



Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny

Panel

Quarterly Hearing

Witness: Assistant Minister for Children and Education

Friday, 30th April 2021

Panel:

Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier (Chair)

Senator T.A. Vallois

Witnesses:

Deputy S.M. Wickenden of St. Helier, Assistant Minister for Children and Education

Mr. M. Rogers, Director General, C.Y.P.E.S.

Mr. S. O'Regan, Group Director, Education

Mr. K. Posner, Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.

Mr. N. Jewell, Head of Governance and Resource Management, C.Y.P.E.S.

Mr. J. Williams, Director, Education Reform Programme

[10:00]

Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier (Chair):

Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the quarterly hearing of the Minister for Children and Education. We will start with introductions. I am Deputy Robert Ward and I chair the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Senator Tracey Vallois, member of the panel.

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

I am Deputy Scott Wickenden. I am Assistant Minister for Children and Education.

Director General, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Good morning, I am Mark Rogers, and I am the director general for C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills).

Group Director, Education:

Good morning, everyone, I am Seán O'Regan, the group director of Education.

Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Good morning, my name is Keith Posner. I am the head of office here at C.Y.P.E.S.

Head of Governance and Resource Management, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Good morning, everybody, I am Nick Jewell. I am head of governance and resource management up at C.Y.P.E.S.

Director, Education Reform Programme:

Good morning, Jonathan Williams, director, education reform programme.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

If anyone else contributes ... I will just introduce Andy Harris and Monique Magalhaes who are our 2 Scrutiny Officers. They do not get an introduction usually but they do a fantastic job behind the scenes, I think it is about time we started doing that. If we get started. Assistant Minister, for the benefit of the public listening, can you confirm what arrangements are in place to ensure ministerial oversight of Education and C.Y.P.E.S.'s remits; so the portfolio currently?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

Currently the Chief Minister is Acting Minister for Children and Education but I have delegated responsibility with all powers for Education and Children, and Deputy Pointon has specific delegations under Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services. So I tend to do the day-to-day running and ministerial decisions for Education. There are times with some really big decisions, things like fees for schools, that I will refer to the Chief Minister because I feel that it is a ministerial decision. When they are big overarching decisions that need to be made I will always go to the Chief Minister to get that decision done at the right level.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

You would say that you do have temporary overall responsibility for Education at the moment?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

Yes, I have the legal powers to make decisions across the whole of Education as the Minister.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So the overall responsibility for the ministerial remit at the time, you have the power to make decisions but it is shared with the Chief Minister?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

All powers for all Ministers start with the Chief Minister and they are delegated to each Minister. At the moment the Chief Minister has taken back the ministerial role but I have delegated powers to make decisions across in decisions, in legal powers, in everything for Education, and that is what I am doing currently.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

How long do you think these arrangements will continue for?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

I could not say with the situation that we are in at the moment. We have to wait and see what process goes on. I do not think it is fair to talk anymore about that situation.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is it the Chief Minister's intention or do you know if it is the intention, if there are no charges made, that the Deputy will come back to the role?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

I would not like to speculate.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I suppose what we are saying is that it would be useful if the Chief Minister came along to the hearings. We recognise there was some difficulty this time but the next hearing for the Children's remit it would be perhaps good, seeing as he has the title of Minister for Children at this time that he came along for these hearings. Would you agree that that is a good idea?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

I believe you have made that request to the Chief Minister. I have not had a chance to speak to him about what his views are.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay. Because this is a public hearing, and I know these are questions that people are asking. Education is of huge importance obviously for any Government and there is a large budget as well. What do you think would be the period of time that you would deem as too long for the department to be without a formal Minister as is, with control for the department and with the mandate from the States Assembly? Because we would need to vote for a new Minister for Children and Education; it is an important part of our governance.

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

I feel that we need to let the process happen that is happening at the moment. I think it is unfair to speculate because of the sensitivities of what is going on. I know that probably in 2 weeks we will hear something, whether it is going on, because that is the end of the time that has been set. I am sure in 2 weeks' time we will know better what is going to happen. How long will it wait? You are right, I do not have a mandate from the Assembly to be doing the work that I am doing; you are absolutely right but I hope that I am upholding the functions of the office appropriately. I am following the strategies and the plans that were set out by previous Ministers and I think it is all about just making sure we are looking after the children of this Island appropriately and keeping the department running effectively and efficiently.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Given the lack of a permanent Minister appointed by the Assembly, what are the main priorities within the Education portfolio at this time?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

The main priorities at the moment are nursery education funding. We have got the education reform programme, the inclusion view that is looking at making sure that every child is included in an education through whatever needs they have. We have the higher education scheme development and I am looking at the retraining strategy, which is about making sure that people have opportunities to retrain into skills they would like to or need to.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

In terms of the Government Plan for this year or in terms of projections in general, are there any projects that were led by the previous Minister that have been stopped or postponed by the current situation?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

All of the stuff that is in the Government Plan is still carrying on to be progressed. Some of it has been delayed due to the situation with COVID.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is that for this year's Government Plan?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Which areas have been delayed?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

Could I hand on to one of the officers that is more operational, that will tell you which areas have been delayed? Maybe Keith might be able to help.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, that would be a good idea.

Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.:

I am sure you are going to ask further questions about the education reform programme and sequencing there but that is progressing well. The main areas where there has been a slight delay has really been on the capital side where we are looking at some sequencing of some of the projects that we have. However, we do not necessarily see them being overly delayed as we move into delivery. It is just more the sequencing and the spending of the money later in the year. We are quite pleased, particularly on the capital side, and Nick Jewell is on the call as well and I know that you have further questions there as well. But as an outcome for those projects within 2022 and beyond we are satisfied that we are on track there. They have just been harder to get out of the blocks.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Are there any other projects other than capital projects, such as the skills? I know the Deputy had particular responsibility for the skills portfolio and post-16. Do you believe that there is clarity for those working within these sectors - post-16, secondary, primary, et cetera - who know where the responsibility lies and where that chain of responsibility is at the moment?

Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Is that a question back to Deputy Wickenden?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, it can be. Also a wider question within C.Y.P.E.S.

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

I have made sure to have lots and lots of meetings with department heads, like skills and all areas of education and children, to be updated on what is going on in their specific areas. Also to let them know what the current arrangements are and meet me and quiz me as well because I think that is important, that they get to know who I am while this is going on, so it is clear.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So it is clear who, for example, has undertaken post-16 work and the college and the secondary schools, that you have met with the heads of those departments, for example? I ask because it is such a difficult time for them at the moment and we have got the second year of uncertainty regards exams, we have got the second year of uncertainty regards funding and capital projects and so on. It is just so important that those leaders within our schools know where the responsibilities lie given what is a difficult situation. We all understand that. Do you think there is clarity there or is there anything else that you could do to give those people clarity who have got those leadership roles within the organisation?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

I feel that I have arranged meetings and I have had meetings with all the relevant heads of areas to let them know part of our educational ministerial briefings or part of just doing update briefings so I am more aware of the situation or what is going on with the department. So yes, I do think there is clarity. I do think I have had the right meetings with the right people to let them know where the leadership currently sits.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We are going to ask some questions about capital projects. Senator Vallois, shall I pass on that ... you were going to lead those questions; I might chip in if necessary.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Good morning, Assistant Minister and officers. This area is on capital projects. We are 4 months into the Government Plan. Could you provide an update where we are with regards to capital projects, of course being wary of what Keith Posner has just stated with regards to some delay?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

I will try and give you an update and then if you drill in maybe I might move on to the officers to try and kind of give some more clarity if it is required. On our capital programmes at the moment we have got the Mont à l'Abbé project. Regular meetings have taken place with C.Y.P.E.S. senior officers. The principal and architects within Jersey Property Holdings, the recent designs were approved by all stakeholders. It is hoped the planning approval and the tendering process will have contractors on site by September/October this year, so that is moving ahead. We have Les Landes nursery project going ahead still. There are meetings taking place with the Constable and the rector because some of the land that is required for the extension at Les Landes is Parish land or church land. We are just working on that. But again, we are having the right meetings at the right time and we are hoping again that we will have approval and the tendering process in place by September or October this year. The J.C.G. (Jersey College for Girls) music facility is progressing still. Regular meetings are taking place. We have undertaken valued engineering from the original designs and are waiting comments from planning at the moment. It is moving ahead as expected. It is anticipated on that one that we will be moving forward by about October with completion in December 2022 for that one. The J.C.G. field project, a formal planning application was made in July 2018 to create a level playing area. Unfortunately due to concerns around archaeological areas and sites of special interest that planning application had to be removed. But we have been working with all the stakeholders and in December we gained planning approval for the archaeological survey to happen. We want to make sure that everything is happening appropriately within the planning application. That we are not destroying a site of special interest or archaeological needs, so that is going to be going ahead. That is what I have at the moment, is that okay?

