



Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny

Panel

Quarterly Hearing

Witness: The Minister for Infrastructure

Wednesday, 5th March 2025

Panel:

Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (Chair)

Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South (Vice Chair)

Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement

Connétable D Johnson of St. Mary

Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South

Witnesses:

Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John, The Minister for Infrastructure

Ms. E. Littlechild, Group Director, Operations and Transport

Mr. T. Dodd, Associate Director, Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure

Mr. R. Buccholz, Head of Property Strategy

Mr. A. Scate, Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment

[10:35]

Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (Chair):

Thank you. Welcome to this quarterly hearing of the Environment, Housing Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel. Today is 5th March 2025 and this is our first quarterly hearing of the year with the Minister for Infrastructure. Thank you and welcome everybody. I would like to draw everyone's attention to the following. This hearing will be filmed and streamed live. The recording and transcript will be published afterwards on the States Assembly website. All electronic devices including mobile phones should be switched to silent and non-vibration, please. I would like to ask any members of

the public who have joined us today to not interfere with proceedings and as soon as the hearing is closed, please leave quietly. I would like now, for the purpose of the recording and transcripts, for everybody to state their name clearly. I will start. So my name is Deputy Hilary Jeune, the Chair of this hearing.

Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South (Vice Chair):

Deputy Tom Coles, Vice Chair.

Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

Deputy Alex Curtis, panel member.

Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South:

Deputy David Warr, panel member.

Connétable D. Johnson of St. Mary:

David Johnson, Constable of St. Mary, panel member.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Constable Andy Jehan, Minister for Infrastructure.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Andy Scate, Chief Officer for Infrastructure and Environment.

Head of Property Strategy:

Ralph Buccholz, Jersey Property Holdings.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Ellen Littlechild, Direct for Operations and Transport.

Associate Director, Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure:

Tristan Dodd, Associate Director for Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. Welcome, everybody, today. First, we have a long list of questions in the next 2 hours that we have.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I should have offered Constable Crowcroft's apologies. He is out of the Island this week.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Okay. Thank you very much, Minister. We have a long list of questions for you, Minister. Really the panel today is looking for new information. If you could try not to repeat from last hearings but that we can talk about going forward and what there is new on all these different areas that we are going to cover today. First of all, we are going to look broadly at the Common Strategic Policy of the Government and looking for an update of progress under your remit within this area. So looking first at the delivery to plan to revitalise town, what can we expect to see delivered in 2025?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, in a matter of days you will be able to see the work that has been taking place in New Cut. Hopefully you have seen the boards that are on the hoardings now that show people what is actually happening there. I sneaked a peek last week and it looks really good quality, so I am really pleased with the work that has taken place there. We are in dialogue with stakeholders in the Broad Street area and we have an event this week to get feedback on the plans we have for that piece of work, that public realm work. All that is taking place. We are making progress with the town youth facility. So colleagues in Property Holdings are working with C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills) colleagues and making progress in that area. I am not sure if we are going to talk about cycling later on in the in the hearing or not. We have some exciting plans around cycling which are coming to fruition in the coming weeks ahead of the summer. That will be done before the summer, so we will touch on that later. There is some good progress being made. I think yesterday you saw the prototype for the Plan for Town, which will be released in the coming days. We just have a couple of technical challenges to iron out but the Plan for Town Tool has been developed and we will be going live in 3 locations, as well as being available online, of course. Hopefully that will help people understand the work not only the Government are doing but also the plans that have been passed in St. Helier for work to take place on some of the key sites. I think it is a good opportunity for people to see work that is in train work, that has approval and some of that is quite exciting.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister. It was a question I was going to ask you later, but you touched on the youth facility. I know that you updated the panel in December, you sent us a letter and you said that you are moving forward but are you, in particular, on track to obtain a Ministerial decision on the preferred site by end of quarter 2, so very soon?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

For the youth facility? Yes, most definitely. We are in detailed discussions about design and what needs to be included and not included. There is good progress being made there and it is good to

see our department working with C.Y.P.E.S. and we are working with other Ministers to bring that forward.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

So we will know where the preferred site is very shortly?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister. We are going to focus on liquid waste management later in the hearing, but I would like to first ask how you and your fellow Ministers are ensuring that departmental work on new housing projects and other related work are aligned with that of other departments.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, so we have planning applications in at the moment for attenuation tanks. I think you have had a briefing on the attenuation tanks as a panel. I recently visited one of the sites where we had a slight challenge but we have managed to overcome that and we are hoping that those sites will be coming to the Planning Committee in, I think it is ... I am going to say May, it might be April?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

May.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

May, we hope that those will be going to that. We are also looking at whether or not there are other areas we can do something similar in a public private partnership because there is a lot of opportunity that we think to utilise existing infrastructure. If we can do this similar treatment, perhaps that is a wrong choice of word, but similar programme, and we have been approached by one of the parishes to see if we could do that. We are looking at how that could be achieved, what kind of a licence we could issue. Because clearly if we were to go down that road, we would need to make sure that we had some kind of agreement in place that it was not going to damage what we already have.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

So there is a number of projects, as you said, and not just on the liquid waste but obviously of these approved sites where there is going to be a number of large scale housing being developed. What extent is your responsibility and that of your department in minimising disruption to the public by co-

ordinating projects, for example, when there is road closures or lots of digging up the road and then putting together and then digging up the road?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are in a no win situation because we all want to see improvements in the surface of the road. We all want to see improvements in infrastructure and nobody wants to see a road closed. Well, the things do not go together. So we have to co-ordinate not only ourselves with our drainage colleagues, but with the utility companies and work with the parishes to try and minimise disruption. St. Saviour Road is a good example. We would all like to see St. Saviour Road resurfaced as soon as possible, but there are so many services that need to go underneath that road for the works that are currently underway and are proposed to get underway, it does not make any sense to do that work then to undo it and start again. What we are trying to do is communicate that a little bit better. You can go online, you can see this next 6 years' resurfacing programme, which has been the case for a number of years. I did not find that out until I became Minister.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Is that including smaller parish lanes? So it is not just the main ones?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No. The smaller lanes are, as you say, controlled by the parishes, but they all use the traffic works system.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

So they are all online and put in their works as well so that it is clear?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, but you cannot see 5 years ahead because very few parishes will have a programme to resurface 5 years ahead. Parishes tend to make maintain their roads as and when and then invest in resurfacing, larger resurfacing, when they have the funds to do so. They will build up a reserve over a number of years and then invest that money in their services. But all of that information is available. We have now started to circulate on a Sunday afternoon, Sunday evening, a road work update with as much information as possible. Now clearly that is not always fully inclusive and we are working to try and rectify that. Only this week, on Monday afternoon, I turned left into La Rue Militaire and found there was roadworks taking place and that was not on the list that I shared with parishioners of St. John on Sunday evening. We would encourage more people to share that information where we have got planned maintenance. If you think of areas where there is going to be works ... the major attenuation tanks are built in fields but we have to get the sewage ...

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I think this is about the wider co-ordination.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Yes. I just want to bring something to your attention. You did a lot of work with the Constable in Trinity Village about the crossings on that road to slow traffic down and I notice now we actually have a big trench from Jersey Electricity actually lifting a lot of the stones and stuff like that which were put down only 6 months ago. Where is the co-ordination on that front?

[10:45]

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, the works in the centre of Trinity predated me.

Associate Director, Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure:

What happened in that particular instance was the utility company, for whatever reason, did not follow the correct procedures. So we have been in contact with them and they are going to lay that back to exactly the same standard as it was before. That can be one of the issues, it is not generally a big issue with the main utilities but there roadworks that we do not get notified of through system. We made a video about that. We put it out on social media encouraging people to do that. But, in the context of over 5,000 activities on the road network each year, which we co-ordinate, it is natural that there will be one or 2 things that will go unless try to stay on top of it. We responded within a day on that.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

So this is like a communication between Infrastructure and the parish or Infrastructure and the utility company? Where is the gap?

Associate Director, Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure:

Well, from the top downwards there are strategic meetings where everyone talks about their plans for the future and then it drops down into operational activities or different levels of impact. What has happened in that particular instance is, I understand, that the right notification was not provided so we were not able to comment on it and say that it was ...

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Notification by whom? Sorry to interrupt.

Associate Director, Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure:

The utility will request permission to work on the road and that will go to the roads authority, in this case, it is a main road so it would have come to us, and it notifies various other people who may have an interest and they have an opportunity to comment on that. But it will also flag up any embargoes on the road. In this instance, that notification was not made correctly, so we were unaware that the road works were taking place, which is very unusual with the main utilities. The only time that normally would happen is in emergency works where there is a different procedure. But if you take, for instance, the type of thing that happened where you had an emergency on Colomberie, we reacted very quickly. We got all the ...

Deputy D.J. Warr:

I am more concerned about regular roadworks, where it is not an emergency and just that process.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

So there is a monthly meeting, I think it is called J.U.R.A.F. (Jersey Utility and Road Authority Forum), which is between the utility companies, Infrastructure and the parishes to try and co-ordinate that work. In general, I think there has been great strides made in recent years to give pre-notice. Often you will see signage up on the roadside or the road to say: "Warning traffic works are going to be taking place here next month, next week." That is pretty good. We are trying to do more with social media. The incident you identify is an error by the utility company in the information they gave to Infrastructure. We have the ability, both as Infrastructure and within parishes, to get full width reinstatement. So if you put a trench down a newly laid road, you are likely to have to reinstate the whole width of the road, not just the trench. That is the ability we have got.

