



Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel

Witness: The Minister for Infrastructure

Monday, 1st October 2018

Panel:

Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade (Chairman)

Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville (Vice-Chairman)

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence

Witnesses:

The Minister for Infrastructure

Assistant Minister for Infrastructure

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment

Group Director, Operations and Transport

Director, Property and Special Projects

Director, Capital Projects

Director, Transport

[11:09]

Connétable M.K. Jackson of Brelade:

Once again we will just launch into this quarterly public hearing for the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel by asking everybody to whip round the room and define themselves. Myself, I am Connétable Mike Jackson, Chairman of the Panel.

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence:

Deputy Kirsten Morel, Member of the Panel.

Connétable J.E. Le Maistre of Grouville:

Connétable John Le Maistre, Vice-Chairman.

Director, Capital Projects:

Chris Sampson, Director of Engineering and Infrastructure.

Director, Transport:

Tristan Dodd, Director of Transport.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Deputy Kevin Lewis, Minister for Infrastructure.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Ellen Littlechild, Group Director of Operations and Transport.

Director General:

John Rogers, Director General of Growth, Housing and Environment.

Director, Property and Special Projects:

Ray Foster, Director of Property and Special Projects.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Welcome everybody and I am going to launch straight off by asking what your strategic priorities are over the next 12 months.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Our priority, Chairman, is to provide travel choices for Jersey that reduce the reliance on the private car, provide access for all and protect and improve the quality of life. We want to do this at the same time as reducing the number of people being injured in road traffic accidents.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Sorry, I am just going to ask, number two, you said, is 'access for all'?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Transport generally, public vehicles, buses et cetera.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Okay, so specifically on public transport?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No.

The Connétable of Grouville:

For somebody who lives out in the countryside, it is not easy to provide regular bus services to these more isolated places so you have got a big problem, have you not?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have tried all sorts with Liberty Bus. We have tried several experiments but it is supply and demand. We have taken buses to the north of the Island and certain routes have come back empty but obviously it is a bus service and we try to serve the community.

The Connétable of Grouville:

People living in those areas have to rely on other forms of transport, usually a car.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Places like Grouville, for instance, are pretty well served but if you live further out then sometimes you need to get access to the main routes, as it were.

Director, Transport:

Over the last 5 years we have made a significant improvement in terms of bus timetabling so the type of service the Island now enjoys in winter time was what the Island previously enjoyed in summer time and what that means for people in the more isolated areas is there now is a 7-day a week service, which there was not 5 years ago, and there are buses in the evening. You are right, you cannot have the same frequency of service as you might do on the south coast because the economics do not add up, so running between Gorey to the airport, however there is a service for commuters and there is a core service provided to stop social isolation, provide that community service throughout the day and into the early evening throughout the year now and summer service is even higher again.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Obviously as money allows, we are putting out more and more bus shelters to make waiting a more pleasurable experience for the people of Jersey, and the bus app which is very good, Track My Bus, it shows you when the next bus is coming along, will show you a map of Jersey and exactly where your bus is at that particular time in real time so it saves waiting around too long.

Director, Transport:

Access for all is much wider than just the buses because access is also about having safe crossing points so people can walk easily because that is a great part of wellbeing. If you can encourage people to walk you get mental health and physical health benefits which feed into the health system and then there is making the taxis more accessible, tactile pavings throughout town so that people who have got a disability can navigate with more ease, that sort of thing.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I was going to ask: do you have any strategic priorities outside of transport?

Director, Transport:

The other part is maintaining the infrastructure we have got and ensuring we have got a resilient infrastructure in terms of our sea defences, sewage treatment plant, our investment in solid waste and those other areas so the society is able to withstand adverse events really.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

How do you balance that strategic necessity over access to all and its consequent urbanisation with maintaining the character of the Island?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is a balancing act for which we have been brutally criticised. We have speed reductions going in next year in both Grouville and St. Helier within the ring road, also Havre des Pas and you have probably seen the press releases. We have 2 crossings going on Longville Road, St. Saviour, which is a bit of a rat run. We have done quite a few crossings. We have lots in the pipeline with pelican crossings and even a submission for a toucan crossing, which is the same as a pelican only with bikes, on the railway walks but it is an ongoing programme.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

No one would question the need for safety but would you not consider that sometimes the imposition of these crossings in country areas is perhaps not appropriate from the point of view of the character of the Island? I agree there has to be a balancing act.

[11:15]

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is a balancing act and we are removing some older and redundant signs that might be superfluous now to try and preserve the character of the Island but it is a fine balancing act, I agree.

