



Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Proposed Budget 2025-28 Review

Witness: Minister for Justice and Home Affairs

Wednesday, 9th October 2024

Panel:

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

Connétable M. Labey of Grouville (Vice-Chair)

Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade

Witnesses:

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier North, The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs

Ms. K. Briden, Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs

Mr. R. Smith, Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police

Mr. P. Brown, Chief Fire Officer

Mr. P. Gavey, Chief Ambulance Officer

[10:44]

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

Welcome to this Budget hearing of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel. Today is 9th October. I would like to draw everyone's attention to the following. The hearing will be filmed and streamed live. The recording and transcript will be published afterwards on the States Assembly website. All electronic devices, including mobile phones, should be switched to silent. Just starting with introductions, I am Deputy Catherine Curtis, the chair of the panel.

Connétable M. Labey of Grouville (Vice-Chair):

Connétable Mark Labey, vice-chair.

Deputy H.M. Miles of St. Brelade:

I am Deputy Helen Miles, panel member.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Deputy Mary Le Hegarat, Minister for Justice and Home Affairs.

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

Kate Briden, Chief Officer for Justice and Home Affairs.

Chief Ambulance Officer:

Peter Gavey, Chief Ambulance Officer.

Chief Fire Officer:

Paul Brown, Chief Fire Officer.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

Robin Smith, Chief of Police.

[10:45]

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I should have said before, if anyone is coming up to speak to please say your name when you come up to the table. The first questions are about business plans. Minister, we have received the 2024 business plan, which is based on the J.H.A. (Justice and Home Affairs) ministerial plans 2024-27 and as such provides a list of key objectives based on the Government Plan funding approved in December 2023. Can you briefly explain what are the key changes to the funding and the scope of the key objectives?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

I think in relation to the funding, from our perspective we are business as usual. There are no key changes. We will be producing a department plan, not a ministerial plan, and obviously it will contain reference to the work across the G.O.J.(Government of Jersey) to achieve my objectives. One of those examples is the violence against women and girls. We will be making those plans to extend cover from January 2025 all the way through April 2026 in order that it takes us up to the next election. Our plan will be obviously a collaborative one, which although it will be specific to my portfolio, it will be shared with the relevant parties on G.O.J. to ensure that we are working to the same aim. The plan will largely be based on the information provided to the panel on 12th

September, which includes investment in public and firefighter safety, violence against women and girls commitments, the legislative schedule of work and major and strategic project objectives.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

We note from your letter to us of 12th September that business plans will not be completed until the end of 2024 and published in early 2025. How do you propose that Scrutiny will be able to scrutinise these plans properly if they are not available?

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

The timetable has changed a little bit, so do you want me to come in?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes.

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

Conscious of the discussions in the States Assembly and in the Chief Minister's hearings, for example, with C.S.P. (Common Strategic Policy), the team are just looking at the timing for the publication of the plans, just watching the latest. There is a meeting on at the moment. The aim is definitely to ensure that they are published by the middle of December, as things stand, but I have not got the further detail on how that times with the Government Plan debate at the moment. For Justice and Home Affairs, as the Minister said, ours is reasonably similar to this year's, is in line with when you published the ministerial plan up to 2027 and does not have a huge amount of change or new investment in it, because of the profile of the Budget this year, we think ours will be fairly simple and straightforward to draw together. We would seek to aim to publish it in draft as soon as we can. That will take a number of weeks to do but if you leave it with us, we take the point that you need to see that information. It will be substantively based on the information that the Minister wrote to the panel about on 12th September. That letter and the highlights the Minister has just given you from it will be the basis of the plan. If you read that letter in conjunction with the 2024 business plan you would have a pretty good view on what the 2025 one will say but we will work on that and get it to you as soon as we can.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

That would be really helpful, thank you. You stated that the priorities will be very similar to those of 2024 but can you list any changes being made and the impact, especially on front-line services?

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

If you want me to come in, there is not any really substantive change in strategic position or policy or operational function other than where we have got investment. We have obviously got the

respective chiefs here and I know you have got question sections later where the return we are seeing on the investment in the services can be explained, so that will continue. It was always envisaged that those services investment plans would take a number of years to continue through them, so we will see that continuing in 2025. There is not anything significant other than that continued investment that changes between 2024 and 2025. It is mainly a front-line operational department and that is where the focus is. There will be continuation of legislation and policy development, which again you have questions on later in the hearing, but there is not any substantive dramatic change in our plans for 2025 as opposed to 2024.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Going back to the business plans, we have not received them for capital projects, which include the ambulance, fire and rescue headquarters and the army and sea cadets headquarters. Is there a reason we have not received those?

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

We would not normally cover them in any length other than a mention in the departmental business plan. We can certainly provide the panel with more detail on what activity we expect to happen on those projects in 2025 and we can promise to write to you with a project update in there. They will be referred to in the business plan but only at a very high level.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

My next question was: when can we expect to see the business case and full costing of these projects? So that is what you are telling us we will receive?