Associate Director, Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure:

If I could just add very briefly to that? When we looked at this a few years ago and we did a review, we were certainly a leader compared to a lot of U.K. (United Kingdom) authorities. We also had the Ille-et-Vilaine for the St. Malo area come over to have a look and they were jealous of our system and wanted to understand more about it. So they had a visit to have a look at it.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I think mainly it is also related to cost because of course, at the end of the day, the taxpayer or those who use using the utility companies get the cost of having to dig up the road. If the roads are dug up constantly, Sion is another good example where they could be more co-ordination because everything is a cost. I think that is where these questions are. It is more about not just every month but about that long-term thinking, maybe not 5 years ahead, but if you are going to relay a surface for a year ahead, then a year later ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Sion is a good example. We have a new housing development getting built at Sion, they need all of the utilities to go in there and they are doing those as quickly as possible. In the meantime, Infrastructure are doing work from the north of the Island down the main road, which will see an increase in the size of the pipes for drainage, which will help the north of the Island, St. John, Trinity, Mont à L'abbé, and that is going to see significant disruption over quite an extended period of time. But we need the drains to make sure we can get more people connected to drains, not only new properties but existing properties. So there will be this challenge, the stress between investing in the infrastructure, as I mentioned earlier, and the disruption. What we do try to do, and I think we do it pretty well ... there is significant resurfacing happening in St. John at Easter, which was planned 5 years ago - not since I have become Minister but 5 years ago - and the team met with the Roads Committee recently. They are taking out a full page advert in 3 or 4 parish magazines, the neighbouring parishes, to explain the level of the works that are going to take place over a 2 or 3-week period. So there is lots of planning goes into places, lots of work not only with the wider community but letter drops to people that are affected. I think Noirmont was a good example of where there was good correspondence and I think we had very few complaints about the work at Noirmont, which was quite complex.

Associate Director, Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure:

If I could just add to that. Obviously on occasion you do have a new road surface and it has this 5-year embargo on it but for some reason, often a good reason, someone has to come along and dig it up because of reasons that were not foreseeable. Then there is an augmented specification for its reinstatement so the public does not have to suffer the cost of that impairment to the road service that they have created.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. Thank you for that. I think we need to move on from that. A question I have: have you got any feedback to date from industry on the Island construction and engineering projects of the I.C.E. (Island Construction and Engineering) programme and whether it is providing certainty and support for the construction sector?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The only feedback I have had is from the session I attended at the Construction Council seminar that we held. That document is evolving, it is constantly getting updated with new information and the feedback I have had has been positive. I daresay we would like to do more really.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Okay, thank you. The other area of improvement with within the C.S.P. (Common Strategic Policy) and revitalising town was the Central Market and fish market. What has been delivered over the

course of 2024? We heard for example that from the Assistant Minister at a previous Scrutiny Panel that low cost and practical improvements were underway. Can you update the panel on that progress?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, that is an area that the Assistant Minister leads on. I think the biggest progress is issuing 3-year leases to the tenants, something that the tenants have been asking for for a long time.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Sorry, can I just clarify this? Do you mean 9-year leases?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Thank you, David, I beg your pardon. Nine-year leases for the tenants. Thank you for that. Which is something that the tenants have been asking for and we are looking to ... we have done the work on the roof, which you would have seen the scaffold down Halkett Place for a long time last year. So that work has happened and we are due to meet with the market traders again in March, I think.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

What has been the reaction to the new leases from tenants?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, certainly in the first iteration there was quite negative reaction. So we have worked with the tenants to find a solution and I think it is fair to say that we have taken the view that we are the landlord as Property Holdings and we have listened to the feedback and we have come to a solution with them.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. Of course we have just heard some of these low cost practical improvements to the Central Market and the fish market, but is there any long-term plans of significant capital projects?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I have seen plans which would cost up to £12 million, but I really think that we need to spend considerably less than £12 million on the markets. They need to be clean, they need to be tidy, they need to be practical and I think of many, many other places I could spend £12 million that is needed rather than a nice to have. So, yes, we need to make sure that the markets are tidy, are functional, safe, but I do not think we need to spend £12 million on our markets personally. That is a personal view. Other people have a different view to me but I think if we want to maintain reasonable rent or very, very generous rents, then you are not going to get a return on a £12 million investment.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Yes. That £12 million, that is not something that the Scrutiny Panel, I do not think, have heard before. Are those plans coming soon for us to be able to see?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

They will not see the light of day if I am Minister.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister. Then moving on, I guess from that and that wider ... you know, because the Central Market obviously is part of the vitality and vibrancy of the town and the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development has recently published the Future-Fit Retail Roadmap. Do you align your work with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development and this Future-Fit Retail Roadmap?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, we try to work together as much as possible. Clearly we are restricted by the amount of money we have to invest and if we had a money tree then perhaps we would invest £12 million in the market. But we do not have a money tree and if you ask me whether drains and resurfacing of roads is more important than spending £12 million on the market, I would say yes every time. It does not mean to say we do not need to make the market safe, make sure they are decorated. We need to do something with the floor of the markets because that is in need of repair and I think we probably need to spend about £2 million rather than £12 million.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Could I check, Minister? On the Future-Fit Retail Roadmap, Infrastructure is listed as the first department considered within the wider government policy context, so mentioning responsibility for parking, layouts of roads and so on. Do you or do your officers feel that you were suitably consulted? Were there areas that the department felt actually should fall into that from your perspective or do you feel actually that the process that the Department for Economy went on was sufficient for your engagement?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I cannot answer on behalf of officers, they will have to answer for themselves.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I think certainly in most cases we have been engaged on moving this one forward.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The Charles Street car park is a good example of something that we have worked on together because there is now a petition where people do not want us to charge after 5 o'clock and do not want us to charge on Sundays. Yet we are reacting to the requests from not only retail business, but hospitality businesses who want us to provide parking in St. Helier in the evenings and at weekends. By charging, that gives people choice. We are trying to work together. We do work together as much as we can.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. One of those, of course, is enhancing those public spaces to make it an exciting place to visit. You talked a bit before about the cycling and walking plans. What do you expect to be completed by the end of 2025 and does this meet your expectations?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Lots and no, I would say to those 2 questions. I would expect lots to be done. So from a broader perspective, we have been working with the parishes of Grouville and St. Saviour to identify wayfinding to have a safer or a good route to be able to cycle from Gorey to town. We are making steady progress with that. I think we are due to meet the Roads Committees again shortly but we have been well received by those 2 parishes. We are doing some work with the parish of St. Clement about how we get people from St. Clement around on bicycles, and there is some really good work going to take place in the coming weeks and months with the schools in St. Clement, in particular. I was in St. Clement only on Friday talking to the council about some of the work that we are doing there. In St. Helier, we are going to be providing some 70 new cycle parking spaces. A lot of those will be covered. We are going to see improvements at Sand Street. We are going to see improvements at Snow Hill. We are going to see improvements in Minden Place and we are going to see improvements in ... where have I missed?

Associate Director, Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure:

Charles Street.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Charles Street, thank you. Yes.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Of course, we saw some of those when we saw the interactive board yesterday.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

To me, if you look around town, as I do, particularly last summer, there was a desperate need for more cycle parking. That is what we are trying to deliver in an organised way. We put in extra parking last year at Springfield or covered parking at Springfield. There is a new cycle shelter in the Weighbridge which is the one that was used for the King's visit. It is a great challenge to have to find new cycle parking. We are working with colleagues from St. Helier and the team will be delivering a lot of that before the end of April.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Of course, there seems to be always a concern about car parking in St. Helier. I know that you provided the States Assembly data in a written question in January about the car parking occupancy in St. Helier. How has this data informed your plan for public parking? Are you satisfied with what is happening or do you think there needs to be further parking?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I would like to see more. I would like to see more parking on the outskirts of St. Helier. Only last week, I think it was, I had a briefing from the team where we have identified some potential sites, some in our ownership, some not in our ownership. We are working hard to find solutions to deliver additional parking for the outskirts of St. Helier. I have said many times, we have to give people choice. We are working really hard to make sure that we have got an efficient bus service, the Hopper bus service works well, but you have got to give people choice. So we do need additional parking, I believe, on the outskirts of St. Helier.

[11:00]

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Just to carry on with that. Obviously the biggest site at the moment is Esplanade that the Jersey Development Company is sitting on. I think I have said before, why is that not a temporary car park for shoppers in town? Is there no ability to flex some of this stuff? When you know that Jersey Development Company, for instance, are some way off developing a new office block and all the rest of it, is there no way in which you can sort of prod them and say, you know, this would be really helpful for town? Where is the collaboration?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have other sites as well. We see in Commercial Street and the hospital where there are potential sites, but we have got dozens, if not hundreds, of empty spaces in our estate already. Our estate is not fully utilised. Now one of the things we are looking at is do we need to change the pricing of parking? Do we need to make the parking that is up a small hill slightly cheaper to encourage people to go there? Or do we make parking in other places more expensive?