Director, Transport:

Can I give you an example? In the St. Peter's Valley path, we have tried to use materials there that match the environment so we have used a wooden crash barrier, we have used brown asphalt to try and blend it into the landscape and to try and match the aesthetic. There are some measures, particularly where you have important thorough-throughs where you need to draw driver's attention to the fact that there are likely to be pedestrians there and it is a busy crossing and it is not just them that have right of way, that other people have right to that road space.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

A number of years ago we did the barriers going up Beaumont Hill on the left and they were very special barriers that the team had sourced. They are steel barriers but they are clad in wood so aesthetically they look far superior to just a plain steel barrier going up the road. In fact, we had calls from a lot of other Connétables out there saying: "Can we have that please?" so it is ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

There has been a lot of traffic calming measures over the last decade, maybe 2 decades, and yet the number of road accidents is going up. Is there any explanation for that?

Director, Transport:

I am not sure that they are going up. I think what we have seen is a slower decline in accidents than what we would have wanted and we really need to push that up to the next level. Of course there are basically more people on the Island and there is more traffic so you are going to have an increase in accidents because the likelihood of the 2 conflicting is more prevalent.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have done as much as we can with the cycle track. The team are working on the final few sections which will enable people to cycle from Corbière to Havre des Pas without encroaching on traffic and that is in its final stages now.

Director, Transport:

In terms of road safety, we have got a strategy which is the Road Safety Action Plan which we developed with the parishes and the parish police and we are engaging very readily with the States police so it is about not just engineering, it is about engineering, education and enforcement and that is the triangle which you can use to drive down your road traffic accidents. Things like the accessibility measures we are talking about, they also add to road safety, as does the speed limit review and the traffic calming.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Perhaps you could go on to the capital projects. We will start with the Future Hospital. Can you tell us where it is? Is it on hold, is there work still going on?

Director General:

Right.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

We do not want you to take too long over this, just a quick, succinct answer to where you think we might be, because we appreciate there are lots of other things going on.

Director General:

Okay. We have currently got all the mandate to carry on in terms of States decisions. The Chief Minister and Council of Ministers have agreed to set up a policy bar which is reviewing the decision on location. They have acknowledged the need for a new hospital and they are going through an evidence based process in parallel to the existing scheme moving forwards. The existing scheme last week went through a planning inspector's review which was a week-long review and again, that is another parallel stream of work which is ongoing. The inspector will be reporting back as soon as possible but we hope within 5 or 6 weeks.

Director, Property and Special Projects:

An indication was somewhere between 6 and 8 weeks from the end of the inspection being published, which was the 22nd of September, so we are hoping for early November ideally.

The Connétable of Grouville:

In essence, you are carrying on as though the hospital will be the choice, until such time as you are told otherwise?

Director General:

Yes, the reason for that is that time is the critical element on this project in terms of the longevity and the aged condition of the existing hospital as well as the inflation relevance of any delay so those are the 2 things we are balancing off. The Chief Minister and his review panel are going to hopefully report at a similar time to when the inspector's report comes in and at that point we should hopefully gain clarity to the directions going forward.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Let us just go on to some of the other projects. The sewage treatment plant is online. The new sewage plant is something that is agreed and when will that commence?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

The contractors will be on site at the beginning of next year and we hope that the new sewage treatment works will be complete by 2022.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Regarding the office modernisation project with everybody moving to La Motte Street, I had a parishioner contact me who was worried about access for the elderly. There is no parking there as far as I know. You have moved a whole load more services down there so a lot of services will not be accessible to the elderly. Is there a way of sorting that problem out?

Director General:

There is a concern about La Motte Street and its accessibility. There is disability parking in the area and we are reviewing the parking provision locally to that site. The direction of travel is that everything is going to be digital. Obviously there will always be a need for a face to face element and La Motte Street handles lots of those issues now with people with disabilities so it is the most fit for purpose customer area we have at present, and other services are going in there so hopefully we will manage that but we will take a close eye in terms of the street and where people are parking and make sure there is enough disability parking in that area.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Did you say there was some already? Where is that?

Director General:

There is some already on that street, on the kerbside.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

When do you expect that particular project to be complete, as in the move into La Motte Street of the customer facing services?

Director, Property and Special Projects:

There are a number of things happening in parallel but 2 principal things in relation to our interim office relocation, one is the moving of customer facing services and back office tax services to La Motte Street. Customer facing activities are happening now and that is in train. Work is underway now to prepare the building for moving the back office tax services to combine with social security tax office functions, but the likely move is after the tax hot period in January. The other activity that is happening is moving, effectively, the main functions currently in Cyril Le Marquand House to go with some other administrative functions into Broad Street, which is a property we have procured under a lease. That is of a similar timescale. Broad Street will become a leasehold property of

the States in November. There is an early access license granted for works and works are being undertaken at the moment but part of that building is still occupied by the previous owner and occupier. The expectation is those works will be finished in part this side of Christmas to allow the site to be used for explaining and communicating the move to staff who will be moving, so there will be some live desk setups, there will be some communications material on that site but again, the expectation is that you would start to move people after the January close period so towards the end of January and in a managed fashion between then and the middle to the end of February.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you anticipate Cyril Le Marquand House will be demolished?

