



Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Panel

Quarterly Hearing

Witness: The Minister for Infrastructure

Tuesday, 16th April 2019

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, Panel Member

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier 3 and 4

Connétable S.A. Le Sueur-Rennard of St. Saviour

Witnesses:

Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour, The Minister for Infrastructure

Deputy H.C. Raymond of Trinity, The Assistant Minister for Infrastructure

Mr. J. Rogers, Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment

Mr. T. Dodd, Director of Transport

Mr. A. Scate, Group Director, Regulation

Mr. C. Sampson, Director of Engineering and Infrastructure, Growth, Housing and Environment

Mr. T. Daniels, Interim Assistant Director, Jersey Property Holdings

[11:38]

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

Welcome to this quarterly public hearing for the Minister for Infrastructure. We will just go round the table quickly and identify who we are, starting with.

Connétable S.A. Le Sueur-Rennard of St. Saviour:

I am Sadie Le Sueur Rennard, Constable of St. Saviour's.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Constable Mike Jackson, Chairman of the panel.

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

John Le Maistre, Constable of Grouville, Vice Chairman.

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier 3 and 4:

Deputy Inna Gardiner, St. Helier's 3 and 4.

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence:

Deputy Kirsten Morel, panel member.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

John Rogers, D. G of Growth, Housing and Environment.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Deputy Kevin Lewis, Minister for Infrastructure.

The Assistant Minister for Infrastructure:

Deputy Hugh Raymond, Assistant Minister for Infrastructure.

Group Director, Regulation:

Andy Scate, Group Director for Regulation.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

At the back?

Interim Assistant Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Tim Daniels, Interim Assistant Director for Estate and Asset Management Group.

Director of Transport:

Tristen Dodd, Head of Transport.

Director of Engineering and Infrastructure, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Chris Sampson, GHE.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Sorry, Chris Sampson?

Director of Engineering and Infrastructure, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Growth, Housing and Environment.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I was wondering what your role was in growth and housing.

Director of Engineering and Infrastructure, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I have now left Growth, Housing and Environment, I was in departments in previous projects.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Right, we are going to kick off with talking about a subject I know very well as does the Minister, the Sustainable Transport Plan. But we are going to have a new one.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There is a new one in the works. Who are we going to bring up first, Tristan, yes, SP3?

Director of Transport:

So the policy development undertaken by a unit within the States called SP3 and we will be working with them over this next Government plan to develop a new sustainable transport policy. The tenants of the previous ones will continue to exist and we are still working towards those targets, but it needs to be refreshed to take into account developments in technology and also changes in people's concerns and changing attitudes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Have you got a timeline on it?

Director of Transport:

The timeline I have on it is during this Government period.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Okay.

Director of Transport:

So we will be facilitating it, we will be doing the tactical implementation, and we will be feeding in the data and some of the expertise, but it is led within the unit. John might be able to add a little bit more about how Government works on this now.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes, so the strategies and policies are developed in that Department and for us that is driven by a Minister, Assistant Minister and the Environment Minister who are part of an overall group looking at the economy part of the Government plan. Also with the Deputy of Grouville who is part of the three Ministers who were actually supporting that. We have got the Assistant Ministers involved as well. First we have had two meetings, one last week where we discussed more of the tactical ambitions. So for example for the Minister for P.F.I. (Public Finance Initiative) we are pushing our fleet, we have got probably the biggest fleet in Jersey to be electrical by default. So we are trying to basically migrate across to a full electric fleet as and when the technology's available to do so. So we are making tactical changes which then enable us to support the environmental drivers of the new Government plan.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Have you got a timeline on electric buses yet?

Director of Transport:

That is in progress at the moment. Technology is still being developed in certain areas but as soon as possible we would like to go that way as the Director General has just said we want to take the whole fleet electric as soon as possible. So we are leading from the front in that respect.

The Deputy, Panel Member:

Sorry, the Director General said it was tactical changes things like that, so that is work which is running alongside the development of the Sustainable Transport Policy.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

At a previous meeting with HCT or Liberty Bus there was a suggestion they were quite advanced with electric bus provision. Have they made this provision in any other of their operating areas in the UK that you are aware of?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

No, the technology that we are pursuing is actually quite innovative in that it is a more modular battery system and it has a lot of benefits and a lot of innovation in terms of the unit costs and the operational flexibility it gives you. The system is currently being rolled out in an Indian city where India is leading on many of these issues in terms of sustainability particularly around pollution in the cities which is a major issue in some of their cities. So we are looking at electrification of these fleets

which have a massive impact on the people who live there. They are rolling that out. We have got a project between ourselves, the bus company, the technology provider and the electricity company. There is now a project manager leading on this and he was over the week before last. He did a week's worth of understanding of where our needs and issues are and our challenges. He spent a lot of time sat on buses understanding our road width and where the services go. He has now gone to India and he is now looking at the technology they have got there. We are working with two of the suppliers that are European Indian owned actually but European so that they can develop this technology with a European standard bus as opposed to an Indian subcontinent standard bus which is slightly different.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

You do not have to hang on to the outside of it. Is Tata behind this at all, Tata the Indian vehicle producers?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I think Tata is possibly one of the owners, they have quite a lot of ownership structures but yes, certainly, what is the bus company in Leeds we deal with? The Leeds based bus company bus manufacturer, there is 11:44:26 (inaudible) and what is the other bus company?

Director of Transport:

Yes, I do not know how much we can say at the moment do you think?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

They are owned by Indian providers.

Director of Transport:

What I would say is they are well known bus companies within the industry and reputable.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can I take you to the Liberation station?

The Connétable of Grouville:

Can I just ask about the subsidised electric bike schemes? Have you got money set aside to - that was very successful but ran out of money.

[11:45]

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, we are talking about possibly repeating that but maybe with bikes, maybe with electric vehicles. That is still in discussion at the moment.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Do you have a developing cyclist strategy using bicycles around the Island, a safety strategy, the whole overall strategy?