Senator T.A. Vallois:

That is helpful. I was going to drill into many of those that you have referred to. I know there was a long list of capital projects, particularly for Education. Can you give us a flavour at the moment, now that the bridging plan has been released? Of course I would imagine you are currently working on the new Government Plan. How is Education working with that new bridging plan to determine future requirements?

[10:15]

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

Can I hand over, because that is very operational at the moment, to Nick maybe?

Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.:

I can take the first part of that, Senator Vallois. At officer level we are working with the Corporate Asset Management Board; we have a meeting later this afternoon and we meet regularly. For example, issues that we need to address will be schools, the potential for building new schools,

particularly in St. Helier. Obviously this is quite a topical discussion at the moment. Working through with other officers and other departments we are making assessments of need, looking at demographics, looking at the facilities and the safety of the facilities, and opportunities for new schools. There is a cross-government way of doing that. There is a report which is being developed to make an assessment of the suite of schools within the St. Helier area and then from that we will then make decisions or proposals to the Minister about what the options are for the redevelopment of schools in the St. Helier area. That is the main focus. As we move into future Government Plans, we have to then take cognisance of what that report will say, particularly looking at the spread of our schools. I know that you will be very aware the way that St. Helier has grown and where schools are, they are not necessarily - it sounds strange - in the right place so therefore through a building programme can we make sure that schools are right in the heart of the communities so that any future development takes that into account and changing demographics within the St. Helier area. That is where the main focus is.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I believe the chair has a follow-up question.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Obviously as soon as you talk about St. Helier schools I have to ask: are you identifying sites? Because obviously there is concern, and concern from the panel as well, about the building of population in the centre of St. Helier, particularly for primary schools at the moment. Are you identifying sites for new primary schools? We are obviously concerned about Rouge Bouillon not getting the fire station site, which we can comment on later perhaps or outside of this meeting. Is that process in action?

Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes, absolutely. That is exactly where we are at the moment. The study of options within St. Helier, which is being undertaken at the moment, is looking at potential sites. When they have been agreed and then assessments made on those sites to see would they be suitable for a school but also what size of schools and does it fit with what we want for our young people in Jersey, in St. Helier and in those communities, then we will see whether those sites will be suitable as an option for future schools.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

In the meantime, improvements to schools such as Rouge Bouillon and Springfield, for example, which I know very well, are being considered and youth facilities - I have to ask again about youth facilities - because we do not have a final outcome for that yet and they are desperately needed now. Are we going to see some action before the end of this term?

Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.:

I would hope so on both those fronts. I know that the north of St. Helier youth and community facility, there is a huge amount of work going in finding the appropriate site as I know you know, Deputy Ward, has been challenging. But there is certainly a commitment there from officers across government to find the right site and get moving. Obviously there is commitments in the Government Plan to that project. In terms of Rouge Bouillon, absolutely. The study that is happening at the moment is looking at possible sites, as you know, but we have to also be aware of the building itself at the moment and young people going there - there is obviously a maintenance programme which continues there for the moment - but finding a solution to Rouge Bouillon and particularly the north of town. Then we will need to look at the south of St. Helier as well in terms of primary schooling. It is absolutely the top of our agenda in terms of our capital programme and the next development of it.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

One more thing, which is: have you fed into the Island Plan or will there be an opportunity to feed into that Island Plan as it is reviewed - the bridging Island Plan - where there is a whole education section in there to address the specifics; there is not a lot in your Island Plan about that?

Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes, we have been an active member in terms of the development of the bridging plan and we will continue in terms of identification sites. I think it is clearly stated within there the challenges that we face, particularly in St. Helier for schooling but also in terms of spaces for our schools as well, in terms of potential field development for additional outside space as well. I really feel, as officers, we are certainly at the table. We are working with other officers in different departments. I think our voice is certainly heard, and I think that was reflected in the bridging plan.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Predominantly the capital projects you have referred to, Assistant Minister, there was also in the Government Plan separately major projects. Under one of those major projects was of course the Highlands campus facility. Can we have an update as to where we are in relation to that particular project at present please?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

I do not have the details of that in front of me at the moment but could I ask one of the officers again to just give you an update on where we are with that?

Director General, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Keith, do you want to just pick up again? I can come in if you want me to but you are as up to date as anyway.

Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.:

I am sorry, I lost connection slightly there for a moment and I did not hear the name of the project. I do apologise.

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

The Highlands campus project please. Can you give us an update where we are with that?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just to give you a reference point, Keith. It was recommendation 11 in the post-16 review that we undertook as a Scrutiny Panel, which is one of the reasons we are asking about that.

Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Obviously the development of an F.E. (Further Education) College is going to be a major cornerstone of capital developments for the department and for the Island. What we have been doing is working cross-government with colleagues working in Economy, also in I.H.E. (Infrastructure, Housing and Environment) and within our policy arm of government to ensure that what we are requiring is going to be future-proofed moving forward. We have initiated a study report to look at all the elements bringing together some of the work within the previous tertiary strategy but also looking at future demographics, and also looking at future skills requirements for the Island. This will then develop into the requirement specification that we need to then move forward to design a future college. This approach, I think, is really important. We could be in danger of simply reproducing like for like but, as we know, there are huge movements in education, and particularly within tertiary education, so we have to be really sure that what is developed in the future meets the needs of the Island going forward. We have initiated that piece of work. As I said, we are working with senior officers across government and we will be producing a report for the Minister, which I am sure will be presented to the Assembly at some point in the future to talk about that next step that is required for an F.E. college to not only meet the skills of young people moving through 14 to 16, but also H.E. (higher education) as well. I do not know, Mark, if you want to pick up further or I have covered it.

Director General, C.Y.P.E.S.:

I think you have covered it well, Keith. I am happy to answer any further questions with you, of course.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Just before I pass on to the chair can I just ask: what is the deadline for that report and the expectation in terms of where it goes through the feasibility or approval for any type of what the F.E. college may look like to the point of putting a spade in the ground?

Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.:

That is a really good question and I will try and answer it as best I can. We have feasibility money this year and we have feasibility money next year. However, before we can really start, in a sense, spending it on almost building-side of that we have to obviously see the outcome of the report and that has to be agreed. We started this now - so we are now beginning of quarter 2 - I would expect the report to be finished at some point during quarter 3. Then we would have to go through the sequence of the presentation of that. I would hope we would be able to start in terms of looking at the requirement for a building later this year and then throughout next year will be the planning and the more detailed design for that. We will need to return to the capital funding for this because it does not sit in the programme at the moment. However, it is obviously known that we need a new F.E. college and therefore we have to see how that will be funded by the Government. However, by the end of 2022, that is where we should be in a position where we have had the designs done and we would know exactly what we want. Spade in the ground, Senator Vallois, will obviously follow when we have secured the capital funding for the project. But there are quite a lot of requirements work to do initially on this, just to make sure we get this absolutely right.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I just step in? I can remember seeing plans in a presentation of a new college campus very early on as a chair of a Scrutiny Panel and going up to Highlands and speaking to the previous head of Highlands College. What happened to all of those plans and designs because there was something in place and we recommended that this was started before 2023 on Scrutiny, and that was one of the things that drove that recommendation, that there were plans already in existence. What happened to those?

Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.:

There is a lot of work that has been done, which certainly has not been wasted. The position we are in though is just to check some of those assumptions that have been made. If you had the principal of Highland College here at the moment, they would certainly say that COVID has changed practice significantly. The delivery of education has obviously altered because of COVID but will potentially continue to change for the future as well. We need to be absolutely cognisant of what are the requirements of the Island moving forward in terms of skills, in terms of the economy. It is that checking point. It does not mean that any kind of work previously has been lost on the design and shape of a campus because there was some quite detailed work done; you are absolutely right, Deputy Ward. It is more of a sense check of where we are to make sure what it is that we want to

be building for our young people going forward and whether it exists in a campus style or in a series of other buildings. That is the next stage once we know exactly what we need.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That will be very important in terms of the education reform programme, would it not, in terms of the structure of our post-16? Is a 6th form college that deals with what is provided at ... or post-16 college really because there is a lot of H.E. that goes on at Highlands College in terms of the role of Hautlieu and the private schools in their post-16 provision and the wider provision. Is that going to feed into this campus design? Who is going to take responsibility for that?

Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Certainly it will be feeding in but from a policy point of view Deputy Wickenden may have some comments. But absolutely it is aligned with the thinking that will come from the reform programme.

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

I agree. The reform programme is about all of education. It is about higher education, it is about all aspects and we need to make sure that whatever we do is a holistic view on our facilities, our campuses, and the education programme we are doing. I think it does feed in.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Can I just check on that basis then, Assistant Minister, in terms of being holistic? What consideration the economic framework work that will be taken into account for that, and whether a skills audit will be undertaken because it has been mentioned consider what the Island needs. Of course we have to recognise that not everyone is going to necessarily stay on-Island and may want to leave the Island at some point in the future or even return and retrain in some different areas. Taking into account the economic framework and of course a very different world in education, what other pieces of work across the Government do you think would be appropriate to consider against this report in terms of the future of that campus, not just the education reform programme?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

I have just commissioned a piece of work on a retraining strategy, which is looking at the economic framework of this Island, about where skills will be needed and sometimes where skills will not be needed anymore.

[10:30]

It is about looking at how this Island functions, what is required and giving people opportunity to change the jobs that they are in or if their jobs become redundant, being able to have access to

educational facilities and programmes to be able to train into an area to continue their educational requirements.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I just have one last question on this before I pass back to the chair. It is in relation to disability access improvements. Can you provide an update on the spend to date in relation to the improvements to schools and youth projects arising from the disability access improvements, as outlined in the Government Plan?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

If you want the figures I am going to have to pass on to somebody else. I know that the work for the disability, the regulation works Accès Liberate have been appointed by the Government to carry out further assessments. Once the reviews are carried out we will develop an action plan but if you are looking for the figures I am going to have to hand on to an officer to give you those figures. Nick might be able to help.

Head of Governance and Resource Management, C.Y.P.E.S.:

As Deputy Wickenden said, we have carried out surveys across the whole portfolio at the moment and to date, in terms of the figures, we have allocated £260,000 of various projects across the department. One of those being the replacement lifts at Liberty House but we are also working with Jersey Property Holdings in terms of the landlord and tenant agreements. Following the surveys there will be work that comes out of that, which will need to be programmed, which will be Jersey Property Holdings' responsibility. But there will be some that will be the schools and the department's responsibilities, hearing loops being another example of some of the work we have already started across the department. The money we have got set aside for this year, £500,000 will be allocated to those D.D.A. (Disability Discrimination Act) improvements, but also some of the safeguard improvements that we have done previously, which you will be well aware of.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Thank you for that. I will pass back to the chair.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I was just going to ask because this is a public hearing I think sometimes we need to get information across to the public who do watch and can watch back. In terms of the education estate plans, which has come into a wider government estate consideration, who has final oversight of the education estate? Minister, would it be yourself or the Chief Minister at the moment in terms of all the education buildings, decisions on playing fields, decisions on builds, decisions on possible letting of education buildings out, for example?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

I am not 100 per cent sure but I would say that Jersey Property Holdings are the owners of the actual infrastructure, the buildings as such, so it will probably sit within I.H.E. - I think they are called today - Minister in that manner, with consultations with the Minister for Children and Education if any changes or the like would have to happen. I believe it would sit with the Minister for Infrastructure because Jersey Property Holdings are the facilitators of the buildings and the land. Nick, is that correct?

Head of Governance and Resource Management, C.Y.P.E.S.:

That is correct. I can just elaborate on that a little bit for you. Jersey Property Holdings have complete responsibility for all the properties across the portfolio for the Government. We have detailed service level agreements in place, which are being reviewed as we speak. Within that, they will be responsible for all the mandatory and statutory works that are required in terms of health and safety regulations and so on. Then we, as the tenant, will have responsibilities in terms of the upkeep and maintenance of the building. We meet on a bi-monthly basis. We work closely with senior colleagues at Jersey Property Holdings in terms of how we spend that money. We sometimes work very collaboratively and creatively across departments as well in terms of maintaining and upkeeping of our facilities.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

How has COVID affected that? When we have been trying to deal with some issues around primary schools in the centre of St. Helier we have been told that there is a long waiting list to make any changes because there is a real shortage of staff able to act on that within the Infrastructure Department. Do you think that there is enough staff there to deal with the current need for repairs, for example, for updates, for upgrading of areas through our education facilities?

Head of Governance and Resource Management, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Sorry, Deputy Wickenden, do you want me to answer that for you?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

You can, I might add in afterwards but you start please, Nick.

Head of Governance and Resource Management, C.Y.P.E.S.:

That is probably a question for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department. We have a good process in place in terms of the business cases that need to be developed. So schools or colleges or officers will help the head teachers in terms of developing business case which then goes into a programme for our landlords to then do some of the maintenance work and general

repairs over the course of the year. That process works really well. I will then sit down with that team and we prioritise the spending that we have got, bearing in mind they have a pot of money that has to maintain something like 360-odd properties across the Island's portfolio. We also then allocate and review in terms of prioritisation; I think Rouge Bouillon came up before. There is a good example there of last year and this year where we are looking at putting some funds in there to make sure we can bring those facilities up to a reasonable standard with external decoration and refurbishment in toilet areas and things like that was completed. That is how we work between the 2 departments and prioritise that sort of money.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think it is for clarity for head teachers such as Rouge Bouillon. When you say we are looking to put some funds in there, which is great and it is desperately needed, but how can we, as a Scrutiny Panel, sort of hold your feet to the fire, so to speak, which is we may have to get the Minister for Infrastructure in eventually, but also how can those schools be certain as to when that is going to happen. That is the overall responsibility question, that is why I asked that question. Is that going to happen this year? Is there a list of jobs that are going to be done in the next few months which are desperately needed?

Head of Governance and Resource Management, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Last year we prioritised that and we have a programme of works across government, and then within the education or in the C.Y.P.E.S. portfolio there will be a list there of the works that are going to be completed this year. Jersey Property Holdings, their project officers will then be in contact with head teachers. Schools also have a minor works budget which they can use to improve facilities across areas, which is ring-fenced against the square footage of their premises. We also have a budget with the department, which is a minor capital budget, it is not a large amount of money but their school will also come to the department for support as well and we do what we can there to make sure that facilities are maintained.

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

Chair, I think it is a really good idea to call in the Minister for Infrastructure and talk about this to himself because I think holding people's feet to the fire certainly when it comes to education, children and schools is really important.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I wonder whether there may be some gaps because of the changes in Minister for Children and Education roles, particularly if it is the Minister for Infrastructure who seems to be responsible for these areas. I can see how accountability can be spread with it or whenever that happens things can go amiss. It is just a concern, I suppose. We better move on. In terms of the Government Plan,

can you provide an update on the spend to date of the budget allocated for education within the Government Plan, particularly 2021 but through 2021 to 2024? Because there are some projects that are ongoing.