Director, Property and Special Projects:

We have looked at the ability to refurbish or repurpose Cyril Le Marquand House but the site lends itself to be demolished and rebuilt as something that is more appropriate for that location.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Have you got a timescale on that at this point?

Director, Property and Special Projects:

Not to maturity but the expectation is that once it is vacated then we still have to move some other functions, particularly the I.S. functions that are there. The property will be vacant as of quarter one next year and we would expect plans to be brought forward for its demolition or disposal and that is going to be worked through in that timeline so we would not expect it to remain as an unoccupied building long in 2019.

The Connétable of Grouville:

We come on to Fort Regent. What is the state of play with Fort Regent?

Director, Property and Special Projects:

The projects going on at the moment are the 2 demolitions. The cable car station demolition is in progress, awarded to a local demolition company following a normal tendering process. The works started in the middle of August. We expect it to finish in early November. They are on time, on track and there is nothing coming out of that work that is causing us problems. Following on from that and probably on site early next year now will be the demolition of the swimming pool itself. We have received tenders back from interested parties. Those tenders are being reviewed at the moment and there may be options to reduce the cost we can explore in those tenders so that is a matter for discussion. It is not public record at the moment but the expectation is that we will have completed those discussions by the end of this month and start to procure the demolition process.

We need to look at whether there are any further planning issues to deal with but the expectation is that the demolition will start early next year and will take somewhere between 8 or 9 months to complete.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

In terms of the future of the Fort itself and forward planning for potential events which do take a long time to get in train, have you any thoughts as to which direction we are going in? It all seems to be a bit grey at the moment.

Director General:

Yes, I think if you look at the recent issue with asbestos and the age of the Fort, the infrastructure, I think this is the beginning of the end for its current use and we are looking at how we can reinvigorate the fort and do something slightly different with it. That work has started, and if anybody recalls, it has been a challenge for the last 20 years in terms of the viability of the fort and what it should and should not do. It is tricky because it is a fort, which is designed to stop people getting in there and yet once you are in there it is a really good space so there is a problem about accessibility and the fact that it is a listed structure so we have to reimagine what we are going to do there and try to find a solution which is viable for the next 50 years.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Could it be put over to private enterprise and perhaps a hotel as has been suggested in the past?

Director General:

There is talk about it. The affection Jersey has with the Fort is something that we should not underestimate but I think all options should be considered and I think some form of public access or public ownership would be needed because it is a fantastic facility but we just need to find what it is going to be in its next life. It has been a coal yard; it has been a fort. It has been a fantastic facility for Jersey. I think we need to look at the next one.

The Connétable of Grouville:

You are not really sure what is going to happen to the rest of it?

Director General:

There are lots of options and they are very political.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Indeed. It does have a tremendous amount of use I think. I was told, but I am not sure if it is true, about 15,000 people a week go visiting the sports facilities. It is very well used, not to mention the

Gloucester Hall when there is something on there. It is a very well used fort but as John said, it has got very tired now, it does need an awful lot of money spending on it and it needs to be brought up to a good standard.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Is there a problem with the roof that needs fixing?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The roof does leak, there are quite ...

Director General:

There is a problem with everything. When was the roof put in, how many years ago?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

30 or something?

Director General:

Yeah, must be 30.

The Connétable of Grouville:

What is your plan for it? Are you working on a plan? It is going to be like the swimming pool, left for 20 years without doing anything.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We cannot leave it, that is the whole thing. The swimming pool, sadly, is completely beyond repair. That has to come down and obviously Ray will be dealing with that, the demolitions and such like. The cable car is in the process of being demolished. As John said, it is a fort designed to keep people out and we lost the cable car that did that so we need another form of access to Fort Regent to get people easy access from Snow Hill that is at reasonable cost. The actual redevelopment of Fort Regent, that will be for the States as a whole to decide, on a political level.

Director General:

It is peculiar that we shut an asset down and the cable cars were shut in ... anybody remember?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

1988 I think.

Director General:

Okay. They shut an asset down in 1988 and then you start demolishing that asset 30 years later. It is a very peculiar way of managing your asset stock and your investment.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It is the same with the swimming pool.

Director General:

It is the same with the swimming pool so once the swimming pool shut there was an illogical thing about budgets and planning and various other things which left it as it is to the point where it has become a carbuncle and a risk so we have to think better about our assets and how we manage them because it is a very dominant building and if you look at the skyline, our Island shone this weekend when the Super League Triathlon was on. There were some beautiful pictures and up there you see this old swimming pool which does not suit what the Island is trying to achieve so we have to be better about how we manage those things.

[11:30]

The Connétable of Grouville:

There are some works to improve the prison as well. Is that ...

Director, Property and Special Projects:

That is correct. The prison is being redeveloped in a number of phases based on a master plan and the master plan was reviewed early this year confirming the next phase, which is phase 6 and those of you who have been to the prison in a Monopoly sense, just visiting rather than ...