Director of Transport:

Yes, so there is now an arm's length body called Jersey Sport, and they are leading on that training issue. So they have recently set up a very successful women's group so ladies who have not used a bicycle for long time who would like to and maybe do not have the coincidence, so they are taking out groups and I think it is called Breeze training if I recall correctly to bring them on, They have got quite a few members of that and they are also going to be looking at with the road safety officer who is embedded within the police how they can get further cycle proficiency training into the schools for young people like that but also extending the principles of Breeze to other groups of cyclists.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

But I would like to get back to the infrastructure, that we would have strategic development infrastructure provided for the cyclists.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, we are extending the cycle routes wherever we can. Obviously the western cycle route we had the old railway track, eastern was a bit more complex in as much as that was sold off when the eastern route went so we are redeveloping that. Tristan is investigating that and new routes coming into town.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

And this is about infrastructure strategy within the town, yes?

Director of Transport:

So, what we are aiming to do subject to funding as always is to provide best infrastructure we possibly can closest to the most number of people. So at the moment we have started one route which starts at Le Hocq, goes through the Le Rocquier school grounds, uses lanes and land we are getting from planning obligation agreements to come through the Le Marais area and eventually get that into town. We are working on a separate strategy to link the Blinerie which is the best route out of the far east of the Island into town. We are developing schemes around that. Then we also have schemes that we have on the drawing board for a town cycle route and possibly a mini town supercycle highway in short lengths. But the issue for St. Helier is the traffic all circulates clockwise

and what we are endeavouring to do is to create an anticlockwise route which will give cyclists an advantage over cars and provide them safe routes through rather than having to circulate with traffic all the way round.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Would you work together with St. Helier to develop cyclist strategy within the town?

Director of Transport:

Yes, so we have met with the constable and we have met with the officers and we have looked at the routes because obviously some of them use parish roads, in fact many of them do to look at how that can be rolled out. We are going to be bringing forward an active travel strategy and at the moment we are busy incorporating the comments of the parish into that so that we have got something that we can all agree on.

The Deputy, Panel Member:

You mentioned you are working with SP3 to develop this sustainable transport policy. Do you have a particular individual officer that is tasked with developing this policy?

Director of Transport:

Yes, we have got leads in certain areas and at the moment we are in the process of sorting them out but I know someone has nominated themselves to do that. I spoke with him last week.

The Deputy, Panel Member:

This person have they got previous experience of working in sustainable transport areas?

Director of Transport:

They do not really need to. Well, they have got knowledge of sustainability and the issues around sustainability. They do not need that transport knowledge because a lot of the actual detailed knowledge will come from us in any event or we will commission the studies in order to evidence the points that have been taken forward. And ultimately it has all got to align with what the Government plan is so it is the idea of creating these joined up policies that function and create these virtual circles between them.

The Deputy, Panel Member:

So, at the moment as it stands you have got somebody who has nominated themselves. You do not have someone who is particularly tasked with this.

Director of Transport:

We do, we have got Dr. Louise Magris who heads the environment and she has been leading on this along with some of her colleagues. One of her colleagues spoke to me last week saying she would like to take forward some of the detail with us, so yes, there is a structure there but obviously they have got to get funding for various studies that they need.

The Deputy, Panel Member:

As far as timelines are concerned the next three years sometime is what you are looking at at the moment.

Director of Transport:

Timescales what has been put into the Government plan is funding to develop a sustainable transport policy over the next Government term. Obviously that needs to go to the States for approval and then that development work will start.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

Could I ask about the sustainability? It is great to have all the buses going electric and we are pushing that, do we have a power station that can cope with it? Do we have a link from France that can cope with it?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

So, at this moment I know we do not get power cuts but we used to get them. So we are oversubscribed is a wrong word to say but we are oversubscribed with electricity if since we are all going to go electricity and it is not going to make any difference to the power station or the link with France.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, we actually produce 7 per cent of it ourselves from the energy from waste plants, 7 per cent of the electricity comes from there but it is nowhere near running at capacity now.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

One of the reasons that Jersey Electricity Company are in this group is because there is a huge electricity demand electrifying the transport route. But what is really clever about it is if your batteries and your charging can happen at off peak times so it does not require an increased capacity in terms of the supply. What it will do is it will use the electricity that is cheaper and overnight.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

It is like the Economy 7 used to be.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

It is exactly that and that will then charge the batteries so that when they get used through the day so these are the peak times they are not being charged then so the peak demand should not change. But the overall total amount of energy we get from electrical versus carbon fuels will increase. But the actual peaks will not and the peak is where you need to size the infrastructure.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Jersey Electricity Company can actually step up as required like they do in the U.K. (United Kingdom) the whole grid in the U.K. is actually stepped up and when the favourite soap is on and that comes to a commercial break they deliberately step it up because people go out in the kitchen and put the kettle on. But they allow for that. So everything can be accommodated.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

Yes, I am just thinking about you are trying to make the Island go electric and I just need to know the feasibility when we are going to be using all the electricity and putting the rubbish on someone else.

Director of Transport:

It is not a direct answer to your question but what I was just going to mention is battery technology is moving apace and the whole area is moving apace. I saw a paper last week where a company based in Germany said they had make three breakthroughs in battery technology and they are hoping in three to five years to bring a battery for vehicles to the market which is capable of doing 1000 kilometres. So this is changing very, very quickly as the investment starts to go in there.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

To come across the other end of your question there is a lot happening there with solar panels. Solar panels are really being stepped up now that you could actually charge, there is actually cars being produced now where the roof is actually a solar panel for obviously used in sunnier climates than ours but the technology is coming on. People will have solar panels on their roofs or in their gardens.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

