. In the past, Jersey has always been very well-served by having excellent public servants. I have always found that the quality and calibre of the public servants in Jersey is very, very high and they are as fine a group of public servants as you can hope to find. The interface with the organisational structure and processes and culture is about ensuring that the Island's public service can use all of that talent and ability and passion and commitment to serving their Island that it wants from its public service when it needs to. In an emergency, in the pandemic, we have seen that. Hopefully we will continue to see that as people respond to the climate emergency challenge, the consequences of Brexit and all of the things that Islanders will want us to help resolve, help to make better for the future.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Thank you. Thank you very much for your time. We really appreciate your time and your answers. The public hearing is closed. Thank you.

[16:13]