[Laughter]

you will see there is a gatehouse which is lovely and new but stops at a point which is halfway through its construction. The gatehouse was built in 2 parts by design and also in relation to funding availability at the time so the next phase, phase 6, creates the second half of the gatehouse and it provides the main vehicle access into the prison. The benefits are operational for the prison but they are also aesthetic because it tidies up what is a pretty ugly area of external space and provides the front door of the prison with a much more attractive feature. You will have noticed in the local press recently we have a new Director General of Justice Services, which includes the prison and a new Prison Governor and a new ministerial team. I met with them a couple of weeks ago and while they are generally happy with the instruction or with the proposals, prior to them being lodged for planning they wanted a further review, as much as anything to understand exactly how it works in situ and what the options were then released for development within the prison going forwards so

we have a hold up of roughly 4 weeks while we revisit that, which is perfectly appropriate and proper. New people, new ideas and new directions need to be taken into account so we are looking forward to that but it is moving forward. There are further phases to come in relation to the prison and they will need to be bid for in the cycle of capital works that will be from 2020 onwards.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Finally, Les Quennevais School, has the land been acquired or is that still ongoing, is that a concern?

Director, Property and Special Projects:

Do you want me to speak on that as well, Minister?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, please.

Director, Property and Special Projects:

We have acquired almost all of the land but there is one ownership of land in 2 parcels that we have yet to acquire. You will recall the States, prior to its summer recess, voted unanimously 46-0 to effect compulsory purchase processes. We are in the cycle of issuing notices in accordance with the compulsory purchase law and there has been correspondence between the owners' lawyers and the law offices department over the course of the last week. I cannot really go into detail in public other than to say that if we can find a solution that is acceptable to both parties, it has to be acceptable to the Public. Short of reaching a conclusion of compulsory purchase, we will seek to do so but it has got to be an arrangement that is fairly reasonable.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Clearly the process of the purchase of this land has been quite long and protracted and it is always easy in hindsight but within the department, do you feel that if you did it again you would do it in a different way?

Director, Property and Special Projects:

Chair, I think it is quite difficult to vary too far from what is a reasonable process having gone through a consultation exercise to identify this site as the preferred site and obtain planning permission for the site then negotiate through an open process through the landowners. The landowners chose to negotiate collectively rather than individually and we were happy to do that. It is just unfortunate that although all bar one were happy to negotiate collectively, at the eleventh hour the last one dropped out having agreed terms with us and we were expecting to finalise those terms and go to court. Would it have been easier to acquire the whole of the site? Possibly. Would it have been easier to have effected compulsory purchase in parallel? One feels that that is overstepping

Government's authority. We are very clear that what we seek to do is reach an agreement with third parties that is fair and reasonable and supported by independent evaluations, so the short answer is I would rather not be where I am but I find it difficult to see how I could not be where I am.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Is it going to delay the project?

Director, Property and Special Projects:

The project is moving forward and we are undertaking what works we can on the sites that we own. It is getting to the point of a critical path issue in relation to how much work we can do before it starts out of sequence works and there start to become inefficiencies in the build. The contractor has been remarkably tolerant and remarkably flexible in terms of trying to keep this project on track. I think it is worth pointing out that the target for completion of this project is July 2020 in order to move the school over the summer period and commence the new term, September 2020, in the new facilities. If we slip beyond the July 2020 completion dates you lose a whole school year because you cannot move the school at Christmas or Easter, a Secondary School, so by necessity we are in the position of having to seek to conclude the land purchase as quickly as is reasonable.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Perhaps you could confirm? I seem to recall in the debate on the compulsory purchase there was a timescale set out to conclude the matter. Where are we exactly with that?

Director, Property and Special Projects:

We are probably a month or 2 adrift from the timescale which is why we need to ensure that we maintain momentum on the scheme in all areas.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes. Finally, on that one, can I just ask if there are any thoughts as to what the ultimatum fate of the former school site might be?

Director, Property and Special Projects:

I am almost tempted to say, Chair, that I refer myself to the previous answer. The existing school is in a residential area and will lend itself to residential development. The exact nature of that development and whether it is combined for other facilities perhaps are still matters for debate. We will be occupying that school, as I say, until 2020 but with a new Government in place and new Ministers, that is something I am sure will be on the agenda very soon because we will need to discuss the future so we do not end up with a facility that becomes boarded up or unused.

Director General:

We will do it with the new Connétable as well.

Director, Property and Special Projects:

Absolutely, the new Connétable is key to have.

[Laughter]

Deputy K.F. Morel:

You have discussed 6 capital projects. Can I ask whether there are any upcoming capital projects or potential ones in the pipeline that we have not discussed?

Director, Property and Special Projects:

There are a couple of infrastructure ones. I think Chris ...

Director, Capital Projects:

The general asset maintenance programme for the roads, sea defences and drainage is ongoing. We have programmes in place for those and contractors on board for carrying out those through 2018/2019. We have £1.5 million for road safety improvements which are the smaller type things, crossings et cetera and we have programmes in place for those up to the end of 2019 and developing programmes further than that so it is more of the same really but those are in place.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

There is always concern about the lack of investment in the roadway structure. Do you think there is enough funding in the current programme to bring the roads up to the standard that the public seem to expect?