That is not practical.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, as I said the technology is stepping up.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So, slipping down to the bus station, there has been a couple of bumps in the bus station. Do you consider the bus station is fit for purpose and actually in tandem with what we have been discussing the charging of electric buses when the time comes?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I think the bus station was inherited. It was designed to fit in with another development and I think if we were designing it again it would be better and would be better served. I think we have made the best of what we have got. The issue of the double-decker buses we have had two very similar incidents and I think there is now a need for something more tactical and physical to stop that happening again whether it is an electronic early warning device. Because I think when a bus driver has been driving a single decker all day and then does a shift on a double-decker they just forget. It is not a malicious thing, because when you are sat in a bus I think you probably forget it is a double-decker so I think it has happened twice now, we do not want it to happen again, I think we need to find some other mechanism to stop this.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There is a parish hall enquiry so we cannot pre-empt.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

No, I think we probably all understand what has happened. But given that the bus station was implemented as you say prior to double-deckers coming back do you think there is merit in looking for an alternative situation?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The bus station has served us very well, we did have a capacity problem you will recall which is why the double-deckers were brought in. They have been very successful and they have gone down very well. John, do you want to take?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I would blame the Minister who brought in double-deckers because the bus station should have single-deckers.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

But the Assistant Minister at the time completely innocent but I would put the blame on the then Minister.

The Connétable of Grouville:

But it would be really easy to put electronic devices on a bus, it would be dead simple I would have thought.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

It is common sense.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I have spoken to the administrator, we spoke about that and bringing some solutions.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It could be wood it could be laser, it could be anything but that is being looked at.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So, what we are saying really there is no alternative situation for a bus station, different bus station in the short term to overcome that.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

In the short term when if we are looking at electrification then things may change in that respect.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

The bus station is well placed for the public and for getting in and out of town so it is sort of in the right place. It is slightly sub-optimal because it does not allow double-deckers in.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So, any other transport questions at this stage? Well, we'll move swiftly on to cats. I do not know who the expert on cats is but probably Tristan. We have this e-petition that has come over with 5,000 signatures and a proposition looming.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is not an easy solution but obviously we all love animals and we all want to protect animals but getting that into legislation is not that easy, sorry, Tris?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes, so when this was last raised in 2015 we in fact consulted with the police and the other parties involved and what we set upon as the solution which has now been embedded in the highway law, which has a weight in law, so highway code which has a weight in law is there is a requirement if

you are in an accident that involves a cat and you injure the cat to phone up the animal shelter. They provide a 24-7 ambulance service and they are happy to attend. In fact it is already an offence under the animal cruelty law to omit to do something that causes suffering of a domestic animal. That can result in a £10,000 fine I think up to 12 months in prison. So there is already quite hefty penalties in law for not doing anything. Now, the reason why the other animals involve the police is there is a liability associated to having those animals out of control. So if you allow your dog to be out of control and it causes a road traffic accident then you could actually be guilty under the dog law of not keeping that animal under control and that driver could sue you, you could be prosecuted criminally and be taken to a civil court for damages. The law recognises that cats have a cat like nature, they are free spirited, they tend to wander, there is no duty to keep them under control. Hence that is why the police are not compelled to attend an accident. The police really do not have any role in animal welfare, they have no veterinary first aid skills. So they are not there to benefit the animal, it is actually far better that that call goes directly to a vet and someone who can provide assistance than it is to the police. There are other things that can be done really to protect cats so obviously chipping is an important thing about contacting the owner but what the research basically says if you can keep a cat in the garden for the first couple of years then it is far less likely to be involved in a road traffic accident later on. Cats that are neutered are much less likely to be involved in a road traffic accident later on because it is when they are young and less experienced or when they are young and male and want to wander is when they are most likely to get involved in road traffic accidents. There is an organisation called Cat Care International who provides advice on the type of things you can do to keep cats safe including things like fluorescent collars and the like although there is mixed opinions on those.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Would you suggest that it could be mandatory to get cats microchipped?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I think you could do that but you would have to set up a law similar to the dog law and you would need to have a register of cats somewhere, so it does not come without its own administrative burden. Now the dog law is administered by the parish halls and so every dog has to be registered with the parish, whether the community, society wants to have something similar for cats or not I am not entirely sure.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The crux of the proposition seems to me not so much towards sanctions but to actually having a reporting system in place. Looking at the animal welfare law I had difficulty in finding where it might fit in if one was to put something of that nature in there. It does not really lend itself in my view as an unqualified person if you would like to comment on that. But the comments that have come back

from the public suggest that neither the petition or the proposition have actually had much legal input at this stage. Perhaps things could be tuned to make things work so there could be some better reporting procedures put in place. I think that is all that has been aimed at. But I just wonder if this could be achieved in any way to satisfy the proponents of the proposition.

[12:00]

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are working towards trying to satisfy the proposition but as Tristan just mentioned if we start treating cats in the same way as we treat dogs there is all sorts of inherent problems, having the cat registered, having a cat licence, having a cat on the lead would be ridiculous, we cannot do that. As have been said cats wander, that is what they do, but also would be a liability involved if a cat ran out in the road, somebody swerved to avoid it and somebody was injured as a result would the cat owner be responsible as if it was a dog? So we have to find this sensible compromise.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I think you can do some of this without having legislative requirements, I am sure all responsible cat owners would be keen to make sure their cat is properly looked after so publicising the advantages of chipping, publicising the advice given by Cat Care International around road safety might be something that actually has far more benefits in terms of animal welfare than having it as an incident that needs to be reported to the police. Because as I said the ability of the police to do something is quite limited and unless you want them to attend every incident which they would be required to do with some of these other animals which then becomes very burdensome on either the uniformed police or the honorary police.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I agree, John you were going to say?

The Connétable of Grouville:

Well, the petition just requires, the law will require people to report when they have hit a cat. The other issue is nothing to do with that.

The Deputy, Panel Member:

I was going to say it sounds like we already have this. But you said in the highway code there is a requirement to notify the animal shelter when the cat is hit, so I do not really understand why we need a proposition from Deputy Macon because it is already there.

The Connétable of Grouville:

But the law says you are not allowed to leave an animal suffering.