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Are you referencing Pier Road?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Pier Road. Pier Road always has dozens, if not hundreds, of spaces. I recognise that as we continue to develop within St. Helier, people in St. Helier are going to want to have a car, whether they use it once a week or daily will be their choice, but they will need somewhere to park it.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

We have to move on to other areas, which cover some of the things that you have been talking about, Minister. But last one on common strategic priorities, can you give an insight on how you are measuring your performance in delivering these goals?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, we have project plans. For example, we have got budgets that we need to meet, we have got time scales we are trying to meet and I think the team within Infrastructure does a very good job in terms of managing their performance. I get updated once a month, quite detailed updates, which I thoroughly enjoy getting those updates. It demonstrates to me that the team are doing a good job in terms of managing the resource they have, both financial and physical, and also working to time on projects. There is some really good work that takes place. Only last week we had a meeting, the Assistant Minister, myself and the team about cycling updates because we had set targets for 3, 6 and 9 months and some of those have been delivered. We then went out cycling around St. Helier and found other initiatives. I am delighted to say that some of those have also been delivered. I am very keen on performance, the team will tell you that it is one of my top subjects.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister. Moving on to Deputy Coles who is going to ask questions about Jersey Property Holdings.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Can you provide us with an update on the works at Fort Regent post the Sports Club leaving and the involvement of S.o.J.D.C. (States of Jersey Development Company)?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, delighted to. We had hoped to be out to consultation now but it is going to be hopefully, I am going to say, by the end of April. But I hope it is going to be by the end of March that we are out to consultation. S.o.J.D.C. have done some good work for us around, I think, some exciting plans

which will not only help Islanders every day but also visitors to the Island and we need to test those plans with the public. That work is in train. We are working hard with - I think I have told you this before - the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning to try and ensure that our estate, our whole estate, works hard for us. We have sporting facilities that lie empty night after night, week after week, at weekends and we are really trying to make sure that they work hard. I think what we need to recognise is that we are investing £8.4 million at Oakfield. That is going to be a terrific facility. We cannot build ... we cannot replicate what we have and leave buildings empty for 50 hours a week. We have to make sure that what we build is going to be utilised and utilised well.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Minister, I think in a number of hearings you have mentioned about the estate, the education estate. Has it actually happened? What is the blockage of not being able to utilise those because this is feels an aspiration that has not actually materialised yet, or has it?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is incredibly frustrating from where I sit, but I understand the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning's challenges as well, we are working together and we are making progress, the team are making progress and I look forward to coming here one day with really positive news. But let us not underestimate ... when I say there are facilities that are underutilised, there are some facilities that are very well utilised and it is about trying to get things on to a central booking platform so that we can ensure that things are used as well as possible. If you think about places like Haute Vallée and Les Quennevais School, for example, they are incredibly well-used. The sports facilities at Langford are well-used out of hours. We have just got to try and replicate that.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Minister, on Fort Regent again and the plans coming forward, is there a funding source identified? Obviously, the panel secured an amendment with yourself that this would be in the budget, but I am assuming work is ongoing. Could you update us on that part?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The work is ongoing there and that has been the delay in going public with the consultation because I am very determined to ensure not only have we got the capital, but we have got the revenue because far too often we build new buildings and do not maintain them. It is vital that we have got a strong revenue stream and that has delayed the consultation, and I apologise for that, but I do not apologise for wanting to make whatever we do there viable for the long term.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Just to carry on about the revenue - you say revenue - what generates the revenue stream for you?
What is your source of revenue?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There will be a number of sources of revenue to fund what happens there. That will be a mixture of private occupiers, as we have got today. We have got a nursery that generates significant revenue, for example.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

But you are emptying these people out, so your revenue stream is going to be killed by the time you vacate the Fort so you ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

You cannot ...

Deputy D.J. Warr:

What I am just saying to you is if you are saying you are waiting on your revenue stream before you can make your capital investment, how are you going to make your capital investment if you do not have a revenue stream?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

You need to have a business plan before you make any changes. You need to have a business plan as to what is going to go into which space and what kind of return that is going to be. Now, not all of the areas will make a return. Clearly, there will be public areas which will be free access and which will not make a return. They will still need to be maintained but we have got facilities; we are building facilities for those sports clubs. In terms of taking the occupants out of Fort Regent, that will make it quicker, it will make it cheaper, and it will make it safer. The nursery is able to operate because it is outside of the main building and so we are looking to do that in a timely way once the new facilities are opened at Oakfield. There has been lots of dialogue over many, many years about Oakfield. There has been lots of input. There are regular meetings. I think they happen every fortnight. I think the next one is ... is it next week, Ellen?

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Sorry, can I cut in on that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Just very quickly and that is about where Jersey Development Company sit in all of this because they are technically going to be the ones who develop Fort Regent. They are the delivery partner for J.P.H. (Jersey Property Holdings) so what I am struggling to understand here at this moment in time is where is Jersey Development Company in all of this because I would have thought ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Jersey Development Company have been asked to come up with designs for the building in conjunction with the Regeneration Steering Group. They have not been asked to go any further than that.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Do they have the capital to do this yet or are they waiting for capital to do the work?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

If they are going to be our long-term partner on the project, we will have to deliver the capital to do that. I do not think the capital is the issue. I think the revenue is the issue because we have got some fantastic aspirations for both locals and visitors which will include an element of sport. I am really keen that sport is back at Fort Regent, but you cannot have people playing a sport in a building site. It is just incomprehensible and so that work has been going on for many years. The roof has started to go on at Oakfields, so the progress is very good. I believe it is going to be on time. We are due to have the building handed over at the start of September. We have said that we will take a couple of weeks and we would look to start introducing sports in October in the new facility. We are allowing ourselves until December to clear the Fort because every day that it is open, it costs us a lot of money which would be much better spent on the capital.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

I will move on from Fort Regent. During last week's debate on the revocation of the sale of Aviemore, you conceded that details provided to the States Assembly in relation to the land transaction could be better and more thorough. What improvements are you now putting in place and what specific information will now be included as a matter of course in reports to the Assembly?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I have not sat down with the team yet, but it was very clear from Deputy Curtis' comments that we did not provide enough information, and it is to my regret that that was the case. We need to take that as a learning. We have got a professional team, and we have to do better, and we will do better. I think we will analyse the comments, and we will look there. We will try and do briefings before lodging 168s of importance. We do a number of 168s for small parcels of land. Clearly,

Aviemore is not a small parcel of land, and I think with hindsight it would have been much better to do a briefing before signing the 168. I think there a lot of lessons learnt there and I thought it was a constructive debate and one that I took a lot away from.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Okay. Please can you outline the input that Jersey Property Holdings has in strategic infrastructure asset sales.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Clearly, they have a lot of input but there is also a property board, which is senior officers in Government, led by the man on my right here and Property Holdings will advise that board. There is a lot of work that takes place, and we also get external feedback in terms of values of land.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Is there any sort of strategic asset scale and grading that you do when making the decision about whether or not to sell an asset?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We did some work last year with the *State of the Estate Report* which is a good starting point for us. I do not know if you want to touch on that, Ralph.

Head of Property Strategy:

Yes, so in terms of disposals, if that is your question, disposals are driven by whether the Government still needs those properties for maintaining services, whether it be in the health or C.Y.P.E.S. or any other areas. When a property becomes surplus to requirements, such as Aviemore, it was no longer a health requirement and it was in the Government Plan as well, so it was signposted there for an onward sale. Then we then progress those sites on that basis. What we are doing in our asset management plan space is we look at it across the entire estate. We are looking at the efficiency of how our assets are working to meet Government services and where they are no longer required or they need further maintenance or they no longer serve that purpose, then they are identified as surplus and then, obviously, they can then be disposed of. That disposal route is governed by the financial directions and clearly we have got also a disposals and acquisitions policy as well which we have written which directs us in terms of making sure that we value that property correctly in the market. If it is directed towards a commercial sale, then we maximise the commercial value. If it is directed back towards more of a community asset, such as maybe going into affordable homes or other uses, then that drives a different dialogue in terms of the sales process.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Just to answer the point, on all assets that are public assets, yes, J.P.H. are the administering body for all of that public asset so it is held on behalf of the public by J.P.H. and any decision to lease, sell or purchase will come through the Minister.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Okay, but is there a grading criteria because you might have a facility that ... bad example, but Aviemore, it was no longer required for health but it could be a strategic asset in another way for another department for another use or other involvement within Government but obviously it sits in a location that might not be considered central and transport-wise. Are all these different factors graded in different ways?

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

They are, so Ralph, in his function, looks at strategic asset management planning with each service area with each department. Clearly, they are the experts in delivering their services and each of those services may well have a real estate or a land requirement, building requirement, whatever that may be. That has to come through their asset management plan through to the Property Board into Property Holdings so that we can assess what the needs are that are emerging. One of the big jobs of Property Holdings is to hold that property asset and most of it - 90-odd per cent of it - is used to deliver services from so we need to know when services are evolving that may have a real estate implication and if some services contract, for instance, and do not need the property again. That is the Property Board and the asset management process that sits within Property Holdings.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

I am going to move on to - I am going to call it - the old social security area because obviously that includes Philip Le Feuvre House, Huguenot House and the former Sounds Workshop. To what degree has Jersey Property Holdings been involved in the sale of this area?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Heavily. They have marketed the site through an agent, and we are currently looking at a number of options which will go back to the Regeneration Steering Group. I am not sure if it is March or April, but shortly. They are heavily involved in that and we are considering a number of options for that site.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

What sort of level of expressions of interest has there been as a result of the tendering process?

[11:15]

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There was not a high level of interest. It is a difficult site, I think. We looked at a carpark but the access and exits from there were not sufficient for carparking for a mixed development. There has been a number of iterations looked at but that was not possible, but this demonstrates that we are looking at different sites for parking around St. Helier.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Okay. Minister, when we spoke in November last year about Jersey Property Holdings, you said that there were improvement opportunities that you would like to make to ensure that it was carrying out its core functions effectively. You said that as Minister you had to work on the strategy and policy, noting your previous comments to developing service level agreements with schools. Can you elaborate on other changes to strategy and policy that you have made so far and are in the process of making?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, sure. I am pleased that all of the schools have now signed up to their service level agreements, so that is progress in itself. We have been talking to colleagues in Guernsey. I went to Guernsey to visit colleagues there and took the opportunity to talk to the team at Guernsey Property Services about how they manage their portfolio. They have similar challenges, similar opportunities. I would say they were more advanced, more mature in their progress. There has been dialogue between Jersey and Guernsey officers and the next step is for some officers to go and meet with their counterpart in Guernsey to see how we can look at that. The other thing I am doing is looking at how we manage it from a political perspective because it is a major asset, and it is not something you should be doing on the side of your desk, so we are looking at how we do that. Hopefully in the coming weeks I will come up with some changes.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Have you identified any key weaknesses that you think should be the main focus yet?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think the key weakness is that we have got departments who do not follow the original proposal of what Property Holdings was due to be and I gave you the example of the schools not having a service level agreement 20 years after Property Holdings had been set up. That has been rectified. I think there are further opportunities to improve. We are working with Treasury to ensure that we get the maximum amount of budget for property maintenance and, as I have said, I am quite keen to look at the Guernsey model, which seems to work reasonably well, and look at where ours works reasonably well and try and get something that is a hybrid, if you like to call it that, but I think we can

improve. The team are keen to improve, we do need a little bit more focus on that area and we are giving it more focus and I hope to come up with plans for that in the coming weeks.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