Director, Capital Projects:

No, the roads have been under funded for the best part of 20 years. The return period for repairs now is greater than 30 years but the level of investment which we have got now through the infrastructure maintenance rolling vote is higher than we have ever had so we are making some inroads into that backlog but we are still under funded. We have requested additional funding for the next 2 Medium Term Financial Plans and that is subject to political approval now.

Director General:

Infrastructure is boring, it is not very sexy but it becomes really exciting when it fails so the investment strategy is you assume it lasts 100 years. Whether that is a sewer or a road, that means it is going to have its surface redone a couple of times over its life but if we assume it lasts 100 years then you

need 1 per cent of the infrastructure value per annum. It is a very rough calculation but one that has some validity. If we have that figure it is a big cost. We have a team delivering that and it does make a difference and it means that you are not going backwards with your infrastructure. As soon as that number drops so that you are assuming your assets are going to last 150 years, that is when you start losing out and that is when you start seeing the degradation and we have had times in the recent period where financial constraints have meant that money has not been spent and we have got to fight for that, but it is not exotic.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Of course most infrastructure, unless it is Fort Regent, does not last 100 years.

Director General:

You assume, it is a very simple accountancy ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I know it is an assumption but ...

Director General:

Yes. The sewers do because the Romans did some of them.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Yes, the older stuff does. The original Fort Regent does but the 1970s or 1960s conversion does not.

Director General:

Yes, but an infrastructure is sea defences, sewers and roads so you just make that assumption for that. When it comes to buildings, I am with you, that is a very different thing because the end of the assets are 15 years.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Perhaps a question for The Minister. Would it be competent to increase the bid for roads?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Absolutely. We have 2 Connétables here and you know that constantly repairing roads, it is very expensive and I would love to see an additional £7 million per year for the next ten years to really bring all the Island's roads up to scratch but, as I say, we are not holding our breath.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Are you confident that the new street works law will control the sort of degradation we have had to deal with because of poor instances here?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The team worked on that for a long, long time and I am sure that is going to go a long way towards helping preserve what roads we have, that everyone is very much online now, all the Jersey Gas, Jersey Electricity, all the utility companies are on board now and they go through our department if they need to do any work. In fact, it works both ways. We say: "Look, we are going to resurface that road July next year so if you want to do any work, you do it now", so that we are not constantly building roads and they come along and dig it all up again, unless it is an absolute emergency with a burst main or something. That is going a long way to preserving the state of our roads.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you have the resource in the department to verify that the reinstatements do get done as they are supposed to be?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

They are checked. Do you want to comment, Chris?

Director, Capital Projects:

We have a small resource but as part of the new street works law, the States agreed to bring in a permit charge so from January next year everyone who applies for a permit to work on the roads will be paying a fee for that and that fee will be used to employ 2 new highways inspectors and so they will be out from January keeping a close eye on contractors but the law gives us other benefits inasmuch as the embargos are now moving up to 5 years so unless it is an emergency, you cannot go in that road once it has been resurfaced. We do work closely with the service companies but they have a programme of asset maintenance themselves for renewals. Their infrastructure does not last for ever but we are much more in control of them now than we were in the past so we do everything we can but unfortunately there are over 5,000 road openings a year so we have to manage that the best we can.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Back underground again, or perhaps a bit of over ground as well really, Jersey's solid waste strategy was last published in 2005, I remember it well. What work, if any, has been undertaken to revisit this and what are your plans there?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Certainly I think we are going to be developing a new waste strategy over the next couple of years and as part of that waste strategy we will be looking at lots of different things. We will be looking at legislation, we will be looking at charging again and looking at how we encourage other initiatives so we are hoping to start working on that at the end of this year and certainly it is a priority from next year onwards.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you envisage much change? We have been talking earlier about charging for waste disposal. Are there any other fundamental changes that you see in the pipeline?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I think this is something where we have definitely got to do more work with the parishes to do with kerbside recycling before providing more facilities for commercial recycling and providing more support so that is certainly something we like to encourage doing and doing differently.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thanks.

The Connétable of Grouville:

What about solid waste charge? Is that going to happen, or domestic, non-domestic?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Solid waste charge is still obviously included within the medium term financial plan. Again, with a new Council of Ministers, that solid waste charging will be looked at as to whether that is something they still want to pursue within the timescales that have previously been outlined.

The Connétable of Grouville:

That is a Council of Ministers decision, presumably? Is it on the table then?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Not at present.