The Deputy, Panel Member:

So, there are two things, one is that the highway code requires you to contact the animal shelter, the second thing is the animal cruelty law which is if you do something or omit to do something to prevent the suffering of a domestic animal then you can be liable. The only people who can do anything are basically vets so you are not allowed to do something to end the suffering of that animal for instance for domestic animals. I think Deputy Morel is correct, we do have that. What people seem to want to do is to want to be able to phone the police but in this instance the police could never be anything other than a letterbox and the question is being a letterbox a good use of that police resource?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

But the police would then have to call the animal shelter, but if the animal shelter is phoned direct that would ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Well, the trouble is reporting to the J.S.P.C.A (Jersey Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) is not a legal requirement and I suspect that is what people are trying to achieve.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Well, it is requirement under the highway code, so ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

But there is no legal sanction is there?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

If you breach the highway code I've forgotten the actual sort of details of how it is viewed by the court but the court views it as a legal document. It is not a criminal piece of law, you are right, but in terms of filling your obligations as a driver then that would certainly be frowned upon by the court because you would not have conducted yourself in the way of the highway code. So if you do not abide by the highway code then you are liable to be found guilty of careless or dangerous driving. That is the weight that the document carries.

The Deputy, Panel Member:

There is also the issue of with the police involved it is going to be incredibly difficult to know that that car hit that cat if they just drive off and leave it behind at 1 o'clock in the morning or whatever. So can I see a lot of wasted police time being involved trying to solve unsolvable cases.

The Assistant Minister:

And it goes even further than that because a black and white cat is a black and white cat, you try to determine it. My father spent 50 years advising the R.S.P.C.A (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) in England, and we could never get the law right in the U.K. The other odd thing is the statistic says you can hit a cat, cat tends to hit the car sideways on. The cat will then run off and die, you have no idea unless you go over a cat and they have tried every which way and what in the U.K. and at the end of the day the one thing is which is quite rightly what they said it does virtually become unpoliceable because you would be forever calling out and you know what a dog looks like, dogs are different shapes and sizes and colours. A black and white cat can be a black and white cat.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

But back to what Mike said, what about microchipping and we had a report that it is around 97 accidents were reported the cats were found during the year so 97 it is just about really a report to show that to have all cats microchipped as a law.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

All cats microchipped, so if the worst comes to the worst then at least the cat could be identified.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Exactly so there is microchip identify and they know that it has happened then they can identify.

The Assistant Minister:

There are a lot of feral cats out in the northern districts with kittens, how do you microchip them? It does become slightly impractical.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

So I think the thing is really in conclusion that making it a reportable accident to the police does not provide for the welfare of the animal however and the police do not have the ability to read chips, but the vets and animal shelters do. Encouraging people to chip their cats is definitely a good idea. Whether it should be compulsory or not I think that is a matter for the state legislature if they would like to make that compulsory. The question is what do you do with the cats that are not chipped, then how are they treated and I do not know if we have a solution to all that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Given that it is in Article 52 of the law poultry part of the list I just wondered if one can liken poultry to cats in any way, we have feral poultry in St. Brelade.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

There is no easy solution I am afraid, certainly the big animals you can understand.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

Just to touch on that. If you were going to start I have got lots of squirrels that get in roadkill, everybody avoids my chickens but not the squirrels. It is a never ending thing.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I think this is largely it is a family issue, a cat is part of the family I mean there is worry and concern and I would do everything possible to encourage to chip their cats because I think it is better for the cat and better for you and also to look at the advice that is out there on the internet about how to keep cats safe from road traffic accidents.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I do receive various emails about cats as members, pets of the family and it is difficult when the cat is not coming back to explain children where the cat disappeared because if they have been hit they could not find them, the cat disappeared from their life so.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Which is a good thing about chipping I suppose, at least they know the worst.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Indeed, it is a question of finding closure. Well, we will see how the proposition goes through the states but you are being asked to consult on it which I am sure you will. If I may move on to more for Tristan I am afraid possibly, the vehicle roadworthiness testing scenario. I just had not thought it would come under your department but there we are so.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, this is part of the change regime.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So, testing, how is it working?

Group Director, Regulation:

It is going well. We have started with the motorcycles and minibuses so that has now been running for two weeks. And that has been working seamlessly. We have had about 80 per cent pass rate, about 20 per cent failure rate and the failures are fairly minor things that really would be picked up

through maintenance checks or servicing so and people are thereafter getting them improved so far so good, about five or six motorcycles a day are being tested.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What is the process for getting them in? Are they receiving a letter to ask them to come in?

Group Director, Regulation:

They are yes, and then there is a booking system, so we have got a few forward bookings coming up. We have had about 57 through just looking at the statistics here. And then people book in, get a slot, turn up down at La Collette for their slot.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Do you advise to get the bike serviced before they bring them down? Because 20 per cent seems to be quite a lot if I am honest.

Group Director, Regulation:

Yes, I think some people are using it as a bit of a test, bring the bike down see what needs required, and then they'll go off and get the work done thereafter so I think some people are clearly getting their bikes maintained and serviced beforehand and then some people are doing it the other way round so using it as a bit of a triage.

The Connétable of Grouville:

But there is an extra cos because presumably they are going to bring it back.

Group Director, Regulation:

Yes, then they have got to come back so I think what we can do as we go through we might just put some information out to say these are the things that are getting picked up in tests, we will advise people to get these things checked before they bring the vehicle to us sort of thing. But so far it has been going fine in terms of operational at our end it is working very well. The process is working well, the bookings are working well.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

In terms of the timeline clearly the more responsible owners will get theirs done but there will be those that perhaps will not. What is the next stage shall we say once you have exhausted the first tranche?

Group Director, Regulation:

So if a bike is not tested then it is not going to be allowed on the road effectively. We have had some anecdotal evidence but I am not sure what that is yet in terms of the actual numbers of bikes literally just not being brought for testing and ultimately when the data will catch up they will not be on the register any more, they will not be on the vehicle register.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So effectively at a roadside check will they have some sort of certificate? Will they carry a certificate of testing going to produce?