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

If I break it down. In Children's Services to date, we have spent £5.18 million out of a forecast of £22.08 million. In Education, so far our year to date is £22.192 million on a forecast of £95.563 million. Young people and further education we have spent £7.579 million on a forecast of £33.549 million. Integrated service and commission we have spent £1.927 million on a forecast of £10.861 million and in the directorate we have spent £445,000 on a budget of £1.349 million.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

In those overall figures, are there any specifics that you can higher. For example, one of the areas was that there were schools with significant deficits, which was recognised. Money was allocated to overcome those deficits. Has that been allocated to schools and will receive, for example, 11 to 16 schools not in deficit this year?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

We have allocated £5.5 million this year to deal with structural deficits in funding of schools.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That has gone to schools and that is being spent?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

That is in the budget by March this year. That is there and that is being spent, so absolutely. It was important to make sure we got that clarity done as soon as possible.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I always like to ask the question what will that look like for schools. I think it is a really important thing to do. For example, in different key stages what will that look like having that extra funding available and not having to worry about those deficits that head teachers have had to worry about over the last few years?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

I hope that with discussions with head teachers when we have talked about the deficits they are having and giving the money, obviously head teachers are in charge of their budgets once they have them in the school. I am hoping that what it looks like is a lot less stress for the head teachers who know that they have clarity for the year. So better outcomes for children. But it is up to the head

teachers, that we give them the money, they tell us what is required and they spend it where they think it is absolutely appropriate for the best educational outcomes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is for delegation of spending to head teachers across the board?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

Yes, I do believe so. I could ask one of the officers to clarify if that is important, but I do believe it is across the board. Could somebody step in and let me know if I am talking correctly?

Director General, C.Y.P.E.S.:

I think a good opportunity for Seán, Anne or Jonathan, Chair, to come in.

Group Director, Education:

Very happy to come in. I am not sure Anne is with us. I believe the AH is Andy Harris but I am very happy to speak. You are quite right, Deputy Ward. It has been a concern and an accumulated concern over years about the deficit. You know that that was a good deal behind the former Minister in commissioning the independent school funding review and we were successful in getting £5.5 million of Government Plan resource as a mainstay of the 2021 education reform programme budget. It will grow and, as the Assistant Minister, Deputy Wickenden, has rightly pointed out, by March all of that £5.5 million resource was in school budgets. In some schools they will not have seen much of a difference insofar as they were already spending that resource on meeting the needs of children with special education needs, wider inclusion concerns, for example, but the strength of feeling for those heads is that those roles that they were commissioning, because of growing need, are now being fully funded. That is the reassurance piece but obviously a big part of the education reform programme is not only getting the deficit funding into schools now, that is the 2021 piece, but we are well away on looking at devising a new funding formula for schools because the ambition is we get sustainable funding for schools that is fit for purpose for the long term. So with that in mind and Jonathan, our programme director for the E.R.P. (education reform programme), can exemplify. I know you will have other questions on the reform programme, I am sure, but we have already stood up a group that is working already with representatives of Treasury and Exchequer colleagues working on the detail of what will be in the funding formula for the longer term because, as you are aware, the £5.5 effectively was to address historic deficits while we get on with the important work of a new funding formula.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That money has been allocated by what formula, that extra money? Is it to effectively wipe out debt, look at what the spend has been over the last few years, because there are some schools with many

more children who have more need and therefore will require more money? Has it gone into Pupil Premium funding, for example, or would it be just a one-off payment? Because we do not have this new school funding formula yet but we have allocated extra money. Just to get some clearer picture of how that money was allocated. Do not get me wrong, I think it is good. It is desperately needed. We have been saying this for some time as a panel. What was the process there partly without a new formula for funding of schools?

Group Director, Education:

Can I invite Jonathan to share something about the process? But working with our finance colleagues, this has been through the process, going up through the director general and then on to the education reform programme board, so the governance we put in place early. Jonathan can talk to the process on the particular means of allocating the 2020 allocations.

Director, Education Reform Programme:

Apologies again of not being to appear on camera this morning. I think, Deputy you are right to infer that there is a balance here between perhaps the urgency of allocating funds for this year and a better level of precision enabled by the implementation of the funding formula. We are very aware in the programme of the balancing needs of those 2 items.

[10:45]

In the context of 2021, and the additional £5.5 million allocated under this structural deficit, we have used a number of different factors. We have looked at the actual year-end deficits by school at the end of 2020.

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

... deficit we have used a number of different factors. We have looked at the year in deficit by school at the end of 2020. At the end of February we then looked at the forecast deficit position for the end of 2021. We looked at spikes in terms of cohorts of children with additional needs entering different phases and we also considered some of the additional opportunities that the fee-paying schools had to raise income. We used those 4 variables as the principle means by which to allocate that £5.5 million this year recognising, as we have heard from other colleagues, that that £5.5 million along with the pre-existing base funding that is allocated to schools, will all be up for review as part of the funding formula, the work for which has already started.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We have got some more questions on the education reform programme coming up, so we will come back to this topic. Can I ask another couple of specific questions regarding the Government Plan?

What progress has been made in developing the new higher education funding scheme and has the pandemic had any impact on bringing this forward or is that going to be from the 2023-2024 academic year as previously discussed?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

Work is absolutely progressing on the higher education funding scheme. We have had meetings and workshops to look into all the various options. We are looking at making sure that there is fairness in accessibility to funding for higher educational purposes. We know that families on lower incomes are not taking up the opportunities for the funding as much as we would like and we need to address that urgently, making sure that the barriers are removed. That is all part of what we are looking at in funding mechanisms and we are still considering all aspects, as in grants, loans or hybrids taking into account the saving requirements in the Government Plan 2021-2024. It is a piece of work that is progressing and it has not been slowed down by COVID.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Are we still looking for the new scheme to start in 2023-2024? Is that the target and is that a realistic target?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

I believe it is a realistic target. There are 2 aspects I guess, which is access for certainly lower income families, which is where the barriers were, and sometimes it is not just financial. Sometimes it is about making sure that lower income families have the same access to getting the right grades within schools and get the right level of education to be able to meet the requirements to go into higher education also.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, so it is on track?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

It is.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can you provide an update on the progress of the primary school meals pilot, which was extended for the duration of 2021?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

There has been a delay, but during the summer of 2019 serveries were installed in the first 2 pilot schools, which you know, Janvrin and Samarès. Obviously all meals are prepared off-site in a facility

in Trinity and then delivered to each school. Unfortunately due to COVID and schools closing and the like the pilot was halted in March 2020, so the data we were hoping to collect during the summer was lost. St. Luke's was due to come on line in September but that was delayed until January this year, but they have had a good start to the programme. At present we are in the process of extending the pilot and we do not propose it closing until July 2022. This will enable the children to continue accessing the programme with more data being collected. The extension to the pilot was also extended to our delivery runway. The S.L.A. (service level agreement) is currently being amended and will be signed by all key stakeholders within the next 2 weeks. Moving forward there are 22 primary schools included in the project with 3 of those already being served with the lunch programme and 19 schools have been listed within the last month to understand how the current model will be able to work within their buildings and what they need. Each school has different issues and in some instances the current severity model would have to alter, however the current model will still be a preferred option on how we deliver that service. The timeline for this project would have to align with the funding and resources and the best option to be phased delivery through 2022 at the moment. This piece of work is being completed at present.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

What data are you collecting and what would be your success criteria? It looks like from what you have just read there that it will be extended to 19 more schools.

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

That is what we are looking at now, 19 more schools. We are looking at how that would work. I would have to ask on the operational level for some of these coming in to tell us what that would look like.