The Connétable of Grouville:

We have looked around the energy from waste plants. We have been told by a number of people that glass is a real problem. Have you considered bringing in a fine for people who put glass in their everyday refuse?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I think it is very difficult managing the everyday refuse to try and work out where the glass is coming from. It is something we have certainly been doing a lot of work with. We now have a glass campaign that is going out there because we are finding that there are lots of contaminants within the glass we wish to be recycling so again we are doing a lot of work on education and working with contractors. It is very difficult to prevent the glass that is going in a parish dust cart, to try and work out where that is coming from but that again it is working with the parishes to make sure that if they see a bin with lots of glass in there, they do that education with the householder.

[11:45]

The Connétable of Grouville:

There are 2 sides to it, are there not? You want clean glass but you also do not want the glass in the energy from waste plant.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

If you stand next to the refuse truck as it is tipping and unloading, you can hear it clinking away.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Other jurisdictions fine people for having the wrong waste.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

They do but as Ellen said, it is very hard to pin it down and to tell which trucks are coming in. The rural parish trucks or the country parish trucks, there is a difference and of course it is different if you have lots of small bedsits or apartments in an area and they do not separate. Obviously that is going to end up in the refuse as well. It is one for education to encourage people. Most places have got a glass collection within a short distance away so it is one for education.

The Connétable of Grouville:

You are not going to chase shadows if there is no penalty. You can educate and most reasonable people will make sure their glass is separated but a lot who do not care ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is a start. It is very hard to pin down people. Short of going through everyone's rubbish individually, it is very hard to pin it down.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

What we have done is a lot of work with the contractors and the parishes so it is the contractors, for example, when collecting parish waste, that have got to be proactive, even leaving householder's

bin there if they have left glass to make sure that they go through and separate that before they will collect them. I think we have contractors that pick up all the waste and all the material. It is great in some ways but also it is that education when receiving things like glass that we do not want to be receiving at the energy from waste plant.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There is a system coming into place soon that if the parish does a glass collection and your glass happens to be contaminated in some way, they will just leave it there and put a sticker on it saying: "Please sort this out" so next time around people will really make sure their glass is clean, remove the tops, remove everything they can.

The Connétable of Grouville:

I am just as concerned about the glass going into the energy from waste plant because I am aware it is hundreds of thousands of pounds to keep that going. It is a problem and it seems to me we should be doing everything we possibly can to make sure that glass is not going in there.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, it is. Absolutely.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Moving on to vehicle emissions duty, Minister, do you consider the current level to be appropriate? Do you think it is set at the right level?

Director, Transport:

I think the problem with V.E.D. (Vehicle Emissions Duty) as it is currently established is it is a one-off charge and so it is of limited use in terms of trying to encourage people to change. In the U.K. (United Kingdom), V.E.D. is charge annually. If you have a car with high emissions, then you pay for that harm every year and that is a cost that you have to factor into running that car which incentivises you to run cleaner cars. I think the problem at the moment is because it is that one charge, where someone has a larger vehicle, they might hold on to that larger polluting vehicle for longer rather than pay the extra to get a new vehicle so I think it can have perverse consequences that were not intended.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

With regard to the new charging structure, could you just clarify what the maximum increase was from when you introduced the new charging structure?

Director, Transport:

I should refer it to the Connétable really. We put forward an inflationary rise in V.E.D. which was 2.5 per cent. There was an amendment to that by the Connétable for Grouville which raised it to 5 per cent and that 5 per cent was just applied across the bands.

The Connétable of Grouville:

The bands were adjusted slightly as well which may mean slightly more of an increase for some things.

Director, Transport:

Yes, it did tighten them up. I have a sheet if you want to know what the changes were for each one?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

We will have a look at it later.

The Connétable of Grouville:

We had somebody contact the panel who said it had gone up 100 per cent. Clearly it has gone up but not ...

Director, Transport:

No, it is 5 per cent.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Also, when you bring in new charges, what kind of feedback do you have from the motor trade, more than anything else?

Director, Transport:

We liaised with the motor trade on it and they did provide comment and it was a mixed bag to be honest with you. I could not really say that they were all against it or all for it. There were a range of opinions, because in Jersey, while there is a new car market, the majority of cars that are bought are second hand so there are a lot of second hand vehicles going through the trade as well.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Were you suggesting in answering your question before that perhaps we should have an annual charge and that would make a difference?

Director, Transport:

My perspective as a transport professional is 'yes' because I think it would be far more effective at incentivising behaviour because if you are buying a new car at £25,000 or something like that if it is a high range one, the amount that you pay on V.E.D. is only really a small amount compared to the total cost of the car so there is less incentive there and I think that is why the U.K. has gone for annual charges.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Maybe this could be a tri-annual charge.

Director, Transport:

It is a political decision. Perhaps that is for you to consider, Minister?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think certain Back-Benchers like to bring forward V.E.D. amendments.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Moving on to electric cars, what is the department doing to provide more facilities for electric cars, for increasing ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We would welcome the initiative to start with. I think the last time around we worked with Jersey Electricity to install at least 2 charging points in all of our multi-storey car parks but things are ongoing. Lots of big companies, Mercedes, BMW, even Land Rover now, were talking about going electric within the next 5 years so it is something we would encourage. Obviously with regard to pollution, the tunnel and a few hot spots we have, that will be a boon. We are working on a few projects. Do you want to comment?