Group Director, Regulation:

Yes, there will be a check if someone has been picked up and they should have had a vehicle tested and they are not tested then that is an offence.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So that can be produced at a parish hall if they don't have it on them.

Group Director, Regulation:

Yes, yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

And what is the sanction if it is not produced if they have not complied?

Group Director, Regulation:

I do not know off the top of my head.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

There must be a sanction a road traffic rule.

Group Director, Regulation:

Yes, it will be a common fine I would have thought.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, yes.

Group Director, Regulation:

Yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

How long do the tests take typically?

Group Director, Regulation:

We are doing five or six a day so I think there are about a 30 minute, it is not a very long process.

The Connétable of Grouville:

So people take time off work and come and stay with their vehicle and then leave?

Group Director, Regulation:

Pretty much, yes, just bring it down, get it tested and back again so.

The Connétable of Grouville:

And if it has got a fault are they allowed to take it away, no?

Group Director, Regulation:

Not if it has not roadworthy, but if there are general leaks and things.

The Connétable of Grouville:

If it is a minor fault.

Group Director, Regulation:

If it is a minor fault then they would be able to. If it is condemned then we would not let people take it away.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Have the parishes particularly the centeniers been kept apprised of the process of stops and checks? Maybe Hugh you might comment on this with your experience. Because they will need to know what needs to be produced I would have thought at parish hall level.

The Assistant Minister:

Yes, I think Mike what has happened they had a meeting with the chefs committee and they were just bringing them up to date with what they were looking for because we work in conjunction with D.F.I. (the Department for Infrastructure) with regards to the road checks as you know. So they have been kept up to date most of the centeniers will know about it.

The Connétable of Grouville:

When do you think that you will be up to date with motorbike testing? Is there a date when you will have caught up with the backlog?

Group Director, Regulation:

I think one of the checks we have got to do is make sure the date is all up to date in terms of what we have got on the vehicle register itself so there is another piece of work that is going on behind the scenes of just making sure we have cleansed the register so to speak. There are a lot of vehicles on there that probably are not in the Island anymore, they may have been scrapped, they may not be used, so it is hard to answer that yet until we have got real clarity on the accuracy of the register. There is a data claim that is going on this year so understandably I think there is going to be a number of cars and bikes that will not be in the register because I think they have been scrapped and things like that.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It seems to happen more with bikes than cars that people sell them on and do not inform the DVS.

The Connétable of Grouville:

If the police stop a vehicle how do they know whether it should have been tested and has not or it just has not been called in yet?

Group Director, Regulation:

It should be on the system, so it should be on the system to be interrogated on the police computer.

The Connétable of Grouville:

So a policeman will say well, that was called up for an inspection but never got there then they can do something about it.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes.

The Deputy, Panel Member:

Can I just check with regards to the register, if we do not know actually how many vehicles should be removed from it then you are basically saying we do not know how many vehicles there are in Jersey?

Group Director, Regulation:

Yes, well, people may be getting that so we will write to the last position of where that vehicle was owned or who it was.

The Deputy, Panel Member:

But you are stating you do not know how many vehicles there are in Jersey.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Well, since road -

The Deputy, Panel Member:

Sorry, yes or no?

Group Director, Regulation:

I think the honest answer is probably no. I think there are probably more entries on the register. We know the number of vehicles that are circulating but I think the register has probably got more vehicles on there than there actually are.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Since road tax was abolished I think we have currently got 120,000, 110,000, 120,000 vehicles on the register obviously that we have not got 120,000.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Lots of people have come to work for a year maybe a season, taken the car home with them maybe and we do not necessarily know about that.

[12:15]

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

So we estimate a significant amount of vehicles will not be either registered for work use or would even be present. So when people have scrapped them there has never been a closed loop for that information to come back or export so it will be fascinating, we are taking guesses on how many vehicles that we actually have that are circulating on the road. The only way we can do it is bulk ask.

Group Director, Regulation:

Effectively yes, so there are for two reasons. One is obviously for the bigger testing regime still to come, we need to make sure that the data is right for that. So we need to know the scale of vehicle ownership so we can scale the solution. But also we are also replacing the software that the DVS use so we want the software not to be clogged up with a lot of old data frankly. So there are two reasons to do it.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Have you got a timeline on the live car project?

Group Director, Regulation

The vehicle replacement system it is live so we are hoping that will be up and running I'm going to say summer this year. So, yes, coupled with that is the data cleanse so, yes, there is live work going on at the moment on that. So in terms of if you are a motorcycle owner or any other owner if you are going to get a letter there is the ability to say I no longer own this vehicle or the owner is not known here and pop it back in the post to us so there is feedback loops but, yes, people I think over the years people haven't informed us when they should have done.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Obviously if you take a car to a scrapyard or motorbike or any vehicle to the scrapyard if you take a logbook there is a section on there saying how to scrap this vehicle, you then send that to DVS, that has not always happened, so we want to really cleanse the system so that those numbers can be reissued.

Group Director, Regulation:

Yes, and I think the register cleanse I think that is a big piece of work that there will be more publicity on in the forthcoming weeks and months coming up now before the summer. So there will be a lot of letters sent out, registered owners will be asked to send them back. There will be something on the envelope saying no this person does not live here, they send those back as well, so hopefully they will do that as digitally as possible.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It is a question you are probably not going to know the answer to but regarding the I.D.P.s (International Driving Permits) and which are flowing out of the parish halls, do you have any thoughts? Are you liaising with the parish halls as to how many are going out in terms of numbers, are you up to speed with that?

Group Director, Regulation

I have not had any data on that, I think the message that we are still getting is still have them, still get them obviously. We have signed up to the Vienna convention now so notwithstanding whatever happens with the B word the Brexit word we still need to legally sign up and issue those. I do not know how many we are issuing but

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

It is a lot and I mean a lot. I have had to cut down and say unless it is an emergency I have a girl who does it all morning, and then I have got to say you have got to do something else otherwise the

parish would come to a standstill. So if it is urgent we will do them almost there and then. But there has been an influx. I do not know, have you been busy at your parish halls? Yes, we have been extremely busy, people have panicked, and then some now have waited to find out what the outcome is going to be.