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

If we take each of those projects in turn, the ambulance, fire and rescue headquarters is in a feasibility stage at the moment to explore what the potential for 2 different headquarters looks like as opposed to a joint one. That feasibility work will be completed by the end of this year and we have offered to come and give the panel a private briefing on that. As result of that, that will not be moved through to full business case stage - well, a new outline business case stage - for some time because the funding does not kick in until 2028. On the sea cadets H.Q. (headquarters) that is in design and feasibility stage at the moment, so we have got an outline business case in place already and once we have got the further work and costings on that, it would move to full business case stage. We have not started writing that yet because the design and feasibility work is still under way on the preferred location. Once we have done that, we would move to full business case once we have tendered that work. Perhaps if we set out a timeline for the panel of where we would anticipate being with each of these projects over 2025 and then we can make sure we are providing you with the right information at the right time.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

That would be very good, yes, very useful. My next question was: when are the new revised ministerial plans due to be published? My understanding is you are saying it is going to be department plans.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Thank you.

The Connétable of Grouville:

The next topic is going to be based around the savings that you have published. We note that you appear to make savings of £334,000 in 2025 and £365,000 in 2026. How will these savings be achieved?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

I think for all of J.H.A. the exact method of delivering these savings is still under consideration with, obviously, S.L.T. (senior leadership team). When the work is complete they will advise me on a range of the options that can be considered in order to ensure that those savings are delivered. This will include a very small reduction in the number of senior roles in the department. The savings were calculated as a proportion of civil servants grade 11 in the department. We fully recognise the savings apportionment for the department was very small in comparison with other departments, recognising that obviously it is primarily a front-line nature services department and so it is essential to provide those services. The savings also include a reduction in previously agreed growth, which started in 2024. It is obvious that the department is also carrying cost pressures, which again the senior leadership team in J.H.A. are working to resolve, treat, mitigate or accept on a risk-assessed basis and focusing on what is essential to deliver front-line services safely and what can be paused or deferred. An example of this would be the provision of training, development or equipment purchasing in some services. The detail of this is being worked on and again the Chief Officer will provide me with options as and when that work is actually done. I do not know if you want to add anything further to that.

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, that is accurate in terms of where we are. We have got to make sure that we can cope with the savings and the cost pressures.

The Connétable of Grouville:

This panel has always been concerned about front-line services and the cost pressures on the front line. I will move on to a question that relates directly to it. We note that the States of Jersey Police are due to make savings of £172,000 in 2025 and £187,000 in 2026. What impact will these savings have on the resources within the police and what contingency plan is in place, if any, to cover any impact or resourcing problems?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

I will ask Robin to speak in a minute, but what I would like to say to the panel is that obviously, as you will appreciate, it is a challenge for any front-line services to have to make savings. Robin will explain a little bit better but what I would like to say is that myself and the Chief Minister and Robin have agreed that we will keep this process being monitored, if you like, to ensure that we are still able to deliver front-line services, but I think I will ask Robin to fill in a bit more on that.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

Thank you, Minister. As has already been mentioned in the panel, it is not just the savings, it is also the cost pressures and those cost pressures continue to go up. For example, in the non-pay side of things our I.T. (information technology) particularly with the Home Office - we have connections into the Home Office to go to a number of very, very important databases - that bill has risen by 102 per cent since 2021. For the Digital Forensics Unit, which is how we investigate nearly all our crimes now, very effectively, I might say, because it reduces the cost into places like the Royal Courts and all the rest of because of more guilty pleas, that software is always moving on, always becoming more complicated and, therefore, more costly. Everybody is familiar with utility costs have risen and utility costs have risen by 22 per cent for us - and we have a 65 per cent electric fleet and we hope to get even closer to the 100 per cent - as well as other costs around training particularly related to firearms training. So it is not just the savings, it is also the additional costs, which of course everyone has. We all accept those costs have gone up, but the budget does not necessarily come along with it, so efficiencies are required. You may not have received it yet but the Police Authority have just written or are just about to write to you as chair as a request of some of their observations and whatever. So in terms of the savings that we will make into next year and the year after, as I think I may have mentioned already to this panel and indeed somewhere else, we will not be recruiting 2 police staff posts, not police officer posts, police staff posts. Those spots do not involve redundancy, so they were vacant. We plan to use additional efficiencies, a very small restructure. On the 18th of this month the senior team and I and a couple of others will be looking at in much more detail how we might have to now restructure some of our organisation to accommodate not just savings for 2025 but also I think probably the pressure is more so in 2026 because 2 consecutive governments now have been incredibly supportive - and I am not shy in saying that - as you would expect, for the major incidents that the Island has suffered and we continue to be properly funded. It is not just

about the capacity, it is also the capability. We may have the money but we also need the people. So we have used that in an entirely transparent way with Treasury to help us deal with what we would describe as the business as usual because, of course, we remove staff from day jobs, effectively, to investigate the major incidents and we have been busy in that regard too. The Police Authority have referenced in the letter they are sending you that we recognise the support we have had from Government for the major incidents, which we believe, have every confidence, will continue into next year wherever that takes us. The final point is, just to reaffirm what the Minister said, and indeed the Chief Minister said this to me too, that he will meet with us in the autumn - I suppose we are there now - to discuss the future of the police budget, given he recognises that it is important.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Those savings, Chief, are quite considerable. We are anxious, obviously, I am sure the panel will agree, that the proportion of the manpower expenses within your department are very high as a percentage of total and that means that these V.F.M. (value for money) savings that are ongoing are going to impact on the front line. Do you think that is an accurate assessment?