What will be the impact of any strategy and policy change in relation to Jersey Property Holdings remit as a corporate landlord? Would there be any changes to J.P.H.'s responsibilities for individual projects, such as refurbishments of the Opera House?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, the refurbishment of the Opera House, I think the Property Holdings can be very proud of what they delivered there. They delivered exactly what they were asked to do. It was delivered within budget and it was delivered on time, if not 2 days early. The relationship there is with S.E.D. (Sustainable Economic Development) and, again, we have got to make sure that we have a vehicle that manages the Opera House and that there are sufficient funds going into a sinking fund to ensure we do not have the Opera House ending up as the Opera House has done on 2 occasions already. There is some good work going on there and I met recently with the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development, the Minister for Treasury and Resources, the Chief Minister and I think we are making progress. I understand that shows could take place there. I have been to a cow shed in Trinity and seen some fantastic performances which have been lit and sound by local technical companies and I see no reason why the Opera House could not be up and running and the aspiration is to have an event there for Liberation.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

You mentioned there about a sinking fund for the Opera House. Is that a policy that might be brought forward for multiple States-owned assets to make sure their maintenance is preserved in future?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think we have got to look at how we do things. It is a real challenge for such an important building in our Island that we do not allow to get into such a state of disrepair. There needs to be a way of funding - what I would call - the regulatory maintenance, your electrical testing, your water testing and so on and so forth, but also it will need decoration at some time, so do not wait for it to get into a state of disrepair and then need millions or tens of millions of pounds. Make sure that you put a little bit of money away each time now. I know that is how I would work and that is how I am trying to get others to work as well.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Just to carry on about all these challenging spaces and obviously we have had our moment on the Lido at Havre Des Pas. One of the issues for me is about transparency and how you have fallen

foul, unfortunately, of being given incorrect numbers and having to withdraw that. How do you overcome all these issues that give trust to the public to make sure that they know that what you are saying is fact? How do you ensure your officers give you the right and relevant information? How do we improve on that transparency?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I think there are a number of points there, are there not? I do not know what colour paint or what make of paint is going to be applied next door tomorrow and ...

Deputy D.J. Warr:

I appreciate that but that is not really the point.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

... I have got no intention of finding out about that. I am here to try and make a difference with policy and strategy. That is my priority. There was a mistake made. As soon as I find out there is a mistake made, I hold my hand up.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

I am not worried about you in that way but from your officer's perspective, how do we improve that transparency on the back up?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think it is fair to say that the officers understand my disappointment at times. Let us remember we have got a small team working incredibly hard. They want to do their best for this Island. It is very difficult. We found out about a fire at the Lido in the States Chamber. No one had contacted us about a fire at the Lido. We found out about it on the floor of the States Chamber, so communication can always be improved with our tenants, and we are working to do that. I think the team are very aware of the high levels of standards I expect, and they are doing their very best to do that. Take the Opera House; fantastic job by the team there. Oakfield, again, a fantastic job. As a deliverer for customers, if we look at what happened at St. Saviour, we had 5 changes in leadership in the Mental Health Team during the period of that project and made incredible amount of changes to that project. In my world, the number 2, number 3, number 4 and number 5 would have had to deal with what number one had agreed to, but we are too accommodating at times. We really are and we have got to be more disciplined, in my opinion, around project management and the team deliver a terrific service. You do not see what they do most of the time. On Friday, I drove past the Lido and was delighted to see the scaffold coming down. You have asked about the water ingress into the roof. I have asked about that question. I was told that holes were drilled into the roof to put a marquee up that did not have permission to be put there. If we want to be transparent, let us look at all the

detail. The team are doing their level best. I am here to work with them, to encourage them to improve and I believe they are.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister. I think we ...

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Yes. In your opinion, do you believe that J.P.H. have appropriate resources and budget to meet the needs of Government? This is obviously following on from the C.E.O.'s (Chief Executive Officer) speech to the Chamber of Commerce about providing a coat of paint sometimes. Are you intending to change the funding?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The answer is quite simple, is it not? We do not have sufficient funding and we have got to find ways of getting sufficient funding, and that is hopefully what I have tried to demonstrate; I have not made a very good job of it. We are working really hard to make sure that we get best value for money but also we need to make sure that the projects that are prioritised are the right projects and that is a challenge for the team. The team do incredibly well on the money they have got. That does not mean to say we cannot do better. We will always strive to do better, but I would just like to pay tribute to the team in Property Holdings. It is very easy to criticise them but when you see what they do day in and day out, I take my hat off to each and every member of that team.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Yes, there is absolutely no criticism coming from this side of the table at this point. There are obviously plans for more public infrastructure in the future, and this might put more stress and strain upon that department, especially when we see the new hospital estate coming into fruition. Do you have any concerns, or do you know what your responsibilities, as Head of Property Holdings, to managing these sites in the future?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, so I think it should become easier because we are currently looking after very old buildings and that is difficult. When you are looking after very old buildings for an indefinite period of time, it is even harder because you do not know how long you need to maintain something for. I think the new facilities will be easier to maintain. That does not mean to say it will be cheaper because the complexity of a new building will be much greater than the existing infrastructure so do not expect to see savings and it is vital that we maintain our new facility from day one and not let it get into a state of disrepair.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Property Holdings are going to have a responsibility for maintaining the hospital leases and ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Currently, the health service have their own property team and ultimately, Property Holdings are responsible for the property but it is done in conjunction with the health team.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Okay. Could you update the panel on your plans for a framework agreement for solar panels on Property Holdings' buildings?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I wish I could. I wish I could. I am really keen to see this get over the line but, as I said, we have got limited resource. While it is one of my priorities, the people have got a day job to do and there was a meeting scheduled for last month which unfortunately was cancelled, and I hope to be able to write to you by the end of April with details of that framework and get you a briefing on it.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

The final question from me is about the Fuel Farm and review of procurement options for a new lease or tendering process; is there anything in train?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There is lots of work going on around the Fuel Farm and we have got to ensure that we get everything right. We have been seeking advice from a number of quarters. We have got to make sure first and foremost that we have got resilience. We want to encourage competition, and it is an area which is very detailed and we will be making a recommendation to the Council of Ministers in the coming months.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

This will include more modern fuels as well, the likes of hydrogen and ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think that is a really good point, Deputy, because we know what we have got today and we know where we would like to get to but as technology changes all the time, we need to be mindful of that. We are going to need traditional fuels for longer than any of us would hope for and as we see technologies improve and the price of alternatives reduce then we need to be mindful of that.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister. Now, I will head to Deputy Warr. Oh, sorry.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

I have one general question, if I may?

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Yes.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

On a general question of where J.P.H. sits, my recollection is it was at one time within the Treasury Department and given that Treasury exercises a shareholder function for the likes of States of Jersey Property Development Company, I can see similarity to that. If J.P.H. is now in its right place, and I am not challenging that, is there some benefit of having the equivalent structures in place, like M.O.U.s (Memorandums of Understanding), to better define what the responsibilities are?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think that is part of the work we are doing, David. We need more political oversight, whether that is a dedicated Assistant Minister or whether that is a small board of Ministers, and that is the work that we are doing in the background. I do not think it matters where it sits. You need to have a better structure in terms of how it works. I meet the Property Holdings Team - it was weekly, it is now fortnightly - so I get regular updates, and I can see firsthand the level of effort that they make. We are working hard to try and streamline things where we can, but we need to make improvements and that is what we are working very hard to try to do.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

I was not challenging that at all. I just question the ... you mentioned the word oversight. That is the question, for instance, would you envisage a situation where J.P.H. might itself become an independent company?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not think it is mature enough to do that at the moment, with respect, because we would be passing one problem on to somebody else. I think we have got to get it sorted before we look to do anything else with it.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay. Thank you.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. Deputy Warr.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Sure. Thanks. Gas Law and Island Energy now. The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs is due to lodge amendments to the Jersey Gas Company (Jersey) Law 1989. The panel's understanding of these changes is that they provide a better framework for Government access to information about the Island's gas network infrastructure. Can you outline how Island Energy currently shares information with the Infrastructure Team about the status of the network?

[11:30]

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am pleased to say there has been a significant improvement in recent months over that and we have seen progress made. That does not mean to say that we do not need to change the law because I think we do need to change the law, but we are looking to do that in a timely fashion. Again, it is an area that we can get you a more detailed update, but we work very closely at officer level with the team. I think Tristan mentioned earlier about the works at Snow Hill. Those works have been extended because they are going to take the opportunity to renew some of the mains while they are in the area and rather than us reopening the road to close it in a few weeks' time, that seems folly to me, so we agreed that we would do that work. We are getting better communication. We have done a lot of work ourselves as Infrastructure because we have got staff who go down in drains and it is important that they are safe. We have a duty of care for everyone above the ground but we have also got a duty of care for the people below the ground and we share the information with Island Energy when we find there are issues. They are being much more open with us and I think that is good progress. I would like to see that continuing.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

From a public reassurance perspective, it was quite interesting, I think, you talk about ... was it Snow Hill where - what they called - emergency works took place and the impression had been given by the term "emergency work" was that: "Oh, they have discovered something. There is a leak." I understand that that word "emergency" is only used to shorten the timescale in which they can dig up the road. Is there a way of reassuring the public that that is the case, that this sort of maintenance although it may not be initially planned it is just done to get the job done quicker? I just worry about this language from a public point of view.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

As soon as we find there is an issue with the network, they will talk to us, and we will work with them to get it repaired as quickly as possible. It is not just gas that we have issues with.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Yes, but gas is particularly sensitive at the moment. Obviously, a lot of people are very nervous about that.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I understand that.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

I am just concerned that this terminology of using the word “emergency” does not bode well in the public domain.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

If there is a problem that is identified, we are not going to leave it there for days and weeks so ...