Head of Governance and Resource Management, C.Y.P.E.S.:

The next specialist subject, I think. In terms of the data, so that you are aware, we are looking at what is the best model that is going to fix the school food provision across all of the primary schools. We are testing the market at the moment to see what other service providers are out there. We are also considering to possibly bring this in-house. We are also looking at how we can work across Government, maybe work with the Health Department as well. The data that our service provider at the moment is providing us is we are looking at how we are going to work with income support families. There is a piece of work we need to do around Customer and Local Services and data protection. The main piece of the work is the uptake from the students across the 3 sites at the moment, that is the income support families but also the students that are paying for the food. It is analysing all the menus, it is working closely with our colleagues across S.P.P.P. (Strategic Policy, Performance and Population) and Health in terms of linking it into the nutrition strategy as well. All of this work is going on behind the scenes and we are extending it now, which gives us a bit more

of a runway to come up with the right food model that is going to help us to develop that procurement strategy, for when we go out to tender. We have got money in the Government Plan for this year, next year and also 2023, which will put us in a good position to have a food model in place but also have that funding there for income support families.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So it is looking positive that the principle of school meals being provided, hot school meals at lunchtime in our primaries in particular, is in place and is being worked on and retrofitting the schools to have those facilities there?

Head of Governance and Resource Management, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Looking ahead, if there were to be new schools developed, particularly in the centre of St. Helier where there is perhaps most need, those facilities would be built in because the principle is in place?

Head of Governance and Resource Management, C.Y.P.E.S.:

That is a good question. That is something we have already been looking at. As a good example, the project we have got going on at the moment at La Moye we are working with a design team there in terms of that classroom extension and the hall extension and we are also looking at putting a kitchen into that as well. That is all incorporated into that piece of work and any new schools that are built in the primary sector within town that will also be taken into consideration.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is good. We will be following that up. I am conscious we want to talk about the education reform programme and there is an awful lot to talk about.

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

Can I just add in quickly that the plan and the political plan, which has never changed, is that we do make sure this facility is available in all schools? It is just about making sure that it is done appropriately, that it is done within a working way in the facilities, but absolutely at political level the strategy is to make sure we have these facilities to be able to get hot food to children in every school and that has not changed at all. I just want to make that clear.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is just nice that it is becoming a priority. Senator Vallois, I do not know if you want me to start on these questions or you want to start with these ones. I have been talking for a while. It is up to you.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I can start. This is on the education reform programme, so when can the panel expect to see a detailed implementation plan for the education reform programme, as this was expected in the first quarter of 2021, as per the ministerial response?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

Jonathan, can I ask you to clear that up, please?

Director, Education Reform Programme:

Absolutely. We have worked on planning on a 2-stage basis. The first phase, which we have undertaken and broadly completed, is referenced in the answers around the allocation of structural deficit, to immediately address what was considered as the most urgent and important aspects of the programme and to do that before the broader planning and sequencing of the rest of the activity. In February, March and early April very much it was around those activities, in order to get the structural deficit allocated to schools, which was firmly positioned as the most important item. In relative terms there is a little bit of space now, so we have committed to doing the next phase of more detailed planning, which will certainly push out for the rest of this year probably until the middle of next year, by the end of May and in fact we have committed to that not just to the programme board and the Deputy but also as part of an internal audit piece of work where we are seeking some early guidance and feedback from an advisory perspective on how we are setting up our governance. The short answer is end of May for the next phase of planning.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Would it be possible for the panel to have a clear document that sets out the implementation plan so that we understand the phases? It is great that things are able to be advanced but it is useful from our point of view in terms of questions to the Minister. Would it be possible to have a copy of that?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

Do you want the project delivery road map, basically?

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Well, it would be extremely useful for us.

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

Of course you can. We will make sure we get that to you.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Thank you very much. In terms of the key priorities within the implementation plan we know of the funding formula. Are there any other specifics that are being carried out at the moment? I recognise that there was a mention of a gap that potentially more things could be done. What specifics at the moment are being implemented?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

There were 3 areas where funding was allocated at the start of this year. There was increased funding for educational psychologists that totalled up to £56,000. There was increased Jersey Pupil Premium funding of £291,000 and the inclusion review, which we are looking at, has £150,000 within that. That was the extra 3 areas.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Can I ask exactly what the spend to date has been with regards to the education reform programme and what that funding particularly relates to?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

That is an excellent question, Senator. I am going to ask Jonathan to reply to it.

Director, Education Reform Programme:

In terms of allocation it serves 4 areas. We look at allocation from the programme budget, so the £5.5 million has been drawn down from the programme budget and allocated to the schools' budget. The £56,000 has been allocated to the inclusion team in order to fund additional capacity in educational psychology. The Jersey Premium levelling up in terms of increased funding of £291,000 has been allocated and the inclusion review monies of £150,000 has been allocated from the implementation budget which was a separate line, you might recall, totalling £750,000 a year. Importantly, all of those areas of expenditure fall within both the purpose and the budget allocated to those lines.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I want to clarify, that is an allocation of budget but not necessarily spent?

Director, Education Reform Programme:

Yes, the £5.5 million will now be spent by the schools over the course of this year and, as you described, the areas are programme allocations to various areas for them to spend over the course of 2021. Once they have allocated those monies from the programme that falls into business-as-usual funding against their 2021 budget.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I was going to ask a few specific questions. The £291,000 on Jersey Premium, you used a word and I did not jot it down because I cannot write quickly enough. I cannot remember the word that you used. Was that to extend the Pupil Premium to post-16? Was it to upgrade the amount of the Pupil Premium or are there more students on Pupil Premium?

Director, Education Reform Programme:

That is a mix of 2 items in terms of both extension to those included and movement towards I think the words I used, Deputy, were levelling up.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is the ones.

Director, Education Reform Programme:

Some of the reform programme recommendations not just in the context of Jersey Premium, in fact elsewhere as well, talk about the desire to level up to equalise perhaps the level of funding, looking at various benchmarks. So in some context looking at what the equivalent level of funding per pupil might be in the U.K. (United Kingdom). You will know, of course, that the governance around Jersey Premium is very well-established by the team and therefore an early decision to allocate that funding to the Jersey Premium group to be managed by that board was deemed appropriate.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay. Another specific then, the £5.5 million that went to schools' budget, we know that some of it is for deficit.

[11:00]

Will curriculum leaders in schools see an increase in their yearly allocation, their funding for their department? As simple as that, is that the sort of thing that we will be seeing with that money? I can remember when I was a head of department that the amount of money that I had I was constantly battling, because it was a very small amount of money, less than £10 per student per year to deliver a science curriculum when a textbook cost £15, for example, and those miracles in spending are happening across schools. Will heads of department, for example, see an increase in their funding from this allocation of money? I ask a very practical question; I cannot get away from it.

Group Director, Education:

If I may, Assistant Minister. Practical questions as ever, Deputy Ward, are very welcome. The short answer is all spending decisions on budget allocation are at a local level. They are the head

teachers and where a school has a governing body, obviously the perspective of governors on profiling of spending. I think the deeper point you raise about do we spend sufficiently on curriculum is the work of designing a new funding formula. We had heads, for example, in the room this week giving feedback on where they would like a genuine reform programme reflected in the funding formula to be based. The additional £5.5 million, as colleagues and the Minister have said already was allocated by the end of March, is not a simple passport that subject leaders know that they have got more resource. That would be at a local level for the school. The bigger picture, to make sure we spend adequately on a dynamic and vibrant curriculum, is core to the work of not just the funding formula but the consideration of the wider reform programme. It is not the magic of there is a bigger pot as of today and anyway that would be down to local decision-making.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I ask because time passes and if it takes a year or so to come up with this funding formula, or 2 years, that is an entire key stage for curriculum for many of our students who may be facing a lack of resources day to day and their opportunity is gone and passed by. How quickly will we see this funding formula develop and be implemented?