[11:00]

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

I think it is inevitable that there must be some impact. My job, and this is where I will be held to account by the Authority and indeed the Minister, is to look at where that inevitability, if you like, is minimised to its greatest extent. So I am very confident that Islanders will not see any difference in terms of our ability to respond to 999s and deal with major crime and major incidents. I am very confident about that and those are the things that I think really, really matter.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Thank you, Chief. You have highlighted that an outline of changes to staff posts and restructuring within your department and the anticipated result in savings and impact on service delivery are as follows: £100,000 allocated to staff costs, £144,000 allocated to non-pay and £200,000 allocated to staff costs and £165,000 allocated to non-pay in the 2 years. How is the J.H.A. senior leadership team developing plans to ensure that these savings are delivered?

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

That is the high-level summary that we gave when the Minister wrote to you on 12th September. What we are doing, a little bit like Robin said he and his team will be doing for the police, is looking at what the combined effect of those savings and the cost pressures we have referred to looks like. The allocation of the savings in the Government part of the Budget is, as you have said, in part staff savings and in part non-staff savings. We do recognise very much at the high level when we are

working on it that it is a very much smaller proportion of savings than many other government departments have had but it is going to have an impact somewhere. As Robin said, what we are doing for my part of the department is looking at what we can do to deliver those savings and cope with the cost pressures while having the minimum effect on front-line delivery. Some of those do mean, as the Minister referred to earlier, deferring or pausing expenditure, which will inevitably need to come later but is done at a different time. That is primarily around investing in equipment, assets and also training of our people and so there are some risks around that that we will be discussing with the Minister around the options that we can take and being very clear and transparent with the Minister what those risks are. We will also be looking at what other non-staff costs we can bear down on but, as you said, the primary weight of expenditure in the department is people. It is about 89 per cent people, with non-staff and then some income making up the rest, so there is not much to go at in the non-staff space and there is hardly anything to go at in the non-staff space that is not training or equipment for our people. So it is going to be difficult but we do very much appreciate that the savings are proportionately less impactful on us as a front-line department than they are for others and we will work on that basis, bring options to the Minister and then make sure that we can deliver a balanced budget next year.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I think I speak on behalf of the panel in saying that we still remain concerned about these savings and how they may impact on some of the equipment that is in your department and particularly that of the Chief Fire Officer and maintaining ... and indeed yours, Chief Ambulance Officer and Robin. We remain concerned about how that is going to impact on potential incidents in the future.

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes. There are probably just 2 points it would be helpful to elaborate on there. In discussion with the Treasurer, he fully recognises that the combination of savings and cost pressures for us does potentially create a people impact, which is not intended but is inevitable and he has invited me to continue to talk. There is no magic pot of money but he has invited me to continue to carry on talking to him to make sure that he is aware of perhaps operational risks that we are concerned about arising as a result of that position once we have done the options work and discussed it with the Minister. Also the other thing around the assets is that we have been very pleased to have a slightly higher allocation for minor capital in this Budget for J.H.A. It is £380,000 per year for my part of the department and £350,000 for Robin's part, which is a significant increase in previous years where it was about £100,000 or £150,000 broadly for each of us. That will enable us to get through more quickly quite a significant asset replacement programme of all the things you need to run fire services and ambulance services and prisons and all those. It is just a very stuff-heavy environment but also the Treasurer has invited me to make sure that we continue a dialogue with him on that in that if there are things we really absolutely definitely need but cannot do within that £380,000 once it has

all been prioritised, we can at least have a conversation with him to see if those pressures can be in some way mitigated. I am concerned but I am confident we have got a discussion that can be had in the future if we think that risks are not worth taking.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I would just like to register again that we are still concerned about this.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

I would just like to reiterate what Kate was just saying there as well because I have also met with the Treasurer. I am quite confident, as Kate said, that she is keeping him up to date because I have also met with him as well during this period.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Quite a lot of my first question has been answered in your very comprehensive answer about risk and investment, et cetera. Just to come back really to the issue about deferring training, potentially deferring the equipment process and reprofiling the budget, following publication of reports by the U.K. (United Kingdom) Government following the inquiries of Grenfell Tower and Manchester Arena, what training programmes are in place to adopt national practice for Jersey to make sure that we are up to speed with the findings of both of those inquiries?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

I will hand over to Paul because obviously he has got a far better knowledge of the in-depth, but it is identified by us that obviously we are a small jurisdiction and we still have the same inhabitant things that will come with that. We have still got the built environment, we have still got high-rises and all of those sorts of things. I think the thing is that we as an Island need to identify that and ensure that we do our best to be able to make sure that people are safe, but I will hand over to Paul who can give far more technical in-depth of all of that.