Group Director, Regulation:

I think in fairness to Islanders they are pretty much doing what we have suggested they do, people there are just covering their enterprises.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

It is much easier, and much nicer for the staff at the parish hall too.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

But given that we have signed up to the Vienna convention the requirement will still be for an I.D.P as I see it so that is not going to change come what may.

Group Director, Regulation

That is right, yes, exactly.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just in the light of testing private vehicles, you are proposing to share the proposals for retest fees. Have you got to that stage yet what your thoughts might be?

Group Director, Regulation

So, in terms of the wider vehicles?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes.

Group Director, Regulation

So, the piece of work is still on track to deliver some answers or potential solutions later this year. So we are just scoping the brief ready for that piece of work so that can go out to tender. And then the piece of work can be done in terms of what that final plan looks like in terms of whether Government does it, we do not do it, if the private sector steps in or a variation of something between. So that is still ongoing so I think we will get into a position we can share with the panel I think what the brief is and then what that tender looks like. We need someone to come in and assess the market effectively, it is a new market for the Island so we will get that piece of work done and we can share that with the panel in terms of what it practically is shaping up to look like I think.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Are you speaking to the industry about that?

Group Director, Regulation

They will need to be engaged with yes, so one of the things we need to assess is there any interest privately out there?

The Connétable of Grouville:

That is before October?

Group Director, Regulation

Yes, yes, in terms of what is the interest in the local market, undoubtedly there will be some garages who want to do more, there will be some who do not. There may be some new entrants, we do not know and the other question we have got to answer is ultimately I think there still needs to be a step in that there are still going to be a lot of vehicles that are not going to be tested in other scenarios. So the Government has still got to gear up to test in one form or another. We're expecting 30,000 tests a year so I would imagine the private sector would do some, I would not be surprised but I cannot see them doing that at that level. But yes the quick answer is yes we need to talk to all in the industry to understand what their capacity is, motivations are, and whether they want to work with us in partnership or otherwise.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Because we already do obviously P.S.Vs (Public Service Vehicles) buses, taxis, heavy goods vehicles, P.T.Os (Power Take Offs) so we are ahead of the game in that respect.

The Connétable of Grouville:

30,000 vehicles seems a lot. You are not testing for the first five years, so there must be a lot of the cars on the roads that fall into that category. And then you have got another three years before you do them again. It seems a lot of tests.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

That is the estimate based on the numbers we have.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Yes, well, you are basing it on 120,000, you have got 100,000, that is quite a big area.

Group Director, Regulation

Hence the data cleanse is a really important piece of work to understand exactly what we have in the Island, we need that data so we know what solution we are building effectively.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Currently we are building a test centre which we believe will be way too big for our needs long term so we need to size it according to what the actual data is and that is the big piece of work we are doing.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Changing to a completely different subject, what is the latest with the hospital, what is your department doing?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes, the Chief Minister is going to be presenting a report to Assembly members after Easter I believe. The previous project closed down at the end of last month and that has now been effectively closed and the new structure, governance, political arrangements and officer group will be established in due course. I understand that the first phase of this will be led by the D.T for Health who will then be clarifying the brief and making sure that what updates have we got from P92 which is now six years old, are there any changes needed to the brief? What is in scope, what is out of scope, whether mental health has a bigger piece to play in there, so there is lots of work to be done. So there is lots of work to be done in terms of challenging that before it moves on to the dreaded difficult problem of where you build the hospital.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Were there any contracts of the old project which we had to cancel and therefore presumably there was a cost?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes, well, I will use the term “fortunately”, but I do not mean it, fortunately we have known this project has been under a great deal of scrutiny and challenge from the elections, so we were just going through a period of innovation for the supply chain so that people who were working for us designing it were going to go across to the main contractor to be their suppliers, so we went through a re-tender process and in that process we got the preferred companies in place in about August, September last year. But by that time the review panel report had been published, there was challenge about things coming back to the States so we put all those procurements on hold. So we have had to basically cancel all the programme of the people we had already got embedded. So they were our direct labour, there were the people from Alderney children’s hospital who were helping us who were an amazing team of people who have done great service helping us on that.

Because the Alderhey children's hospital is probably one of the best hospitals in the U.K. to a new standard. So we have politely said we do not need your help for the moment, and then the contracting arm were only a pre-construction services agreement which is like a consultancy agreement and that came to the end. Again we terminated that at the end of last month.

The Connétable of Grouville:

So that is all included in the cost that we have spent 40 million?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

That is all included in the capital costs today, yes.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

How much has it cost to cancel this contract?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I do not know the exact figure, I can give you that information, yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The Chief Minister suggested in the media that he intends taking the hospital site decision I think I interpreted that as to the States. Clearly he will have to be fed the options. Do you see any different options from what's been produced before at this stage?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is under discussion at the moment. I think the Chief Minister was of the opinion that it was unfair to burden one person with that decision. But that will be a matter for States now.

The Connétable of Grouville:

But site selection, is your department doing anything on the future hospital at this current time?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

At this current time I think everyone has been stood down so no but as the D.G. (Director General) said the Chief Minister will be making a statement in the not too distant future.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

And that is the one that he did with Mr. Parker?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Sorry?

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

When he was on the television quite recently he said that he and Mr. Parker were looking into the hospital.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

So, this is a decision for the Chief Minister and he will be making a statement in the next few weeks I understand.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

I just wonder why Mr. Parker had been involved at that level but you do not know, no.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I do not know the conversation between the two but this is the decision of the Chief Minister.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

You were going to say something.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes, I am probably the wrong person to talk about this but it is the biggest decision the Island will ever make. It is the most important building of any jurisdiction.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

Yes, well, we know that.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

And it is the biggest capital project we have ever seen, so I think the involvement of the Chief Executive in this is imperative. And we need to move it forward as quickly as possible.