Group Director, Education:

It is a very good question and that is why of all the initiatives, and yourself and Senator Vallois have asked really pertinent questions about what we are doing in prioritisation after the allocations for those immediate points the deficit funding, Jersey Premium uplift, educational psychologists recruitment and funding the inclusion review that is now happily underway, doing this new funding formula as well as teacher development have been the biggest focus areas and that is why we have got proper work streams already established, working on those now. The ambition for the funding formula is that it is ready for the next fiscal year in Jersey, 1st January 2022. That is a high ambition to get the modelling done, the agreement, the piloting, the practicalities but that is our ambition.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

If this is taken longer term but you can recognise that there is need, could there be a phased approach whereby: “Yes, we will put money into schools, we will get money into the curriculum areas, we will get money into those subjects so that students have a better experience day to day. In the meanwhile we will look for the funding formula”? I suppose the biggest risk to a good plan is a perfect plan. We are looking for this finalised thing at the same time that time is passing for the students and the teachers in schools to deliver curriculum. One of the roles of the Scrutiny Panel, and I am going on about this but it is really important, is to know the specifics on what is going to be in place year on year to see these improvements happening because it has been recognised that they are needed. Ready for 2022 would be great but if it is not ready will there be a commitment to

looking for areas where we can target funding in schools for the best possible opportunity as this formula is being developed?

Group Director, Education:

A very good question, Deputy Ward. If we might, Deputy Wickenden; Jonathan, you were at the sharp end in chairing that meeting only on Wednesday, the most recent one. I know that there has been thinking about phasing in the round because the new funding formula might see a different distribution. We have been implored by the independent school funding review over time to move more funding to the earlier years of a child's schooling than the later years, for example. Jonathan, on Deputy Ward's question on phasing?

Director, Education Reform Programme:

Yes, of course. In the context of the funding formula I would endorse the points you have made around the risks associated with trying to be absolute and precise causing delays as a consequence of which we do not implement the change we want. I will give you a couple of specific examples from this week's workshop, which as you would expect would include a number of head teachers inputting into the practicalities of this. Again just by way of example, there are 2 other projects on which the funding formula is particularly dependent. We are going to be doing some work on S.A. (supplementary allowance) points over the course of the summer, the output of which might influence some of the way that we structure workforce costs, the workforce of course 80 per cent of the overall cost in schools. That is my estimate. We have also got, as you know, the inclusion review. The output of the inclusion review will be a critical input to the funding formula, but if you just imagine the timeframes for a minute, let us hope that the inclusion review reports at the end of July. We have heard from Seán we want the funding formula in place from 1st January 2022. That requires it to be ready from 1st October, so you suddenly have only September and October to incorporate the recommendations of the inclusion review and the S.A. point review into the funding formula. While our ambition is absolutely to do as much as possible in the funding formula work by 1st January 2022 we do recognise there may be a fallback position to phase the improvements and to focus on other areas and then pick up, for example, the inclusion review or S.A. points in the next step, which might be another financial year, it might be partway through the year if that is deemed practical. Absolutely phasing is a consideration because the overarching goal is to make sure that we make the investments unlocked by the reform programme for the purpose in the year for which they are provided.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So this reform programme, when you talk about S.A. points, is it more a structural review of responsibilities or is it a review into the pedagogy of education or the structure of 14-plus selection and the nature of our education? It concerns me when you talk about a review of S.A. points. We

are releasing money to go into schools. That strikes me as a mini target operating model as opposed to something that is a reform of the principles of our education system.

Director, Education Reform Programme:

So the S.A. points you referenced there was something that was agreed with the unions in quarter 4 of 2019. As a consequence of COVID you will know that we were not able to progress that, so it has now been ported into the scope of the programme. We are just going through the work at the moment to revise that scope and make sure we are clear on what the goal is. It will be very much looking at the way the points have been allocated, the way the responsibilities line up against that, and how perhaps to ensure greater consistency in governance in the future. I come back to the point that we have made already; the funding formula redistributes existing funding; it does not add new funding into the system. So that S.A. point activity is just one of many things that will help sharpen our focus and help us improve the way that we are allocating funds.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I ask this carefully, because I do not mean it in a derogatory way, but it is specifics. When you lead this education reform programme do you lead this as an educationalist looking at education or as an H.R. (human resources) specialist looking at structures or is it a combination of both and how do they feed into each other? I think it is really important when you start a reform programme that you know where the drivers are coming from. My background is an educationalist and that is where I would come from. I would look at what we need in terms of our educational theory and how we provide it. Perhaps if you come from an H.R. specialism you look at the structure first. Does that question make sense?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

I think it is an excellent question, Chair. It has to come from an educational point of view, of course, because the education reform programme is about educational outcomes and making sure we go back to there. Of course there will be levels of looking at what staff requirements are there to deliver those educational outcomes but absolutely I agree it all should be about educational outcomes. I will let Seán come in.

Group Director, Education:

That is a really helpful question, Deputy Ward, and we will be more than happy to share the full governance structure, but this is fundamentally education-led. An important place is we have got a unifying department for all children and the feed in is we get educational reform right when looking at, you mentioned this, apropos wraparound services, widened services for schools in the St. Helier area in one of your earlier questions. The education reform programme is driven by a board that I chair. It has educationalists leading that and we have just strengthened the board with more

educational voices. In each of the workstreams there is educational expertise leading it, including teacher and union representation. The programme board feed into the wider sites programme board, so the challenge piece across the whole that we are getting things right for children is in that place and we are also building a political oversight board to make sure that the education reform programme stays focused on the principles that the Council of Ministers gave us, which is effectively over 4 years there is £42 million of public money, and to go away and reform education so that Jersey can be on that journey to be able to compare with the very best in the world. That is our driving aim. If we were just being given some money to fix a funding formula or top up underspends or buy a few more educational psychologists with respect that would not be a reform programme. That would be an important, useful accounting exercise. We have got really high ambitions for the education reform programme. It is education-led.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is good to hear. It will be interesting to see what educationalists you are using as your advisers, because I have said before and, as Einstein said, the theory determines what you observe, so you get what you are given, really. We would be interested in that; I would certainly personally. I am interested you say it is not just about that because all we have seen so far from this is exactly what you said, some funding for educational psychologists and so on. It will be interesting to see the wider context in which you develop that. That is good to hear. What is being considered within the funding formula to ensure it is sustainable in the long-term? That is one of the key issues, the sustainability. It is clear that it has not been sustainable because a number of our schools have been in deficit for a long time. It has not worked. What is going to be there to ensure that this time it does work, to deliver the outcomes that you want?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

I think the idea of creating a new formula is to make sure that this formula does work and it is sustainable and it gives us the information that we require to be able to go from year to year in Government Plans to make sure that we have the acceptable level of financing for best education outputs. I will let Seán or maybe Jonathan come in on specifics on how they are making sure that it is sustainable.

Group Director, Education:

Deputy Wickenden, you are absolutely right, that is the challenge to the work stream, looking at a new funding formula. We have to be well-informed by data and the demographic data is significant. We know that there is a significant bulge of young people moving through the system, so our planning piece, I think our colleagues and the predecessor department did rather well as that bulge hit primary schools with the building of new accommodation, the resourcing of additional teachers and support staff. That was handled very well, I think a lot better than in many other jurisdictions

facing change but that needs to be locked in. The funding formula is going to be very different. One of the recommendations of the school funding review that was accepted by previous Ministers and the current political leadership is that low prior attainment should be a key component of the funding formula. That is a new piece of work. Our head of early years is working closely with colleagues and family and nursing and home care to develop holistic models of what assessment of children's need is when they are very young, so that all can start school with the resources, that they can get the best access to their education. That is the work of that work stream. As you have said earlier, if it sounds a little functional at the moment, we have put £5.5 million here and £291,000 there, that is because those matters were urgent but it has not stopped the reform drive of ourselves.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is why I asked the question and we understand the balance between urgent need and longer term. Is one of the considerations going to be I.T. (information technology) as a variable in the funding formula? We have seen a change during COVID. We have seen the issues of young people not having access, particularly those who face the most challenges and families who face the most challenges. Is that going to be one of the considerations in the education reform programme, how we provide that distance learning and how we change the model of education to integrate I.T. into that? We are spending an enormous amount of money on I.T.