Chief Fire Officer:

Thank you, Minister. I think it is worth saying as well, and as you know anyway, if we take it in the round, for example the Manchester Arena inquiry, Grenfell phase 1, which reported in 2019, and phase 2, which reported last month, that will encompass lots of responders in some areas and a smaller number in other areas. It speaks across responding to emergencies but also trying to stop them from happening in the first place. Of course, phase 2 to the Grenfell Tower inquiry is talking about a systemic failure that led to the problem that in the event was insurmountable. What I would also say is these events - and it is horrible that it happens - and tragic events tend to raise the standard of our counterparts' activities in the U.K. and we model our policing, fire and ambulance services on the U.K. model. It is very difficult to have the capacity to create your own or copy

something that is more distant. So that bar gets raised through tragic circumstances and new standards are achieved. I think also with the learning from things like Manchester Arena, Grenfell in particular, there are new challenges and new risks that are discovered, so we see from the phase 2 report, for example, that something that had a certificate to say that it was compliant with some fire safety standards because it was tested was not compliant with those fire safety standards and not only did it not resist the spread of fire, it promoted the spread of fire. That sort of level of fundamental failure is a new risk and a new challenge for us to have to grapple with and it creates lots and lots of things for us to do. It is very, very challenging. That bar has been raised and of course in my sector, in the fire and rescue sector, the bringing back of H.M.I. (His Majesty's Inspectorate) that covers policing and fire raises the bar as well. As those professional bars are raising, of course we have to try and work out how we are going to follow that with a limited capacity. As the Minister says, Jersey is a pretty active and well established place and so it has a higher per capita rate of high-rise residential buildings than almost anywhere outside of London, if you were to take the British Islands, if you like, and Channel Islands into that. It is not small. There is a lot going on. We are a busy fire and rescue service by any standards. By English standards we are a very busy fire and rescue service if you were to compare us with our colleagues over there. So there is a lot of gap to fill. It is quite challenging. What we are doing ... and of course from the previous government and the previous government before that, the recognition that there is work to be done, recognition that investment is required and we are really delighted that we received that support. I know you know that very well through that phase and we still continue to get that support. We are in a phase at the moment of trying to put in place programmes to do as much work as possible but it is challenging and that is why, as Kate says, this is not a short-term solution. This is more of a medium and longer-term solution as well.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

I guess the issue for us is that some of the reductions in budget, some of the savings that have been given, saying it will not affect front-line services, but if you have not got the back office who is able to support you doing the policy work and keep a weather eye on Grenfell, that ultimately will affect the front-line services and ultimately affect the safety of the Islanders in generally. I guess what we are getting at, and something, I suppose, that the Chief Officer has relayed as well, is that just because you were saying that it does not affect the front line, the fact that your savings are being hit in the back office does affect the front line.

Chief Fire Officer:

I think Kate alluded to this before. I think at the moment in the next year or so we are in a phase of growth. We are trying to recruit people into key roles, particularly at the moment fire safety roles where we are expanding the size of that team. Fire safety is absolutely critical to the strategic response to some of the issues that we find from those reports. The money comes in, then you start

the recruitment because you cannot start recruiting until you know that you have got the money, so there is always a lag. I think what we are doing is accidentally benefiting from that natural lag now. We are struggling a little bit to find access to people with the right skills and resources to go into leadership roles. That will save the day for a while.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Has the recruitment freeze of grade 11 and above had an impact on you doing that work?

Chief Fire Officer:

Not in Fire and Rescue.

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

Not in the department as a whole because we can make the case for essential and front-line roles still being recruited at grade 11 and above, with permission from me and the Chief Executive Officer. I have not put one of those forward yet but, for example, we will in due course recruit a new prison governor and I do not expect there to be a problem in relation to the recruitment freeze.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Again with the States of Jersey Police you talked about having restructuring and therefore you will not be replacing 2 vacancies for police staff. Does that mean that you will have to allocate very expensive police officers to do the tasks that those police staff were doing?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

No, is the answer to that question but it is something that we are always mindful of because that is not a best use of resource. Indeed, over the last few years we have had one particular sergeant, from memory, who was in doing our duties and of course that was not a sensible use of money and that post was redeployed. Just picking up on the Fire Chief's points, one of the learning points from Manchester, which has been mentioned a couple of times, and one of the criticisms that came out of the public inquiry was that there was not the appropriate investment into the emergency planning team. The reverse is the case particularly in recent months where the Government have increased ... and it is these people who are rarely seen, who do enormous amounts of work in the background for the time when the bad thing happens. So where I get reassurance from, and hope to give reassurance to the panel, is Government - and Kate Briden has led on this - have increased the number of people in our emergency planning team. Only yesterday one of them and others were deployed at the ferry port for Operation Turbo to practise again our joint interoperability, test again, bearing in mind we have had plenty of opportunity to learn but we still had various emergency services at the ferry port yesterday practising.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

I would just like to add something to what Robin has just said, and this is what for me in this role is critical. It is that what I have seen, like many others, an erosion of things like your emergency planning but we should never ever allow those types of roles to go because they are exactly what they say on the tin and that saves a lot of money in the long term.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Thank you.