Director General:

The vision for Jersey, if you look at it very simplistically, thinking about getting rid of the petrol car and diesel car and making it electric, you would just have an electric traffic jam and I think there is a bigger prize here in terms of looking at our transport infrastructure, how best we can spend the money we have to support these things, which changes the world, which changes what we do so what I would like is to have less cars. I think electric cars in the last 5 or 10 years have been playthings of middle class people, their little runabout, with their big car for their big trips away. This is becoming far more mainstream. Electric cars are something we are 100 per cent behind. Their environmental impact is interesting because of the battery issue but I think there will be a bigger prize to an electric bus system, there will be a bigger prize doing electric bicycles, which we have succeeded in doing before and I would like to do again, so I think what we can do is look at how we

change people's lives here using electric transport, the development of it and the electric car is part of it, not the headline: "Let us make all our cars electric" because we will just have miserable traffic jams and issues and still be building car parks and still have all the issues there. We can start bringing some of our road space out for sustainable transport.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have got this love affair with the internal combustion engine and we need to change our mentality because Jersey is 9 by 5 which is absolutely perfect for electric vehicles.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Given that they are increasing though, just in answer to the question, are you providing additional facilities?

Director, Transport:

We are working with the J.E.C. (Jersey Electricity Company) to upgrade the current chargers so that they will be able to charge faster and also to increase the number where there is demand.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I just want to make a comment that I prefer an electric traffic jam to a fossil fuel electric jam. It is still preferable.

Director General:

Indeed, but it is still a traffic jam.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have had comments recently about pollution in the tunnel which will be completely eliminated once electric vehicles come online in a serious way.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Can I ask a question about the knacker's yard? Again, somebody has approached us. How many animals go through the knacker's yard roughly in a year? Presumably all sorts of animals go through?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Yes, I am just looking at these pictures of the cows in front of me. In 2017 we disposed of 2,270 calves, nearly 300 cows, 115 sheep, 50 pigs, horses, dolphins, the number goes on.

The Connétable of Grouville:

This is the knacker's yard as opposed to the slaughterhouse?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

This is the knacker's yard. Also, they effectively disposed of 131 tonnes of waste from the abattoir within the knacker's yard.

The Connétable of Grouville:

The knacker's yard is all done humanely, it is done by professionals? How does that ...

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

We have a small team of 3 that operate 5 days a week so effectively Monday from a Wednesday to Saturday. They are all skilled knacker's yard men and effectively they go around to the farms and such like, working closely with the States vet, by whom we are regulated.

The Connétable of Grouville:

The abattoir itself, is that all running how it should be run, inspected regularly and ...

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

That is all heavily regulated. On the days that we are operating, the States vet is in attendance and then we also have a meat inspector that also checks the meat and the product as it is going through that process. Again, it is a great way for the States vet and the regulation team to work closely with the farmers and again, if there are any problems or issues with regards to welfare, they will be working with those farmers to try and resolve those issues.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you think we have reviewed it? I think when I was involved in 2009 it had had a lot of work done then. Are there any plans to review the abattoir again?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

It was reviewed in about 2016 by the environment department and economic development department who got an external to come into look at that again, which was very supportive, I think, of how the abattoir operated and those functions and although there were a few recommendations for improvement, generally it was to carry on and provide that service for the agricultural industry and other users.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Good.

The Connétable of Grouville:

We have also been approached by somebody who likes using the compost that you produce but it quite often has plastic in it. Is that a major issue and is there anything you can do about it or what are you doing about it?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

We do a lot to the compost to make sure that we screen out any plastics or contaminants. We also get that compost tested at least 6 times a year. We have passed every test again and that is looking at any kind of contaminants so we do sometimes people writing in saying: "There are some plastics" when people have taken photographs on the site. That is not normally when the compost is at the end of the process so by then most of those plastics and materials would have been screened out so we do not see that as an issue of plastics and contaminants within that product.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Is it screened out mechanically?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Yes, and we also have people doing inspections as well.

The Connétable of Grouville:

It should not be a problem then?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

No, it should not.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Moving on to bus fares, obviously linked with the previous transport, we have been contacted by members of the public who are asking about the department's position on the cash fare separation on Liberty buses and wondering what the department's position is on that.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It obviously slows down tremendously if people are paying cash but if they have the Avanchi card you can load a bus within several minutes.

Director, Transport:

Cash fares are now down to 27 per cent of the fares taken on the bus so they are reducing. It is a big advantage having contactless card payments because it just speeds up boarding which means that you can increase the service so at the moment we have got the number 15 which is every 15 minutes. There is potential, if we can get it up to all card boarding, that you might be able to get that down to every 12 minutes where you stop having a bus schedule and you just have a bus every 12 minutes and you just keep the headway between the buses. You have to have incentives to push people in that direction, so with the Oyster card, they did not have 100 per cent use of the Oyster card on buses until there was £1 differential between the cashless bus fare and the coin fare, if you like.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I was going to say, I think the differential is about 30 per cent at the moment. Do you feel comfortable with it being quite a considerable difference?