Deputy D.J. Warr:

I get that I am just ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

... it is urgent. People’s safety is really, really important.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

I totally get that.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We understand our responsibilities. If you look at Rouge Bouillon, that issue there was caused by water underneath the road and people’s safety is why the road is still closed. If you go and look at the building and see the size of the gap, you can see daylight and that has grown.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

I get all of that. I am just worried that we are in a situation whereby everybody is so heightenedly nervous about gas and what is going on that maybe some of that language can be softened.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

If I can comment, if we are doing an urgent road closure, I think we use terminology such as that. As we described earlier in the hearing, there is normally a planned approach to road closures but if something is then much quicker than planned, the word “urgent” or “emergency” comes because effectively it is a lot quicker than a planned closure, if that makes sense. I think it is purely to

demonstrate some of that. Certainly, the communication between the gas company and ourselves as utility company to utility company is a lot better. The changes to the Gas Law effectively codify that, if I can describe it like that, just to ensure that that is continuing so where we are seeing incidents, we get information about those and we can share information, whether it be about asset management renewal. They have networks, we have networks and then our operational teams will talk to each other as well. As Andy said, I am pleased to say that communication is a lot better. We have got new management within the gas company and the changes to the Gas Law effectively ensures that that continues despite people ... people always change, do they not, in their roles and if you change the law, it just ensures that that joint working continues.

Associate Director, Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure:

The terms in terms of street works management predates anything with the gas company by decades. It goes back as long as I can remember ...

Deputy D.J. Warr:

I understand that.

Associate Director, Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure:

... and it really refers to an unplanned activity. It might be a burst watermain. It may be a sinkhole in the road. It is something like that so there is no opportunity to provide notice to the public other than through the radio stations, so it is a reactive situation.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Sure.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We could call it unplanned as opposed to emergency, could we not?

Associate Director, Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure:

You could have called it urgent works. I am not sure if it is in the law ...

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Sorry, I will stop there. I feel like I have gone down a rabbit hole.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

As I was saying, there is going to be a briefing to States Members in ... I think it is 4th April.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Sure. To what extent will this update provide a better base for closing ... I think I will move on to the next question after that. Storms flooding and sea defences. Minister, you and your officers kindly provided the panel with a briefing recently on the Shoreline Management Plan and the critical work to mitigate the risk of coastal flooding. The panel appreciates the development of this work is ongoing but, given the long lifespan of this project, we would like to understand what mechanism this Government intends to create for any long-term funding security for the projects?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think as the last line of the briefing that you received says: "Time and tide wait for no person", so that work is ongoing, it is significant work, as you say. It is probably going to be in the region of £100 million worth of investment. But like many things within the Infrastructure remit, it is not a nice to have, we have got to do this work. As the team are looking forward at funding proposals, whether that is for road maintenance, whether that is for sewerage maintenance or improvements in the sewerage network, the sea defence work will be part of that plan.

Deputy D. J. Warr:

Okay, thank you.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Sorry, and just on that because the question was about the funding security for the projects, will we be seeing anything specific within 2025 to identify that long-term funding security or will it be budget-to-budget negotiations?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We hope to lodge plans in the start of 2026. We have got funds in place for this year and for next year. Yes, and then so it will be part of the next Government Plan to long-term plans.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

If it helps we are also currently working with Treasury around long-term capital planning and long-term asset planning. While it is right that we have a Government Plan with a distinct period of time and looking at budget-setting, we have also got work ongoing and we are doing some really positive work with Treasury colleagues on our outlook out to 2029 and 2040 and beyond. We are responsible for a number of assets which have got a very long life. Yes, we do think about how long their life is, when they will need to be renewed and so we had a lot of data on long-term capital, which, ultimately, runs underneath, if you like, subsequent Government Plans. It will cover many Government Plans. The relevant Government Plan of the day will, effectively, deliver the solution for that period of time.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I have just got a question, Minister, while we stay on the Shoreline Management Plan, the sea defences, as you mentioned, the panel were briefed on, which is around the form and shape of what is provided on them beyond just the funding for them and the panel heard obviously as to what provision might exist within the reclaimed shoreline, my question to you and your officers is how are you looking to ensure that the consultation you run and you have continued to run provides a chance for people to provide feedback during the journey? The reason I highlight this is, do you see a concern that if the process is not correct Members or the public could raise issues and say the consultation was not right and the Government would feel they would push forward with the risk of the pause, which seems to be a political concern right now?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Absolutely. We are doing the 3D visuals and the landscape visuals and they will be shared with stakeholders, both internal, more importantly external stakeholders. Because the work that the 3D designs we are doing is very much based on the feedback that we have received from the people who live and work in those areas to date. It is important we continue to take people on that journey with us. I think it is a very good example of, yes, another fantastic officer in our department leading that team who is very mindful of the impact we are going to have. It is different things for different people. If you live where Hotel De La Plage was there is already a pathway in front of your door. But if you have got a sea wall in front of your door you are unlikely to want a pathway right there. We are trying to get a mix that is well received, which has been well received. The next set of designs will show that. I think you saw some of the visuals and we look to share that with a wider group later this month, early next month.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

The next question is the panel understands that the responsibility for sea defence at the Waterfront now falls back within Government's budget, rather than the S.o.J.D.C. What impact is this on the project budget in phasing?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is a good question. I honestly do not know the answer to that question, I was not sure that we had given up our responsibilities at any time. I think we are responsible for the shoreline defence around the Island.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

I do believe S.o.J.D.C. did have ... that was part of their budget.

Associate Director, Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure:

In the Waterfront development plans there were various options within the West of Albert plan to modify the defences. However, those defences were constructed even back in the day, which was now probably about 20-odd years ago with global warming in mind. The structures, the footpaths are designed to withstand. There is not, in effect, threat to that area; that is not one of the priority areas. That would fall within the normal sea defence maintenance part of the works. But obviously there are threats between West Park and First Tower and we have had breach to the sea walls in the past. We would be looking to put in some early mitigation along that to help control ...

Deputy D.J. Warr:

That is further down though, is it not, from the main development piece?

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Could I quickly just check on that? The previous plans included the raising cost to the applicant, S.o.J.D.C., of the curve that faces to the south and west around La Frégate, indicating they wanted to raise that. Is it the suggestion from your department so that was not a necessary intervention at the time?

Associate Director, Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure:

My understanding is they were looking at not raising the sea defences but raising the land level. They were concerned about inundation and future-proofing that for the land levels behind and that would still be part of their plans. But in terms of the sea defences and their performance, we are satisfied with those for the moment for the immediate epoch.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

With what is there.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Yes, the statutory responsibility for sea defence, the flood authority, the coastal defence authority, we are not all called all of those things but that is what we do and, effectively, sits within Infrastructure and Environment. Infrastructure is the lead authority. The States of Jersey Development Company is obviously responsible for land behind the sea defences. When there is development going on we talk to each other obviously in terms of if there is potential to improve sea defences for the longer term. But as has been pointed out, the defences in that area at the moment certainly meet the requirement for the next period of time. Obviously as climates and sea levels change and weather events change, we are continually looking at that area and certainly that as part of the Shoreline Management Plan there is a lot of thinking as to how that may need to change in the future.

Associate Director, Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure:

Just to finish on ...

Deputy D.J. Warr:

I am conscious of the time, our time is ...

Associate Director, Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure:

Within this planning process there is an opportunity for us to pass comments on the plan. If there is a risk then we will highlight that within those comments and obviously we liaise as statutory ...

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Okay. I am sorry to cut in to rush on. Jersey experienced its highest rainfall levels in recorded history this year. Minister, do you believe that Jersey infrastructure is currently resilient enough to deal with increased rainfall?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, no. That is why the team are working on a number of plans and the work at West Park to take surface water was key. We continue to do work to separate surface water from sewage to make sure that our Sewage Treatment Plant is treating sewage and not rainwater. Wherever we go we have got further improvements to make and the climate is changing; it is very different. We are having issues and it is not just infrastructure that has challenges, the parishes have got challenges. Because I think the way the land is tended these days is causing no end of problems with the amount of silt that is now running off into roads, both public and parish byroads. I am talking to colleagues in the Economy Department, from the rural economy, about encouraging farmers or landowners to dig trenches at the end of their fields where it is appropriate, to act as a defence from the water to try and slow the speed of the water that enters into the system. There has been some good work done. But only 2 weeks ago I was with the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Treasury and Resources at Bellozanne, I wanted them to see the telemetry system for themselves. Because there is a huge amount of work that goes on and needs to continue going on and investment will need to continue. We cannot stop. Recently I was in Grands Vaux with officers looking at the work that is being done as mitigation, looking at the work we would like to do as further mitigation. There is lots of work that we need to do.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

A lot of this is obviously different elements working together, parishes working together, particularly in Grands Vaux. It crosses over to 2 parishes, its infrastructure is Jersey Water, et cetera, et cetera, is it not? It is all ...