The Connétable of Grouville:

In 2024 the ambulance underwent restructuring and new posts were identified and recruited to. How have these extra staff allowed you to increase daytime resilience and how to invest to increase the resilience in the nightshift?

Chief Ambulance Officer:

We have added a 4th crew during the daytime now for the additional staff that we have had, which we were very grateful for. That has increased obviously our resilience during the day. On the evening part, we are just starting a piece of work with the staff and the unions coming up to look at how we cover the evening periods, so a lot of shifts have been covered in addition on the evening period from the additional staff that we have put in. It has not been regularised into a shift roster pattern yet so that is something we are looking at and we have just written to the unions recently to engage with them on what that looks like.

[11:15]

We had obviously done that on the back of a demanded capacity review. We looked at the times that we needed to put on more capacity to deal with that demand, which was initially from 7.00 p.m. until 1.00 a.m. in the morning, and we have recently spoken about the need to refresh that on the fact that our calls are still rising, so we have seen an increase already this year.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Is any additional funding - going back again - required following this restructuring?

Chief Ambulance Officer:

That funding was provided within the 2024 business case and a few adjustments that we have made internally within the service. There is not currently any required for the current model.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Okay, thank you very much, Chief.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I have some questions now about the Criminal Offences Confiscation Fund. Minister, there are no balanced transfers in the proposed budget from the Criminal Offences Confiscation Fund to the Consolidated Fund. Can you tell us about the projects that were being funded from this fund and whether they are ongoing or complete, et cetera?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, the amounts allocated in the Budget are carried forward so, effectively, what you have is the firearms range, which is being paid out of the C.O.C.F. (Criminal Offences Confiscation Fund), and you also have Dewberry House. Part of it is being paid out of that fund as well. There is going to be a further request in relation to the C.O.C.F. funding in relation to potential for the laptops for the Honorary Police, but those requests that are in there at the moment are projects which are going to happen and, basically, the 2 that I have identified.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

I also had a note about the prison improvement phase.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, sorry, those things are continuing.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

So the funds are there for them?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, those funds are there. They have not changed.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

On the matter of Dewberry House, I remember there was a shortfall of funding available for what had been planned so I do not think that has been addressed in the Budget. Can you provide us with an update about that project?

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

Do you want either me or Robin to take that?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

I am not sure what the size of that is, and that could be as a result of rising costs, as we have seen in the local media about costs of materials and whatever, but I would not have a precise answer to that so I would prefer to just write to you on that point so that I can be accurate.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, thanks, and my next question was to ask about the total project costs for Dewberry House but shall we get the response there? Okay, so we will just wait to hear back on that. Thank you. Okay, Helen.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

I have a few random questions about funding in the Budget. £425,000 was allocated to the Passport Project for 2025 and 2026. The question is: is that adequate and do you think the work will be completed by the end of 2026?

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

I think it is accurately profiled. The piece of work has been outstanding for some years. That has been reprofiled to modern day costs and our understanding from the Home Office is that we are now in their priority portfolio for that piece of work to be done. It is the system that is needed to replace the current passport system, which is called Gypsy, with a new version. I do not know why it is called Gypsy. We love a different name for things. It is like Caesar. So it will replace that with the fully digital passport system that the U.K. already has but preserving the island variant approach. It is a collaborative piece of work with Guernsey, Gibraltar, the Isle of Man and us. We have a long-term engaged contracted project lead for it who is the interface between those island jurisdictions and the Home Office who worked very closely on those costs. I am confident that they are accurate, and as soon as we press "Go" on the project, which is due to be before the end of this year, it will run as planned and be completed by the end of 2026.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you. I just wanted to ask because I think we have just had the report released about the consultancy projects. Evidently, there is a fee sum in there for consultancy. Can you just confirm that that consultancy will continue despite the efforts to reduce the use of consultants across the public services?

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, so it has been regarded as "technical" which still needs approval. We have cited the Chief Executive on it, although the approval for technical stops with me because it is such an important

priority project for us and the contract with that project lead is due to be extended. We are doing it in good time from May 2025 for 2 years so that it sees it through to the completion of the project.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

It is fed into the project plan so you have got control.

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

That is lovely. Thank you. We also note that the combined control in funding for 2025 is £450,000. Can you just tell us more about what that funding covers and if you are confident that no further funding will be required?