Group Director, Education:

I am glad you raised that, Deputy Ward, because when one looks, and I know you read it thoroughly and had presentations with Scrutiny, to the recommendations of the independent school funding review it came up with 6 long-term transformational policy options.

[11:15]

In our education reform programme that 6 has gone up to 8. One has been added, that you have alluded to. There was a smaller reform programme running about teachers T.s and C.s. (terms and conditions) and union colleagues have told us you cannot reform education if you do not pay cognisance, so the S.A. points is one part of that. That is number 7, but number 8, the one policy driver we have added, is digital and the education space because with respect to a very good report, the independent school funding review was quiet on that. Obviously we have got an Assistant Minister who leads Government on matters digital and has paid regard, and in fact has been very supportive of us as we have done close work with our colleagues in M. and D. (Modernisation and Digital) with strengthening the hardware/software support, but it is much bigger. We want to look at the impact. As challenging as the COVID period has been we had a rapid learning curve about digital enablement and also issues of digital poverty and access, so we have got a great deal of learning. Be assured that is a strong work theme of the education reform programme.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I want to move on but I will ask Senator Vallois to ask her questions. I have just got one quick question of reassurance for teachers that the S.A. points review and other parts of the education reform programme will not simply be a way to introduce efficiencies, which some would see as cuts in the long-term. Just a reassurance that is not an aim behind the education reform programme?

Group Director, Education:

That element, as Jonathan raised, was agreed in quarter 4 with all of the local trade unions as a means of looking again. Our survey evidence has knocked on the door by teachers saying to us: "Can you look at S.A. points? We want to know they are equitable and fairly distributed and used for purpose." There is strong buy-in from all sides to do that piece of work. It was stalled, as Jonathan said, by COVID and is now properly subsumed as a workstream of the reform programme.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Senator Vallois, do you have any questions? I hogged those questions a bit. Sorry.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

That is okay. I have just got 2 questions I am going to try and mould into one, which is a questioning no-no. We have mentioned the inclusion review and there was also the work of the Early Years Policy Development Board. I suppose the question is the timelines for those pieces of work and how they integrate with the education reform programme and the expectation of any further funding that may be needed, particularly in regards to inclusion, will that be included in the Government Plan for 2022?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

Absolutely. We are trying to make sure that now that we are kind of getting back to normal and people will be able to travel into the Island that we get the people in and start those reviews as soon as possible, so stakeholder meetings for inclusion to make sure we get a full picture. We are looking to move as fast as we possibly can to get the right information, to speak to the right people, so that we can get some money set out in the Government Plan to be able to deliver.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Can I just clarify then, the inclusion review has not started yet?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

It has started as in we have set it up to go but there are areas that we had to wait for because we needed the supplier who won on the tender to be able to get their people into the Island to start

having discussions with people and reviews around the schools. It has started but we are trying to make it even faster right now.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

What is your expectation for the final outcome of that inclusion review in terms of whether it is a report or recommendations or what that will look like and how that will feed into the Government Plan? I know the work has already started on the Government Plan.

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

I know we are putting it in in a phased way, so there will be recommendations that will come throughout the phasing of the inclusion review. It will end up with a report and recommendations at the end but we are not going to wait until we have finished, until the end of the review, I believe. Keith, is that correct?

Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.:

Yes, that is correct, just to give you reassurance, Senator Vallois. We are working with our delivery partner now. They are doing a desktop review at the moment of policies and legislation here on the Island. The part that Deputy Wickenden is referring to will be the in-person stakeholder management piece that fortunately we feel can now go ahead on-Island, because of obviously the travel position that we have here now, which is really positive. We were only speaking with them this week so hopefully they will be coming to the Island very shortly and then we can set that up. The review has started. In terms of timelines it will be delivered throughout this term so the aim is to have a report to the Assistant Minister and Chief Minister by the end of the academic year, so that is the second or third week of July. We will then be in the process of setting up a series of briefings and I hope you do not mind me saying so, Assistant Minister, but Scrutiny will be part of that. We will be able to keep you informed as we did with the independent school funding review. We have scheduled check-in points throughout the review process as well, so as Deputy Wickenden was saying in terms of his ambition for potential inclusion within the Government Plan, feedback can come through the process to see exactly what the opportunities are that we could look to. I think there are 2 bits of this. There is obviously a demographics piece but in terms of numbers, as we know, that drives costs up. You have better diagnosis, you have more pupils that you are spending money on and that is why we are seeing some of the financial challenges within schools, but also different ways of doing things. That is what the review will also focus on. So as we move through the process between now and the end of the term we will be, as I say, regularly checking in, finding out what those opportunities are and feeding back so that we can hopefully try the best we can to align the processes as we are moving forward.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Thank you very much for that. I know the chair has many questions so one final question before I move back to him. You mentioned that there was a desktop review of the legislation being carried out. From that desktop review, and of course the education reform programme work that is being carried out, will there be an intention to bring any changes to the laws forward, whether that is the Education (Jersey) Law, the Day Care of Children (Jersey) Law, or anything in relation to mental health because that may touch on the inclusion review?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

For me I am not aware of anything right now so I would like to know the answer to the question as well. Keith, are we planning anything as such?

Head of Office, C.Y.P.E.S.:

I do not necessarily know the answer to the question, but the point of this part of the inclusion review is to provide a series of recommendations to identify where potential changes in legislation will need to happen. It is a very important aspect and, as you know, Senator Vallois, just in terms of the age of statutory education being one and so on, there will be a series of things through this review where I am sure our partners will be making recommendations to the Ministers about: "If you want to change your system this way you will need to consider changes to legislation."

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Okay. Thank you very much. I will pass back to the chair now.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am conscious we have got about 10 minutes or so. We undertook a review into teacher recruitment and retention and one of the things we highlighted was it was clear that we are coming up to that time in May, half-term, where resignations for this academic year happen. Do you have a picture of how many vacancies there may be arising in the teaching profession this year?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

I do not have a view on that myself, but Seán might be able to help out further. I think he is more on the coalface when it comes to this.

Group Director, Education:

Thank you, Deputy Wickenden. Yes, Deputy Ward, currently there are 12 vacancies for teaching posts across Government of Jersey schools. We would expect that to rise because, as you rightly know, there are only 3 resignation points, or rather whenever a teacher serves their notice it affects only at 3 points of the year, which is 31st May, and indeed many people considering retirement or world travel or a change of direction because they care about children tend to do it at the end of the

academic year. We are expecting that. We have had some very successful recruitment in those schools that have advertised posts, for example, with responsibility points. We are seeing some Jersey young teachers who went travelling around the world or went to overseas schools for 2 or 3 years, quite a number in a few of our schools coming back to their Island home. As you know with our colleagues in H.R., led by school leaders, we keep a close eye on that but it would be as you would expect a little quieter this year at this time, but it could change in the next almost exactly calendar month today.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We will be in contact regards that. In response to the panel's recommendations you explained that the Government of Jersey were intending to improve the process of staff who undertake the leavers' questionnaire. What progress has been made in that regard and is the new electronic process to automatically send a member of staff a formal offer of an exit interview up and running, and if not when is this system expected to be in place?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

Another excellent question. Seán, are you able to respond to that? I think it is important.