[11:45]

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The water catchment area for Grands Vaux starts at St. John, so you have got St. John, Trinity, St. Saviour and St. Helier, yes, so it is a significant area.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

For all these plans that you were talking about and, as you said, it is not a nice to have but these are necessary, do you have the funding for it? Is the budget sufficient for this year to be able to do those plans that you are talking about?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There is 2 points, we need to have sufficient funding and we also need to have sufficient resource to carry out the works. There is that balance that we have got to try and keep aligned. We have got the money for this year, we have got the money for next year identified. But we cannot just think that it is going to stop. We are going to have to continue to ... the level of the water table is so high, I have never seen it as high in my time. That is causing a problem on roads, as well as potential flooding and houses are getting flooded around the Island that have never been flooded before. Hopefully, we can do something with some of the land because land drains have been used for centuries in Jersey and we need to make sure that people look after brooks and gullies. Often they go untended, which means that there is a problem build-up further upstream.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

This is about communicating all of these things.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We did in fact in the December parish magazines put an article in. Next autumn I am expecting us to put a much better article in with images and just remind people of their responsibilities as landowners how they can help us. People clearing drains, clearing gutters to make sure water flows is really helpful.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Absolutely, yes. Okay, I am going to stop there. I have got a few other questions but I will pass it over to the Connétable on liquid waste, his questions.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Yes, Minister, can you recap both to the panel and the public which elements of the Bridging Liquid Waste Strategy were implemented last year and will any of the projects intended for commissioning in 2024 remain outstanding?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Last year we finished ... the Sewage Treatment Works is fully operational, that is working really well; I think you have been to see that. We did the work at First Tower, which was necessary. We have still got further work to do at First Tower, particularly on the road because people get soaked because there is always a pooling of water on the road there and we are planning to do that. The planning work made good progress in terms of for those attenuation tanks that we spoke about earlier, so that was good progress and the applications were lodged last year. The Bonne Nuit sewage treatment plant, the replacement there to make it a pumping station, rather than treating the sewage and then putting it out to sea; that has made good progress. That work will be completed later this year but the transformation from a treatment work to a pumping station, that work was completed. Lots of exploratory work on the West Hill network and the St. Peter upgrades, not only on the attenuation tank but the networks, that all took place last year, yes.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Thank you for that. Leading on from that, what are your key priorities for the current year?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, sorry, I should have also mentioned the West Park surface water separation and outfall, that was completed last year. On that project we are just going through the defects list, which is not unusual, with the contractor but that is making good progress. The priorities for this year are to try and get these applications that we have got in planning at the moment passed. They really do mean so much in terms of unlocking housing developments. We have had a number of questions about them and, hopefully, we have answered those questions. We have got a public briefing session in St. Peter soon.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Later this month, I have got the dates.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Later this month, following a request from the Constable of St. Peter, he has asked for a public briefing to be done, so that work is taking place. We continue to look at what we do for the future and how we fund those works, so that is where the priorities are.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

How does all this compare with your ambition in us which you had last February?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think good progress has been made. I am really pleased, you would be surprised at the level of effort. I was on the phone to the man on my right at 10 o'clock one night recently when we had heavy rain and I know the phone calls did not stop at 10 o'clock and the team were working throughout the night making sure that we did not have an event in Grands Vaux. There was terrific co-operation between all departments and Jersey Water. We must not underestimate the effort of people because it is fantastic and that is their day job. We want to do more but let us recognise the great work. The biosolids, have I got that right? That work was completed a couple of weeks late but on budget and that is now working well. Some terrific work going on and, yes, I am really pleased with the progress. Yes, we would like to do more but I am realistic. I am realistic.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

I am sure the panel do recognise the progress and thanks for all that. At the last hearing it came clear that while it was your ambition to have a policy on a new funding mechanism for liquid waste, this required the relocation of officer resource from other policy projects. Has that reprioritisation happened?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Not yet, not yet. I think Andy said earlier about the work that is taking place at senior officer level, trying to get co-operation between departments around our major capital expenditure. We often talk about the health and education but if your sewerage network is not working then do not worry about your health and your education. It is really vital and we are doing what we can to raise the profile of the importance of infrastructure.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Within the Council of Ministers ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Within the Council of Ministers, I think many people around the table understand that. We also do stuff with the public. We try and encourage the public to come and see what we do. Because we just do not think about it and it is terrific the work that happens each and every day, 24/7. We try and engage with people of all ages, both with liquid waste and solid waste. We encourage people to come and visit us. There is more we can do in those areas. Last year we ran a campaign about keeping the Island running, which was about infrastructure and environment and the different jobs people did; that work continues, that work continues.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Obviously you are prioritising certain areas, does that mean that certain other areas are being deprioritised?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It does not mean they are not important, David. But we have only got a certain amount of money, so we are trying to do what we can. I have mentioned that we have been to Guernsey recently. Another area we looked at there was recycling and I have to say they are streets ahead of us in terms of recycling. I would love to do more in that area much quicker but we do not have the resource to do that as quickly as we would like to do.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I will push you on that shortly, Minister, do not worry.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Have I peaked too early?

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay, well moving on to a more general question, your recommendations from the former panel would suggest that it was the intention to lay the groundwork for the Liquid Waste Strategy 2025-2035 by the end of 2024. This was to include clear options and assist strategic direction and engagement with the uses. Can you please provide the panel with an updated position on this work?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are behind schedule, unfortunately. I think we have spoken in the past about the options for charging for some of these services and those options are still there. But we need to do a lot more work, including talking to stakeholders but it is about having the resource to do that. We have made some conscious decisions. Within Infrastructure we have reduced our spend on consultants by a third. With that comes consequences and we have to cut our cloth accordingly and try and deliver what we can with the resource we have got. I mentioned earlier about efficiencies, the team know my view on efficiencies and lean process management. We had a good debate about that as recently as last week. The problem has not gone away and I am very keen personally to address that during my term of office.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

As far as you are concerned, yes, I accept you see it as a legislative priority. Is that the basic problem that you have to convince C.O.M. (Council of Ministers) as a whole that it should be a priority?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have got many competing priorities and I think we discussed yesterday at the Council of Ministers, those competing priorities. I am not sure if it is the next Council of Ministers' meeting or the one after that we are going to have a review of those priorities as a group.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I would like to just maybe, Minister, push you a bit more on this and you have made a very good case this morning about really the importance of infrastructure, that it underlines everything. If you do not have a good waste system, then education and health, housing on top, does not work. The Island will not work without these. Hearing about the delay around the Liquid Waste Strategy is a bit concerning because of course on one hand previous Governments have all talked about their ambitions of what we need, we need more people, we need more housing, we need more people coming to the Island because of an ageing population; all these things. But if we do not have the basic building blocks in place all those ambitions will not be delivered. Again, it comes back to that trust in Government, the trust of hearing these ambitions but never delivering because these building blocks are not moving forward. How are we going to make this go forward?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Let me just recap in terms of what we delivered in 2024. We have not been sat back, fat, dumb and happy. We have been working incredibly hard. We have delivered the biosolids storage facility. We have delivered the Sewage Treatment Works and working really well. We have delivered plans to do the attenuation tanks. We have got funding to do that work. We are in the planning process for that work. We have acquired the land, we are in the process of acquiring the land. We have got agreement for both of those. There is a huge amount of work that goes on. The complexity of the surface water outfall at West Park is incredible and that work took place underneath Victoria Avenue while people went to and from home, to and from the airport, without them even knowing what was going on. There is a terrific amount of work going on. Yes, we would like to look much further ahead and deliver a longer-term strategy. But please do not think that we are not doing things around liquid waste, solid waste or any other area in the department. We are working tirelessly, the teams are working tirelessly to deliver each and every day and ...

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Of course and that is not something that I was questioning, it was more at that strategic level of thinking, what happens next when we are telling the Island that we need some of these major things and we have some issues?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are delivering ...

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

But how do we ensure that we will be supporting those ambitions?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

With respect, we are delivering. If we get planning permission for both the St. Peter and Maufant attenuation tanks, we will be delivering a solution to unlock many new homes that we need for people to live on the Island. That work is underway, there is a huge amount of work and effort and, again, that is across the department. We had people at the meeting I attended on site from Infrastructure, from Property Holdings, from the Law Officers' Department. There is a huge amount of cross-working that goes ahead. I would love to look much further ahead at what we need to do in 10 years, in 20 years and the team do that all the time. Because that is why we have got a shoreline protection plan because if we were not looking that far ahead, the tide would come up one day and flood areas of St. Helier and we would be scratching different parts of our body. But that is not the case, there is a huge amount of effort that has gone into that work. The same can be said with the Sewage Treatment Works. The Sewage Treatment Works is built for a population of up to 140,000, whether it is ever needed, that capacity, I do not know. But we have put in place long-term solutions, 2 things and what we do not have is where we are headed in the next 10 years but we are working hard on that.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Just going back to the earlier comment you made, I do not doubt your sincerity about the new strategy but I did hear you right that the Council of Ministers, not the next meeting but the one after, are going to reset their priorities on ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not know if we are going to reset, we are going to review. We were discussing an item yesterday and the Chief Executive offered to bring back the current list, I do not think it is next week, I think it is the following meeting, so we can have a look at that.

[12:00]

I will be banging the drum as loud as I can for Infrastructure.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

I do not doubt it and thank you for that, thank you.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Connétable. Moving on to Deputy Curtis.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Okay. Thank you, Minister. We are going to stay on waste, this time solid waste and recycling. Minister, please could you update the panel on the status of the procurement for a contractor for the handling of inert waste, first and foremost?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I thought we had done that already, had we not?

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Let us treat it as an opening question and we will look at the contract.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, we have. Yes, we have let the contract. We went through a tender process and the contract was awarded. I am not sure of the start date of the contract.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

It has started.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

It has started.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

It is underway, yes.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It has started, yes, yes, sorry.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

When did it start?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

It started about 2 months ago.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Because it was due for the end of ... are we able to discuss who the contract award is? Was it a private award? I just cannot remember seeing correspondence with the panel.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Is that in the public domain?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Existing contractor.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The existing contractor.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

It is the existing contractor, okay, lovely. How long is the contract term for?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Good questions, sorry, I am not prepared for that. But I have to say the person that looks after the contracts within Infrastructure is the same person that did the bus contract and also did the I.C.E. programme. I have every confidence in their integrity, in their professionalism and perhaps we can get you a briefing on that. I apologise, we did that 2 months ago, so I have not really got ...