The Connétable of Grouville:

My understanding is that the new thinking is you get the Health Minister to say what he wants and then he will ask you to find a site and build it. That does not seem to take into consideration that that size hospital might not go on any given particular site, and it seems to suggest that we have got an infinite purse and we can spend as much as we like. Would you agree?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, as the Director General just said we have had experts from the U.K. which were very expensive but they build hospitals every day of the year, so we take their advice on board. But I have got no information as to anything else.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I think it is worth saying we were very ambitious in the previous plan in terms of we were trying to build a hospital for the next 50 years. So we have done a lot of modelling of the health system and trying to predict what is going to happen in health is really difficult because technology changes are difficult, technology moves forward in medical care far quicker than it does in other businesses. It is not quite I.T. (Information Technology) in terms of how it changes but there is a fundamental difference in medical care now than there was 25 years ago, even 10 years ago, so you have got to build a hospital that is flexible, so it has got to be able to cope with those changes as we move forward. But the main driver for a hospital is the population and we understand our population, it is an aging population. And so the facility has got to cope with that. But I think what is timely now is to challenge the assumptions that are in P82, I said P92 before, it is P82 which I think was agreed in 2012 and agreed by the State so that is the strategy that underpins it and that does need to be checked because again we are 6, 7 years on from there so this first period is to check that and I think while they are checking that I think the site selection process will start going ahead.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

I cannot say that I am happy that you keep mentioning aging population because you also have a policy that is trying to keep the aging people like myself in their own homes and they are having to pay for that. So you cannot blame having to have a big hospital on an aging population.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I am not blaming, we are all aging and what happens now is amazingly 25 years ago if you had cancer the chances of survival were a lot less than they are now. What happens now is people have cancer, they recover from it, they live for another 25 years, they have another cancer, recover from that. So the reality is the pressures on the hospital increase. And it is a fabulous thing, it is something we should celebrate is our aging population. It is not a derogatory term because actually we are all fitter, healthier and living longer lives. But the reality is that what happens in the hospital has got to be there for our community and for the people here. And some services you cannot do off Island, it is very expensive to do off Island and very disruptive. So if somebody has got dementia the last thing you want to do to a dementia patient is put them into a foreign country, move them away from their home town. So there are lots of things you need to think about for hospitals and it is a very complicated issue. Whether it is big or small I think is another interesting thing, I think the ambition before was to try and build one and not have to modify it in the next 10 years. We might change that ambition, it might become a more flexible and a more expandable building.

[12:30]

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

But do you think you are able to say what sort of hospital you want if you have not got a site and you have no idea where you are going to put it?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

It is sort of irrelevant. I think the hospital is defined by the community not for where it goes. Where it goes is a second iteration decision, the first iteration is do we need a hospital, yes or no. And what then goes in the hospital is imperative. Once those are decided where it goes it is important for the community but it is not important for what goes on in the hospital. One of the medical directors on our project board said, "I need a box to do what I do in, I do not care where that box is, but it needs to be on the Island".

The Connétable of Grouville:

Depending on the site though it will determine the design of the hospital, I mean if it is on a waterfront it is a flat base, if we put it up somewhere else it could be upwards on the slope but I do not know.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Obviously the architectural, the transport links to it, how people utilise it is a function of what it is. But for the people working in there if you are an orthopaedic surgeon where that box is physically located is not relevant to him, he just wants a fit for purpose area to work in.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Just going back to the first question current status and I would like to check with the Minister if I understood correctly that at this stage we are waiting for end of April announcement by Chief Minister, we do not have any more data in a month or 2 months or 6 months who will be responsible for what and how we would move forward or we have more?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, as I say the Chief Minister has announced he will be making a statement in the next few weeks is the direction we are taking.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

So, basically we do not know if you as Minister of Infrastructure will be given responsibility to find a site within x amount of months, so we do not know anything except going forward except the end of April.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, well, at the moment it will be my responsibility as it comes under infrastructure. But it may be decided to run it as a stand-alone project.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

So, basically status now it is end of April waiting for the announcement of the Chief Minister.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

And the Chief Minister is obviously doing this on his own because he is not involving any of you. So he is making assumptions on what we need.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, he will be consulting us in the not too distant future.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

Yes, but if he is going to make an announcement, sorry, I am not having a go at you but if he is going to make an announcement at the end of April who is he consulting?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, all the Ministers will be called in and consulted at certain points.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

So, he is going to put it all together in a matter of 10 days to a week.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, no, this is the direction that he will be taking yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Does the subject come up in the Council of Ministers then?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes.

The Connétable of Grouville:

So, you have discussed what he is going to be announcing?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, no, not the detail no, just the fact that obviously what has happened in the past and moving forward where we go from here.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

So, these discussions that he mentioned with Charlie Parker these obviously are the main crux of everything.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is the preliminary, yes.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

Yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can I just project ahead now, we have been through the pain and the iterations over the last year or so with regard to the hospital. What maybe for John to answer, and it is always easy in retrospect and one learns from one's mistakes, if they can call them mistakes. Truthfully to go forward what would you do now shall we say that you didn't do before? I mean is it in terms of consultation, in terms of process, what will you be doing differently given that you are involved in it in the site selection process?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