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

So that covers the residual technical aspects that need to be done in relation to the Emergency Services Control Centre, which is the completion of the I.C.C.S. (Integrated Communications and Control System) project, which is the sort of integrated headset. This is on the ambulance and fire and rescue side of the room. The police are essentially using a slightly different solution. It will also cover some integration work that is needed for new mobile devices for ambulance and fire and rescue that had been funded slightly separately to make sure that the interface between the vehicles and the information the crew needs and the control room is right. It will probably also include some subject matter expertise contracted in again on a technical basis for ambulance and fire and rescue, both of which have just had peer reviews of the service and the control function interaction, and we have got a number of recommendations arising as a result of that. I cannot be completely sure that that will be the end of it because it is a really important priority area for us and we will need to continue to invest in the E.S.C.C. (Emergency Services Control Centre) to make sure it is as effective and efficient as possible. Much of it is discharging the Minister's statutory responsibilities and those of the Chiefs, so it might be that we do need a further programme of improvement work but we would build a case for that separately in due course, yes.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Again, just to confirm that the consultancy element of that - and I know some of that has been provided by local consultants - will continue throughout.

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

All of the local consultancy has stopped at the beginning of last year - I need to check that - in terms of project management consultancy, but the only thing we have remaining now is the real technical

consultancy about the system - it is Motorola and people like that - and the subject expertise that would come in the future from fire and rescue and ambulance specialists. Also, we have a consultant on a contract to chair the 999 Liaison Committee who is an expert in the field and, again, I would expect that to continue next year and fit within the technical category.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you. You stated in your letter as well that you have got 2 staff employed as data analysts and one dedicated to violence against women and girls. Again, the question is have you got adequate funding for that? Have you got enough capacity within that data analysis team to do what needs to be done for the V.A.W.G. (Violence Against Women and Girls) staff?

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

So we have those 2 people in post now and they are having a very significant impact. It is the first time that we have had a proper data analyst and lead in the department. The police have had their own arrangements for some time but we are really seeing an impact in relation to that and there is also a separate person in post as the data analyst for V.A.W.G. essentially who is making very good progress in bringing on the dataset we need to support not just the implementation of the recommendations but what that whole piece looks like strategically going forward.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

When do you think they might be reporting on the first bit about the prevalence of V.A.W.G.?

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

The first dataset is due to be published at the end of Q1 next year but I will check that when we write to you from the previous hearing about the V.A.W.G. recommendation implementation update. We can include that in that so, yes, we are confident we have got the person power to take it forward.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Just the last question on that section. The modern slavery work has been introduced into your work programme. Currently, you said it is in the early development phase. Again, are you confident that you have got the right resources so that it will progress on time?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, I am confident that we have got those resources to be able to continue that work. As I said, we really need to look at the scope closely, but we obviously will be looking to certainly progress that work in the next 18 months to 2 years.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Thank you. My last question around what is in the Budget and what is not relates to honorary policing and the proposed Budget does not include any central funding to parishes to support the essential functions of the Honorary Police. I know we talked about making an application to C.O.C.F. for laptops, et cetera, but I think we are just interested to know what your position is, Minister, about providing central funding to parishes for the kind of core policing functions that obviously supports the States Police.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Right, well, in recent weeks, we have had a meeting with the Attorney General, myself and I think you, Robin.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

I have spoken to the Attorney General about it.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, I cannot remember exactly but we have certainly met with the Attorney General because this is on my priority list. I think it is difficult. We obviously cannot fund it from policing funds for obvious reasons because there is not sufficient funding to do that, but we are mindful that we need to look at how we are going to do that resourcing. In relation to things like laptops, radios and that type of thing, we have formed a group, we have met on it, and we will continue to do that. I meet regularly with the Attorney General anyway and it will be continually going forward so I am minded we do need to fund them in some way, shape or form. We just need to decide how that is going to be and where it is going to come from because I do think that that is a fact.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

I think the thinking around that is honorary policing in Jersey provides a very useful and very comprehensive support to the States of Jersey Police. If you looked at the U.K., you would not expect Special Constables to be funding their radios and their laptops, et cetera.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Exactly.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

I know it is something that has been raised at parish level by parishioners, the ratepayers' money going to the provision of vehicles, so I think we just want to understand from a J.H.A. perspective whether there is an appetite to consider what level of central government funding should be put into the budget to provide that.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

Coincidentally, I am seeing Joao Camara on Monday and we have discussed this a number of times and I have spoken to the Attorney General, who is very receptive. It occurs to me sometimes that our Honorary Police colleagues are sort of going around cap in hand and we have only got to ... as you have just touched upon, Deputy, we know what they cost. We do not know what they save and just look at the Royal Visit. A massive effort on a bank holiday which would have cost the Island, if they had put in a bill, way beyond anything I think we would have even suggested as part of laptops or whatever. I am strongly supportive of there being a central fund where our honorary colleagues can use it in a transparent way for things that they need to provide services to the Island.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Okay, thank you.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Sea cadets and army cadets, Minister. What discussion have you had with the sea cadets and the army cadets to ensure the proposed funding of £4.9 million is adequate and the proposed premises are adequate to accommodate any growing numbers in the future?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

The sea cadets are funded by us for £20,000 a year, which is a grant awarded annually following the return of financial information relating to the previous year. In relation to the headquarters, et cetera, I think that matter was discussed earlier, but I do not know whether you want any further ...