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

No, Minister, I am just trying to remember here, we had obviously probed on this, other Members have in the States and I do not remember the panel receiving necessarily the same correspondence following.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Okay.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Our last letters I remember we did ask for an update. We heard that we were in the final throes of appointments and I just do not remember. This is us obviously checking on the record in Scrutiny but that is good news and it was awarded on time by the end of the year.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

But it was a competitive tender as well, so there was definite choice with different solutions. The team came to me and made their recommendation, which I was happy to support.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Brilliant. I think the panel would appreciate a briefing or more information. Part of the tender was looking at the recycling and we know the current provider who has got this again clearly will be performing that. But if any new changes have occurred as part of how you secured best value and best outcome for the Island, then we would like to hear that as a panel.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Absolutely. I apologise, I am told I have got to stop apologising but we will sort that out, yes.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Okay. Staying on the topic though of solid waste, can you confirm if it is still your intention to submit a Solid Waste Strategy update or a new strategy by the end of quarter 2 this year?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is still my ambition but whether I am going to be able to deliver that I do not know. I really do not know. We are working hard in that area. We have certainly been given a lot of food for thought on our visit. I think there is a lot we can do but I need to temper my ambition as to what is deliverable in a short period of time.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

The former Solid Waste Strategy was a fairly significant document. It is so old it was still approved by the committee system; it celebrated 20 years this year, if I am not mistaken.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Given the short timeframes that were initially aimed for, as recently as 12th December when you wrote to us saying you are aiming for Q2, are we expecting public consultation on the contents, given it is wider ranging?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, I would expect to consult them. Is there an update on ...

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

We are looking at approval, certainly maybe pushed back slightly from quarter 2, quarter 3, quarter 4 of this year. Again, as we are developing that Solid Waste Strategy, be slightly different. I know the team are working on that. We are trying to work towards those timescales on that.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Will the strategy cover all the same breadth or even more than the former or the original 2005? I note of course the original strategy was very much right on the back of waste management laws in 2005 and predicted, for example, that the disposal of solid hazardous waste could be handled in secure pits in the short term. Of course 20 years normally in capital is not the short term. Will hazardous waste and will these areas all feature?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I think all the waste streams that were in the existing Solid Waste Strategy have to feature because we need to know what the options are for the Island in the longer term. With the Minister, as part of the development of that strategy, there will be wider consultation on that site.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are currently talking to garages about disposal of electric vehicles because that is something that would not have been in the plan 20 years ago but we need to give that a lot of thought. I wrote to local garages in the last couple of weeks about some of the challenges and some of the opportunities in that area. No doubt that the strategy will include new waste streams but we will have to include the waste streams, as Ellen has said, that were included in the original report.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Will it aim to be strategic in the sense that some of these waste streams are critical for the Island to work out what its ambition and its appetite for dealing with things in different ways, rather than short-term fixes? Will it try and be strategic and say sometimes a paradigm shift could be required in one direction or the other?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think a lot of our challenges have been and we started this morning talking about the C.S.P. One of the ambitions was to ensure that we did not increase charges because of the cost of living challenges we have had. We have to think about how we do things, the cost of doing those things and how they are paid for. Can we get an update, Ellen, to the team?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Sure.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, we will get you an update as to where we are.

Chief Officer, Infrastructure and Environment:

Then the key thing in fact waste arisings will always arise; clearly different wastes arise. It starts with education about how much waste we all create. We are the waste disposal authority, effectively. The big question for our strategy is whether we dispose and treat on Island or whether that is something we do here or not do here; that is something the strategy is going to have to look at in the future.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I will move on but before I do you mentioned education, is that the only route that you see the strategy can deal with? Of course if you did not want it arising if it is of a certain type I would presume the strategy could start to look at whether you would need a legislative programme or a regulation and I think again hazardous waste could be an example of that. Are you only considering education or are you considering different regulatory models for ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are not launching our thoughts for education.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

You are not launching your thoughts, okay, brilliant.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, we have got to think wider than that.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Okay. I will touch back on to your trip to Guernsey, Minister, and the views that you shared, obviously that Jersey's recycling rates lagged significantly behind that of Guernsey's. You mentioned one means of increasing recycling would be to require a framework for collection services and investment in processing facilities. But for that to be robust that would likely require regulation. Is it your intention to provide this regulation alongside plans for a unified framework?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think you have to give credit where credit is due and I think Guernsey have done a super job with the work they have done there over quite a period of time. It was really interesting to talk to both politicians and officers who had been involved in the programme for a long period of time and to watch the process in action was also really interesting. The amount of food waste that they collect, I am sure it has reduced the amount that people purchase. Once a month I put on my social media about reduce, reuse and recycle because it is not all about recycling. If you reduce what people purchase in the first place, then you reduce the waste at the end. I think talking to colleagues in

Guernsey, they were explaining to me how it had changed people's purchasing habits because they realised the amount of food waste they generated as a household. We have really got to look not only at Guernsey but in other jurisdictions as to how they have been successful; why were they successful? I think it is a combination of carrot and stick and we have got to find ways of encouraging people. We still have, sadly, 3 parishes that do not do kerbside recycling and I think that is not through a lack of trying. It is a lack of supplies in the market. But we look in St. John currently at how we collect waste. It is expensive, it is very expensive; the frequency we collect waste. All of that needs to be considered in a strategy.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Looking at that strategy and the initial direction you are setting for recycling in December, you stated that: "The future framework for the Island service provision would likely still be kept at a parochial level with Government setting its high-level requirements." The panel would like to really know, why has this framework been chosen and what do you see as the advantages of this kind of direction?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

In my experience it is efficiency in terms of ... I foresee some parishes working together in like a co-operative. But I think we have seen many examples where jurisdictions have sent out their waste collection to the private sector to save money initially and in the long term it has cost additional money. You have got to think about longer term. I think we could talk about a whole range of services which may or may not be more efficiently run in parishes.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Okay. Plans are progressing or is it still very much not progressing?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The teamwork .. I cannot stress enough how much effort that people make. I drive as hard as I can and the team work hard.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

When do you think we will see these kind of plans for this coming ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We will write to you with an update, yes.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Okay, with all of that, okay.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

With all that. I will ask, notwithstanding we will get an update, bring bank recycling facilities are having a discussion, where do you see these fitting into a framework or do you have a Ministerial view you want to share?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have been approached by some parishes who want us to remove bring banks from certain locations. Because while they provide a useful facility in some areas, they provide challenges in other areas. We continue to be in dialogue with that. We, as a Government, do not plan to close any currently but we will work with those Constables who want to work with us. Clearly the parishes that do not have any kerbside recycling, they need facilities. We have had a lot of feedback about that. Some people do not have room in the home to store recycling for 4 weeks. It is back to that point I made about frequency.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Okay. Given the work on this, do you see food waste featuring within a strategy on recycling?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

On a personal level?

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Yes.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do, yes, I really do. I think for my shame the only thing that I do is save teabags that go to some chickens at Sorel but that is the length of my food waste recycling currently. But what do you do with it if you do it? But I think, as an Island, we could do a lot more, a lot more, yes.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. Thank you. Connétable, we are coming to the end. The road safety focus, is for you.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Right, okay, for you just some general questions then. Before I start on that, I think at a previous meeting I expressed frustration that my own road restrictions were not being imposed or put in place by the end of last year, which you intended. They now have, so can I thank you and your team for doing that? The Collision and Casualty Reduction Plan published earlier this month, what is the key piece of information that you would take away from that and ask members of the public to take away from the results?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I suppose the key information is that we have all got a responsibility. It is not everyone else's responsibility, it is all of our responsibility. We are working hard and I was really pleased to see some feedback online from an expert in the sector saying that: "A small Island but with the chance to become the first to implement a full safe system. The plan gives me great hope, well done." That is really nice to see that kind of stuff. The safe system of work and I was really also pleased to see the police plan for this year to have road safety near the front of that. We should also pay tribute to Constable Stone who got us the funding originally for this work. We are in the process of recruiting an additional person to help us with the education element, which education is important. It is not the only thing but it really is important. We are making progress. We did some work last year, I think I have spoken to you before, about the tyre safety work we did; 10 per cent of tyres that we checked were faulty. A lot of those shocked me because they were on performance cars. I expected, naively, that people who had cars worth many thousands of pounds would look after their tyres. I was expecting to find the problems on the cheaper vehicles. It was right across the vehicles that we have seen.

[12:15]

Some good progress made, this is just the start. It is a very detailed plan. It is a very meaningful plan. We have used a lot of data to gather that but now the hard work starts. We have got to continue to work with Home Affairs, with Health, to ensure that we make progress. One good thing that happens now is that when there is a collision the data that we collect is collected consistently. That really is useful in terms of analysing what has or has not happened. We are working hard to make progress in this area but it is just the start of a journey, it is not the end of a journey.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Taking you up on the last point about the data you are collecting, is it a case, therefore, that on a collision, et cetera, that Infrastructure receives a report from the States Police or ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The States Police have, I presume, a handheld device where they collect the data in a consistent manner and then they share that data with us.

Associate Director, Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure:

That is correct and then we can undertake collision cluster analysis or themes among collisions as to what were the contributing factors and that will help us focus on the different parts of the safe system. Is it safe roads, safe speeds, safe vehicles, safe people? Then also look at the post-collision response.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Yes, I am pleased to hear that because I raised the question because I am not sure that we share that same data with the parishes and it would be helpful for them to know but ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not think they share that information with the parishes but I think we have got a Chief of Police who is keen to work with the parishes. In my experience, he is very keen to work with the Honorary Police, he sees them as an asset. I am really pleased with the relationships. We are looking at technology. We had hoped last year to have introduced some technology. The latest estimate I have been given is May. They are not bold enough to tell me which year I do not think now.