Director, Transport:

I think the numbers that speak for themselves in terms of growing ridership and so the bus service is becoming more and more popular and part of the reason it is becoming popular is convenience. People, when they have got their Avanchi card, get into the habit of using it and so it is building those habits in people and of course, if you can get on quickly, if you do not have to queue too long then that helps as well.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Also, sticking on that with the fare structures, something else that has been raised is obviously the lack of through fares. In Jersey you are having to pay every time you get on and off the bus. Is that something the department are ...

Director, Transport:

It depends if you have got an Avanchi card or not. If you have got the monthly Avanchi card, then you have unlimited travel for £1.50 for the day. If you have the annual one, which is obviously a big price when you first buy it, that is £1.35 for unlimited travel for a day but I think there are products there to suit people depending on what their habits are.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

For the less regular bus users who do not have an Avanchi card because they use the bus once or twice a year, they are paying the price.

Director, Transport:

Now it is £2 if you just have a contactless bank card. If you have a standard pay as you go Avanchi card I think it is £1.80, less again.

[12:00]

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It is more a question of if you want to go from Gorey to Corbière, is it not?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

That is why I say you are paying 2 fares. Is there no way ...

Director, Transport:

If you are not doing it frequently then it is not a big cost in terms of your life. If you are doing it frequently, get one of the monthly passes or weekly passes.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Are you speaking to Liberty Bus about the potential for changing that fare setup?

Director, Transport:

The way the contract is set up is that we basically do the regulation, so we undertake the regulatory side and they have the commercial risk and that has been a formula which has worked very well throughout the life of this bus contract so in order for them to hit their K.P.I.s (Key Performance Indicators) they have to grow ridership so they have to find that balance between what they do commercially, what services they operate and the amount of income they get to be able to reinvest into it. The risk for them is if they do not hit the K.P.I.s they will not get the contract extensions which means that the contract becomes more expensive for them because they have less time to write the capital off over so there is a financial incentive for them to grow the bus ridership and by that, their capital costs come down. It is a complex subject and if you would like, we could arrange to give a presentation to yourselves with the C.E.O. (Chief Executive Officer) of Liberty Bus at some point and talk about the overall aims of Liberty Bus as a social enterprise and a charity because all the money made goes back into the bus contract and is reinvested in services and bus shelters and the like.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The charities that receive money are not local charities. That is another question.

Director, Transport:

The charities that Liberty Bus have invested in here are predominantly Jersey charities. Most of the money that is made here goes back into the bus contract and running more services.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Goes back into the service?

Director, Transport:

Yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Some of the charitable donations go to U.K. charities?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

I think all of them, to be honest with you.

Director, Transport:

No, the money that is made here goes back into the bus service here. Liberty Bus do a social impact report which has it all detailed out so they invest in things like travel training for people who cannot use public transport on their own to try and give them that independence. They also invest in increasing the services, they supplied a copy of it through the key to the ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Yes, I read it, it is ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I am conscious of the time and I think we would welcome a discussion on that. I know there are a couple of last questions, jumping in.

The Connétable of Grouville:

The panel is aware of the recent recommendations of the States of Jersey Complaints Board, to which you have provided a response. Can you confirm whether you will be adopting all recommendations? This is in regard to the foreshore compensation claims.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Oh right. We have replied to those. Do you want to say anything about that?

Director, Property and Special Projects:

Yes, Sir, thank you, Chair. Yes, we have replied. The reply is quite complex and I am conscious that we are short of time. Are we going to take on all of the recommendations? The short answer is we will look at all the recommendations but some of them, we will not accept.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Speaking of the compensation, are they one-offs or every time the property changes hands, does somebody have to pay?

Director, Property and Special Projects:

No, they are not compensations per se. In very simple terms, encroachments are people building on or over our land, the Public's land and the transactions between the 2 parties represent the cost commercial value, determined through a number of ways, of the benefit that has been gained by that third party encroaching on to the Public's land so that is a one-off issue that normally would result in either an adjustment to that building right and withdrawing of the Public's land or remaining there having paid a payment and that payment is a one-off, so it is not a rent and the boundaries are normally adjusted or another deed of arrangement or deed or agreement put in place to recognise that, so it is not a ...

The Connétable of Grouville:

A pass contract to say that person now owns that land that he encroached on?

Director, Property and Special Projects:

That is correct. There is a lot of generalising in our conversation but in simple terms, that is correct. If the decision is that they can remain in situ, then the boundaries will be amended so they have ...

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The right of buying the land or buying the right of access or something like that, one or the other?

Director, Property and Special Projects:

That is correct.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I am sure we could discuss this further. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for attending today. I conclude this review and look forward to seeing you in another quarter's time.

[12:05]