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, I can probably elaborate slightly further. The £4.9 million is the total amount that was allocated in the Government Plan with this budget. It has been there a number of years as we have been working on the feasibility. There have been a number of different sites in play in that time. We have had good discussions with the army and sea cadet leaders, which continue. I think we are narrowing down now on to a viable option working closely with Jersey Property Holdings and continue to work closely with the cadet leaders. I would hope that we would be able to brief the panel on that in a bit more detail in the next few months as we get agreement around that. It needs to go up through the ministerial government agreement route first. We are maintaining with the cadet leaders that that £4.9 million in the plan is the maximum amount available so that the development plans need to fit within that amount.

[11:30]

There has been some talk from the sea cadet leaders about potentially fundraising to contribute more. We are looking at how perhaps the development could be phased so that the main responsibility for government from that proposition a number of years ago is discharged through the money available. Then, if there is a sort of value add from them seeking fundraising and sponsoring, that can be added in a slightly different part of the site either at the same time if the fundraising money is available or perhaps later. It is trying to take a slightly more dynamic approach to it essentially so that we can recognise that, particularly for sea cadets, their membership has significantly grown but that really Government's contribution to their facility should be to provide them a core facility and that if there are extras to add, perhaps that can be done in a slightly different way. That is the discussion we have had so far. As I say, hopefully we can bring forward a firmer conclusion of where we think the final site will be and what the timelines for it will be to the panel in the next couple of months.

The Connétable of Grouville:

We had a visit to the headquarters at Rouge Bouillon and we were incredibly impressed by what we saw so we are fully supportive. There is so much uncertainty over Fort Regent. We really are in the dark over that one. The premises there will continue to act as a base for these units. Is that fair to say or is that uncertainty bearing some impact on that?

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

The sea cadets vacated their unit at Fort Regent a number of years ago and, as you have said, were relocated to Rouge Bouillon. We have slightly alleviated the pressure of needing to move them from Rouge Bouillon by the timeline for the ambulance and fire and rescue development now being later so they are sort of safe and sound where they are. Returning to the Fort is a strong option for the sea cadets and redeveloping that whole area is certainly being considered. It does need to dovetail of course with whatever the wider strategic plan for Fort Regent is and Ministers are in a sort of early stage of a refresh of thinking about that as I understand it. We will be working closely with Infrastructure and Environment and Jersey Property Holdings on what those plans for the Fort might look like and how any proposal to move the cadets back to their former area would dovetail with the wider plan. Getting those 2 things lined up is very important to us.

The Connétable of Grouville:

For whatever reason, as I said with the uncertainty of Fort Regent, if those premises is not available, do you have any contingencies for that particular opportunity?

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

We have one or 2 other options that we have looked at previously and ruled out for a variety of reasons that we could revisit but, obviously, it is incumbent on us to make sure there is a solution,

partly because we have temporarily put the sea cadets in a building that we will eventually want to vacate and destroy and partly because, of course, there is the proposition from 2020 that we need to make sure we fulfil.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Excellent. That is all from me, Chair.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes, if I could just add a question to that. We have heard before about the plans for the joint headquarters for sea cadets and army cadets. Is there any consideration for not having a joint headquarters?

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

We are still aiming for joint. I think there is a real advantage to one set of government investment providing for both cadet forces and the cadet leaders are working well together on that. The financial constraint is causing some space constraint that we are looking at with both forces. In some ways, the absolute priority has to be to move the sea cadets, for the reasons I have just described, and it has always been an additional benefit that we can also enhance facilities for the army cadets at the same time. Their facilities at Le Quesne Barracks are not ideal in a number of ways so we are looking at how, as I say, we can do that perhaps slightly more dynamically, so how we make sure that we maximise the totality of the space available in that area to make sure it is a joint facility or that at least, in some respects, it is joint. It may be that the army cadets end up retaining a base at the barracks but using those joint facilities in a slightly different way to how we first envisaged, but that is all in place at the moment and, for me, it is really important to get a solution that works for everyone, that is affordable, that we can move forward on, so we are still working on that now.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, thank you. We have finished our questions but while we have got you all here, I wonder if I could add a question. We have talked a few times about this at TETRA, so let me get my words right.

The Connétable of Grouville:

TETRA, sure. Helen is more familiar with it than I am. When I first became a Connétable in 2022, this was still in our budget and it remained in our budget and it was a considerable chunk of budget. At that time, it was £14,000 to update the Honorary Police system and I was greatly concerned that it stayed in the scenario with no real advancement in the system development, as it were, or how it combined with yours. Has there been any advancement on that?

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Yes, what is happening? That is what we wanted to know.