Associate Director, Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure:

No, no, been a bit of a journey.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have got some technology on the way, which is identified not to catch you and I doing 21 miles through a 20 mile an hour speed limit but to catch those people who drive around this Island predominantly late at night, although we just heard somebody who was probably exceeding the speed limit, who drive at excessive speeds, excessive speeds. Unfortunately, the weekend that this plan was launched there were 3 serious accidents, one in St. Mary where the car ended up on its roof in a 20 mile an hour zone and one where a motorcyclist was taken to Southampton Hospital. There was a third serious incident and I was really disheartened that they all took place the weekend that the plan was launched.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

On that, are you, Minister, planning on more communication with the public and education on that? Because of course there is that at the end when there is a collision or there is an accident but the

beginning is that perception of road safety and, unfortunately, especially in the lanes you see a lot of cars going very fast past pedestrians who are walking their dog or horse riders.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Most definitely we have to educate and I gave a talk the other day to a reasonably small group of people and somebody said that: "Every cyclist was a twit." I explained to them that there were twits on every mode of transport and 3 questions later somebody said she nearly ran somebody over who was walking and on their phone. I said: "There we are, my case is proven." Education is absolutely key. It is not just children that we have to educate. I see many people cycling all in black and in a previous life when I was a cyclist my coach used to always tell me: "Wear bright clothes, Andy, so people see you." But the fashion is for people to wear black, which is a bit disappointing. There is a huge amount of education for us to do. We are working with both the States Police and the Honorary Police and other key stakeholders to get that message out there. I envisage for us, now that the plan is in place, now to start really ramping the visibility of those efforts.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Sorry, I do not want to pursue it too far but one of those accidents you mentioned, I understand the Honorary Police have not yet had any sort of report on it. What I am saying is that ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That would be a policing matter, Home Affairs matter, rather than Infrastructure matter.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Yes, okay. But you would not feel inclined to ... any inclination to come and share ... you do not sift it to pass on to the parishes as such.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, I do not think we get information by incident.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay, not an opportunity ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That to me would be a Home Affairs question. I think they would be the one ...

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Yes, okay, I will leave it at that.

Associate Director, Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure:

The database contains a sanitised form of the police accident database and we do receive it. I am not sure it is exactly in real time but relatively we do not get every detail. We do not get the details of people, et cetera, because obviously that is subject to a judicial process often. The police are the best people to start with but we can look at sites on behalf of parishes. The software itself is quite sophisticated, so you do need somebody who is dedicated in using that software to use that. It would not be a case of providing the system to the parish I do not think. I think it would be a bit ...

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Going back to the general casualty reduction, you did say you were trying to recruit a support officer. Has that happened or where are we in that?

Associate Director, Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure:

I do not think the advert is out but it is virtually there for that part of it.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Education is absolutely key. We have got a team of 2 at the moment. We need more resource to get that message out, yes.

Associate Director, Highways, Traffic and Infrastructure:

The important thing to remember in this it is about collaboration. While we, the Minister, is leading on this, this is about co-ordinating across Government because education has got their place to play, health, everyone has got a role to play; we cannot do it alone. The cost of changing our roads, the actual constrained nature of our roads well obviously often would not allow it. It is about changing behaviour, changing people's culture and understanding how they should behave on the roads.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay. My final question really was on e-scooters, on which you made an announcement recently. Could you just remind us of ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

E-scooters are illegal in Jersey to be ridden on the highway or any public area. It is illegal to ride an e-scooter around Les Quennevais playing fields, for example, and that remains the case.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Okay, I will leave it at that. Thank you.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister. Finally, we are just going to focus a little bit on youth facilities and I know at the beginning we talked about the St. Helier youth facility. But the next area that is really pertinent is the skate park for St. Helier. Could you provide information on the scale of the development and explain is it adequate for St. Helier or are there plans to expand it? Where are we at, et cetera, for the skate park?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Is it adequate for St. Helier? I think it is adequate for St. Helier. We have got the largest skate park in Great Britain at Les Quennevais, so we do not need to replicate that in any other parish. We need to use Les Quennevais as the centre where people go for events and there are some exciting plans to host some events there, like what happened last year. What we are trying to do with St. Helier is to provide a facility for those people who have not got the time to get out to Quennevais and who want to skateboard there. We looked at 50 locations on 34 different sites and we are currently still in discussion with stakeholders around utilising one of the reversing bays out to South Hill. We are looking at what treatments we can put in place, having listened to those stakeholders, to mitigate their concerns, so that work is ongoing really.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister. When do we expect to see the skate park? When do you expect that youth can go up there with their skateboards?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I expected it to have happened by now but it is very complex. It is very difficult. We have an officer who is passionate about skateboarding and leading on that project. He is as keen as I am to get it sorted. There is no point in us making an application until we have identified mitigation for those people who are concerned about what we are trying to do. The idea is that we put it at South Hill for a short period of time until the Fort is ready to move the equipment to the Fort and then utilise that space for cycling, so that young people in and around St. Helier can have an experience similar to those people in St. Brelade, at Quennevais where they can cycle around the track and learn to cycle. We would look to put in a facility. If we are spending money on the groundworks we do not want to waste that money. We want to do something there where people can do like a cycling proficiency with road markings, et cetera, that is our aim at the moment.

Deputy D.J. Warr:

Just to carry on with that, I had not appreciated it would considered to be a temporary facility and moving into the Fort; I have not heard that one before. Because I do not know that the residents of Havre des Pas and the rest of it would understand that to be the case.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Hopefully, that was ...

Deputy D.J. Warr:

That has been communicated?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Hopefully, that has been made clear, I can double-check with the officer. I would not envisage it being there more than 2 or 3 years, that would be my expectation.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Yes. The officer who came to the Havre des Pas Improvement Group mentioned that it was a permanent fixture that they were planning there, so that is what I was ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is news to me because I have seen the plan for the cycling, which really excited me. The idea is just to lift it up and move it to Fort Regent. The idea is to have a modular kit which you can just lift up and move.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

With it moving to Fort Regent, would it then be accessible at all hours or would that then become ... if there are doors to stop access into Fort Regent, would that mean that it is not ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is a dialogue to have and you cannot use Quennevais all hours because the lights go off at I think it is 9 o'clock.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I did not mean too late but ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

But, no, it is interesting, at St. John, for example, people arrive with their cars and shine their lights ... after the floodlights have gone off, they shine their lights on the facility. In terms of hours of operation, that is not discussed or decided yet.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Okay, thank you. Lastly, Minister, some of the last States sittings have been focusing on play and children's play, could you outline for the panel your responsibilities and your department's in relation

to the funding, upkeep and development of play areas and public spaces that are leased to the States but owned privately?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That are leased to the States?

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Not necessarily leased to the States but I think open to the public but are owned privately. Are there any play areas that ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

To my knowledge we have one site which we have extended the lease for 12 months and I believe we have got a solution after that 12 months has expired with the people involved for the space to continue as a play area but not run by the Government. If we lease property in a parish and run a play area, I will have the other 11 Constables knocking on my door saying: "Where is ours? Where is ours?" We have just seen the work that is getting done in the Parade by the Parish of St. Helier. St. Brelade have got plans for the Elephant Park. I know we have got plans in St. John. St. Martin have just opened a successful facility. I think the area you are referring to I believe we are very close to a resolution.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Overall on that, I know that there is a play strategy being developed and that sits in a different place. But in the future, where would the responsibility sit? Do you think Infrastructure should have that overview to make sure that there is accessibility to enough interesting different play areas of different ages in the Island, whether it is private or public?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, we continue to work. Deputy Ferey has now got political responsibility for the play areas. But we look after play facilities that are in parks and gardens and also they are in sporting venues, Springfield and Quennevais, for example. Millennium Park has just signed off on plans recently, over £300,000 investment for plans there. I would like to see it become easier for people to get from there to Springfield; you have got to cross several roads. But that contract is let and the work is due to begin in May, so it should be done in time for the summer holidays. There are a couple of service small pieces of kit at Millennium that we are going to move, we plan to move to Springfield, so that we get the good use out of that. I mentioned earlier in this hearing that I was in St. Clement last week talking about cycling but we were also talking about play. We continue to do what we can, where we can with the resources we have available.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister. Just looking at the time, has anyone on the panel any other questions for the Minister?

Deputy T.A. Coles:

The only question I have is because we have mentioned on the recycling before, that the metal recycling yard at La Collette is still closed to the public. Is there any idea of when that might be opening to the public again?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I thought it has reopened, has it?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I thought it had.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

It was still indicated on the Government website this morning that Hunt Bros are taking over the contract but it is still showing is closed at the moment.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Good question.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I have not got a date but I will find out and get back to you.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think it was scheduled to open mid-February, yes.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

That is what I believed as well.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, so you have surprised me but I have not had any green waste for some time, so I have not been down there.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I noticed that your department received approval for toilets at Snow Hill to be refurbished. I just wondered if there was an update on the progress for those.

[12:30]

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That planning application should have been withdrawn because I had no idea that we had put a planning application in or for what the application was. I had no idea the cost of those. We are back at the drawing board, I would suggest, on that.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Is that related to the cost of the ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, I have no idea what we were doing there. I have no idea if we need to maintain toilets at Snow Hill and if we do need to maintain toilets at Snow Hill what they need to look like. I was somewhat frustrated to read a second time in the *Evening Post* that plans had continued through the process and been approved because I had asked for them to be withdrawn some time ago.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. Any other ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Okay, thank you.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

No. Thank you very much, Minister and officers, for attending our hearing today and for addressing the panel's questions. We had a couple of more questions that we skipped because of time to make sure that we covered all the different areas we have today. We will probably be sending you a letter in follow-up to some of those questions. But thank you very much for your contributions today and thanks also to the members of the public who were watching this hearing in the room and then also online. Thank you.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Thank you.

[12:31]