Group Director, Education:

Yes, my understanding is you are quite right, Deputy Ward, and we have discussed this properly through Scrutiny over a period. The People Hub now automatically email any leaver a note acknowledging their formal resignation, their retirement, whatever the process by which they have announced to the employer that they are leaving and they are automatically given a link to the leavers' survey with the encouragement that they complete that. Obviously as we get the first tranche of those in it will be a key part of the analysis of trends as to the reasons for movement and change in our profession. My understanding from colleagues in the People Hub is that it is already up and running.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is there a part of the People Hub specifically aligned to education now or is it still the general People Hub?

Group Director, Education:

As you know People Hub work under the C.L.S. (Customer and Local Services). I see some of the same names and people in the People Hub so I believe they have got some people assigned to our roles but apologies, I can certainly check for you about the current structure. It is an essential service across all government departments and employment under the S.E.B. (States Employment Board).

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think one of the issues regarding exit interviews is that they are generic and just a paper exercise and not a lot was learned from them, so that would be really interesting to know about. Just a couple more things. What actions have you identified in order to reduce the workload of teachers within the Government of Jersey, which was one of the huge issues that came up in our recruitment and retention review and has been something that has come up again and again?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

The actions we have identified are to reduce teacher workloads, so we have got some policies ready to be launched in the autumn term. Promotional material is to be completed for all Government of Jersey staffrooms, all schools are expected to incorporate into the school improvement plan workload related to the 2 documents that I mentioned earlier. All schools have organised a workload working party to look at the 2 documents and internal practice, so schools' recommendations to be incorporated into their S.I.P.s (school improvement plan) is for 2021-2022. S.A.s will monitor all of the S.I.P.s and meet with the working parties on a termly basis to establish how the schools are addressing workload issues and feedback is being captured by the Department for Education. I think Seán may be able to bulk that out a bit.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So you have said S.I.P.s. What do you mean by those, Deputy?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

School improvement plans.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Right. Are they the ones that come after inspection or are you talking just in terms of their yearly school planning?

Group Director, Education:

If I may help there, it is the annualised cycle. Some schools go for a 3 or 4-year vision now called an S.D.P. (school development plan) or a school improvement plan. We are saying to all schools with the regular visits of the senior adviser that workload and workload planning mediation needs to be a component part with school level bodies. Indeed, my next meeting after this is with Graham Charsley and colleagues in People Services as we continue to look at the balance of workload and staff well-being. I know our new chief executive and the leadership of C.Y.P.E.S. are very concerned that we do all that we can. Obviously we are focused on the teaching and school support workforce, but workload is a focus across school improvement planning for all of our schools for the next academic year.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, so what is being actioned day to day to ensure it is consistently applied? I understand policies. Policies are great and plans are great but the actions of teachers and what is expected of them to get outcomes can often be somewhat detached from the reality of what they are doing day to day and workload simply does not change. What could a teacher see different after these policies are enacted?

[11:30]

What is it going to look like for them? Will there be a limit on the number of hours expected to do marking? Will there be a limit on the generation of marking? Will there be a limit on removal of triple marking on pieces of work, on lesson planning in primary schools and the level of those? What is it going to look like?

Group Director, Education:

If I may, Deputy Wickenden. I think, Deputy Ward, you show your strong subject knowledge here because indeed the working groups with all of our unions on things like marking, on assessment, on removing any duplication, when we look at the reviews of our primary and secondary assessment frameworks one of the prisms that we are looking at is what is the value of the assessment activity, what is the value of the marking, what is the value of the work scrutiny for outcomes for children and young people, which is the main driver of education? One of the prisms we look through is what impact is that on the best use of a teacher's time or indeed support staff? As well as a mechanism to meet at half-term with teachers' unions, we are now doing it with all support staff unions as well and so they are partners in that work.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I see a question from Senator Vallois, but just a couple of things I must pick up on. For example, I can always remember the strange situation where one would have to provide written proof of verbal feedback, which seemed to me ridiculously bureaucratic and a lack of trust in teaching staff. Is that the sort of thing that will be addressed in terms of workload, those nuances that happen day to day where we seem to have developed this desperate need for proof for everything that is going on? Is that the sort of area that will be addressed? It will be very popular if it is.

Group Director, Education:

I think as you are aware, Deputy, the department in its first guise has never required those devices.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is a shame they existed. Just to say, this is the thing, the detachment between what the department wants to happen in policy and the reality of it. I ask because post-COVID when so many teachers have taken that classroom into their home and they have been working from home and teaching online, and they are still doing that, there is an even further lack of demarcation of the line between home and work and that is where workload really does become overwhelming. Is the department acting on that? Minister, are you aware of that as an issue that could arise into the future in terms of workload, i.e., the workload challenges are changing and we need to be aware of them?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

I agree absolutely. I think everyone could see over what has been going on certainly with working from home and doing the classrooms what a great job a lot of teachers really did to make sure that education continued during that difficult time. I am very clear that the workload is changing in the way that we are doing it and we are going to change the way we deliver education through the reform programme. There will be a change in workload and the policies have to align with that way of working.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay. Senator Vallois, do you have a question? I realise we are just about at the end of our time but please do.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Yes, we are almost finished but it is just a quick question. Seán mentioned the value of assessments and how that particular piece of work is being considered around the workload for teachers. How is consideration for the voice of the child taken into account for that in terms of assessments or marking and how that feedback process works for the child?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

Seán, I think I will let you answer.

Group Director, Education:

That is a really apposite question, Senator Vallois, because it has shifted. I know a considerable amount of work is being done for the young people at the sharp end of these changes and those are the ones in the examination years. Deputy Ward referred earlier to the fact that last year by diktat outwith the Island of Jersey, obviously beyond our ken, the cancellation of formal exams. This year the Secretary of State for Schools in England in the United Kingdom Government did the same, but of course a version of this. Our schools have been talking to the year 11 and year 13 students about how they marshal, because teachers' assessment has completely changed. Teachers are working

on centre-assessed grades, on building the evidence, still unsure what the external scrutiny and moderation will look like. I have seen some remarkable evidence of young people through their school councils and the forums, which have been harder to meet because mixed bubbles have not been enabled and we have had real challenges. The engagement of teachers and their students on what you need to do, we have got really strong school codes of conduct. A young person cannot say to a teacher: "What grade are you going to give me?" The interplay of what is important has been brought into sharp relief with assessment because term exams in 2020 and in 2021 and all that flows from that, we have had to change our practice and it has been salutary, school by school, to see young people inputting to that process. We do want to stand up school councils again. We have got the new Youth Parliament, the Children's Rights Impact Assessment we did in COVID looked specifically at how we listen to children and young people about their experiences. I think it is across the piece. As Deputy Ward said, the impact of COVID on workload by being in your home as well, but we know teachers and staff are the front line workers who were pretty much in the workplace throughout from last March. We continue to pay cognisance of this, but to answer your question, Senator Vallois, at a concrete level young people in those critical years where decisions are made for future pathways and routes to the next stage of learning and life have been strong.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay. We are coming to an end. I suppose one final thing I would ask the Minister: is the "put children first" pledge still alive and strong in the department and are you committed to that?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

Yes, I signed the pledge in May 2019, I believe, so I am committed to that. Thank you.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Thank you, and just to say if there are any questions you have got for us at the end ... we have quite a few questions and we have got some we did not ask, so we will put them in writing, as we normally do. Are there any questions that you want to ask the panel before we close the hearing?

Assistant Minister for Children and Education:

No. I just want to carry on working closely with your panel and Scrutiny on what is going on. Only by working together will we get the best outcomes collaboratively. I thank you for your questions today. I think they were excellent and I am going to use some of them when I do my school visits to ask teachers from the coalface if they think that their funding is right, if they think their workload is right. I am going to use what you have asked me today when I go to a St. Mary's School visit after this meeting now and I will be speaking to the teachers there.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is good to hear that and I thank everybody, and I advise to do that without any senior management present in the school because you will get a much truer answer, but anyway. I thank everybody for their input today, thank you to all the officers and we will look forward to the next hearing, whoever that may be, and we will see how we go. I call the hearing to a close. Thank you very much.

[11:38]