Chief Fire Officer:

Somehow I am the S.R.O. (senior responsible officer) for what was the TETRA replacement project, and still will be, and TETRA refers to the technology basically. It is radio in this way but an awful lot of it happens underground, essentially, and we are sort of in abeyance really in terms of the big strategic replacement project because we are waiting to see what happens in the U.K. Technology moves on in significant ways and you have probably heard of Airwave in the U.K. so that is what the emergency services use in the U.K. All of the blue light agencies and others use Airwave. It is a TETRA-based technology. It is the same sort of radio system but very much bigger, and they have been working for some years now on trying to roll out a new emergency services communications system. That has been beset by a number of problems such as contractual, financial and technological and my strategy, if you like, on that is to sit behind that and watch what happens so that we can learn from it and not fall down any of the holes that have appeared in the road in front of the colleagues in the U.K. who are doing a very big but similar project, if you like. So the TETRA system stands, we have funding available now and we are updating the software. We are updating servers because it is all a computer-based radio system and we are updating radio handsets. There are various bits and pieces going on so, essentially, what we are doing is keeping the current system going in a sort of as new as possible way. They can integrate. The system network allows Honorary Police in a particular parish to talk to firefighters if that is what we need to do. That can happen. That whole system will do that for us so it is still a very usable system. It still has life in it. We do know that it is going to need to go into a next phase in the new technology but we just want to watch what the U.K. does.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

I guess the question is you look at things from a government side, so how many firefighters you have got and how many police officers you have got, who is looking at how many Honorary Police Officers there are, because it tends to be kind of rolled back to the parishes as an afterthought, so they end up with having to replace their own equipment, which links into the previous question again.

Chief Fire Officer:

There is a lot of work going on and always been, but I think we are resurrecting some of the sort of user group forum work that is going on and it has always been an interesting funding approach really because the system costs what the system costs. If people are disincentivised to pay for their units, the system cost does not go down. All that happens is all the other units get a little bit more expensive.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

Somebody else has to pay, yes.

Chief Fire Officer:

So we are making sure that we have early conversations and making sure that everybody is heard and listened to in that process.

Deputy H.M. Miles:

And funded.

Chief Fire Officer:

Yes. We went through a long period where that funding was disaggregated. For example, you would find a pot of money in the policing budget, a pot of money in the Fire and Rescue Service budget, a pot of money in the Ambulance Service budget because in terms of the generally accepted accounting principles, you needed to show where the costs were being incurred. I think there has been some rethinking about that in terms of centralising that model because it costs what it costs. You cannot change that cost. As long as you can show it and show who is using it, I think that was the important thing, and support them in using it.

The Connétable of Grouville:

If I may, Chair, I think now for the last 2 years, the principal worry that we have concerning this system is some of the Connétables on the committee are in a similar situation. They have so many of these charging units that are now running out of their sell-by date. Some of them are working and some of them are not, but we are constantly saying: "We cannot replace them. If a new system comes in, we do not want to replace all our old units which are only going to become obsolete" where we have all been in abeyance and we are just keen that you give us some direction.

Chief Fire Officer:

I think the problem of replacing something and then the system changing is some way off, if I can put it that way, just judging what is going on in the U.K. For example, in terms of the Grenfell Tower inquiry, they were talking about firefighters, so fire rescue, you will see, wear different handheld radios to everybody else's. They wear red ones and they are twice as expensive as everybody else's radios because they are of an intrinsic safety standard so it will not ignite in a flammable atmosphere. That flammable atmosphere is based around a settling. So we are reassessing that because the Grenfell Tower inquiry said: "Is that your bigger problem or is your bigger problem making sure that you have got enough wattage to talk in a building and make sure that it has got a power to get through those concrete walls?" and all that kind of stuff. So there is a lot of work going on. I do not think we are going to be confronted by a problem soon, which is buy new radios and

they are obsolete or, sorry, buy new radios and then we are replacing something and you need to buy them again. I think that is years away. It is quite some years away.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Okay, that is very encouraging. I have got a police meeting tonight at 7.30 p.m. and I will pass that on.

Chief Fire Officer:

I think we are talking sort of 2030-ish I think at the earliest in terms of technology available.

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

I think what we could propose in the meantime, if this has not already happened, is that the digital services team who run the network essentially, and perhaps also a member of staff in the J.H.A. Business Support Unit who has been looking after the replacement for J.H.A., can perhaps talk to a representative of the Comité des Chefs or whoever is right as a contact for TETRA perhaps across the parishes to make sure that that more granular information that Paul has referred to can be shared with each parish lead for TETRA such as they are. To the extent we can, we can help a bit with the approach we have taken to replacement and it could be that there is equipment that can be redistributed to help. Let us make sure we have that conversation at that really practical level. We can create the contacts after the hearing if we need to.

The Connétable of Grouville:

That is very encouraging. Thank you.

Deputy C.D. Curtis:

Okay, that is all our questions done, so thank you very much, everyone. We will just bring the hearing to an end.

[11:41]