We did not underestimate it, the reality is when you have got regime, political change, and this hospital project in my involvement has been through two changes of political leadership, the last one probably bigger than the previous one in terms of the political alliances and allegiances to the project. It has a fundamental effect on projects of this scale and magnitude. Now on both elections we have seen a fundamental change to what we have been about to deliver. It is a really hard thing as a project director, engineer, somebody who leads projects on our Island to actually think of how you can support a project when it goes through that. The hospital has generated passionate noises for and against and the voice of the against has been vociferous and constant. But actually strangely not from a massive amount of people but from people who are passionately against the location, what is in it, what is out, and it has had a very difficult, challenging effect on trying to deliver stuff and on the political leadership of that. So it is really hard, I still do not know how we would have transcended the last election with this project because there was a fundamental diversion of views before and after. I think any project that transcends an election cycle has got a huge risk on it. What I would have done is I would have put a bigger risk on it and I would have perhaps thought of is this project too big for Jersey, should this have been a phased approach, should we have done things in a smaller scale? Going for one big thing is actually more efficient but is it actually something we

can achieve? Would it have been better to say we are just going to do a phased approach and set our ambitions slightly lower so that we could have delivered those phases in a timeline that fitted the political window? That is my personal view.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you think we should perhaps change given that 2022 is when the election time is not that long away and knowing how long these things take to achieve do you think we should change our overall strategy to aim for something which we can achieve exactly as you say?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I think what I have given you is an honest view reflected on how can we do this differently, that is something which if I am asked I will articulate from a political perspective because you guys are the powerful ones, you make the decisions, you live with it and you sign it off. If you are not happy with it then it stops but the consequence of getting to those points and stopping all of that work effort and angst is a very disappointing position. So I think we have got to think about ambition on major projects in the future.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Can I just ask one question about the hospital? Minister as it stands do you expect the Department for Infrastructure to deliver the hospital? Do you see that as being the role that the Department and the hospital will have?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, but obviously I am directed by the States, I was accused of being intransigent in the past, no, the State's directed me, Gloucester Street was the site, that is what I must follow until such times as that was rescinded by Deputy Russell Labey's proposition then obviously it is no longer the site, but I have to do as I am directed by the States.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

If the hospital was delivered by some sort of private financing initiative would you expect the Department of Infrastructure to still be involved in the delivery?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

You would still, thank you.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Well, talking about slightly controversial things can we talk about the Liberation 75 project. We understand that once again Deputy Russell has called for a cessation of the project and that the plans you suggested are now on hold. Are you in support of the project going ahead or not?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, this is being taken care of by Chris Sampson who is the project manager.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Chris kindly presented to us some time ago so we are aware of what was being proposed but since then there seems to be a political move that is not quite so supportive. Where do we stand now?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes, there is a proposition Deputy Macon on the 21st of May with a view to cancel it out of the capital programme and reallocate funds. So, at this stage we have put everything on hold subject to that decision being taken. So we are in a position where we have got an application which could be submitted, we have got an opportunity to do some trials before the State's debate which we are considering and we are looking towards how we can do that. But at the end of the day it is the State's decision whether the project goes forward or not. So on the basis of that opposition was lodged, we stopped all work.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Can I just say when you presented to us a few months ago you said through no fault of your own there wasn't going to be much public consultation. Would you say that this hiatus that we are currently in especially when you reflect back on to the hospital project as well, this is what happens, would you agree that this is what happens when there is not public consultation?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I agree 100 per cent, I agree 100 per cent. We were given a programme to deliver within which would be significantly shorter from what we do for a project of this nature and it was not only the consultation which was short, it was the whole procurement, the design process, we were looking to try and deliver in start to finish under 18 months, not impossible but tight and consultation which was something which we had to cut out. We went through public engagement which was telling people about it, it was not very well received, so yes, I would agree.

The Connétable of Grouville:

The press release when you announced you were going to do it said that the businesses were generally happy but that was not the case.

Well, I think I was slightly misinterpreted. What we did in terms of public engagement prior to actually having our public engagement day we went to speak to the major businesses around there. We came to yourselves from scrutiny, we went to the Council of Ministers, we went to the Chamber of Commerce, we spoke to the bus companies, and on the morning before the public engagement we had a separate day for the other businesses and I would say the smaller businesses in the area and the businesses themselves were generally supportive, they liked the idea of the end event or the end result, did not necessarily like the pain around it and some of the issues with it but there was for the hospital there is a very small vociferous group who it got out on social media and the public engagement and the results we had from the electronic and the paper copies of the consultation were not very supportive at all.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

So, there is a theme now with social media where no matter how good your plans are, how virtuous they are, how important whatever the scheme is and this is the first phase of a major scheme how it can be disrupted by a small amount of people who are very vociferous in terms of how they throw stuff on social media. If you look at the current situation it seems to be a very reactive position where we then lose confidence. So the challenge we have got now is there are two issues about Liberation Square, there is a value for money piece, there is a huge challenge about public open space in St. Helier, performance space, spaces where we actually celebrate St. Helier a bit more. There is the issue of the liberation and existing Liberation Square which is tired, if anybody has been there recently it has been in place since I think 1995, and then there is also the key thing seems to be the issue of shutting the road, and the potential for traffic issues. So what the Minister has insisted on quite rightly is they run a trial before the State's debate. What we are trying to do is find a way of running that trial which does not prove that everything was right and it is going to be disaster. So we are looking at face trial, but trials on roads are really difficult because people ignore the signs and on the first day it is normally terrible. But then people change what they are doing, they think about it, they iterate and it is something that the Department have done in the past. If you look at Charing Cross and the area there they closed the road as a trial basis and to see what happened and the world did not stop and no one would want to open it again now, you can cycle through there, you can walk through there, there is a lot of pedestrian activity there and I think we unfortunately we feel as though we are on the back foot again trying to deliver a project which I think would be a real benefit for the Island.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Can I ask where did this project come from? Not the Island plan 2007 not that, 18 months ago, where did this project come from?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

The project come from a combination of things. There was a Liberation 75 question about how do we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the liberation, it is the last major anniversary where people who lived through the liberation as survivors of that would actually attend a ceremony. So there was that driver the transport corridor were putting in and the south west water masterplan in the area ties into this so there was two benefits to that and it was the bringing together of those two things.

[12:45]

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Excuse me Minister, how did this land on your desk? Where did it come from?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I have inherited it obviously.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

From who?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It was in the portfolio.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

So, how did it get into the portfolio? Somebody somewhere had to say give this to the Infrastructure Department, we need to build it in 18 months, who sent that to you?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, it was not sent to me, it was part of a portfolio. It was a decision made by the previous Council of Ministers.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

So, it came from the Council of Ministers to your lot?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That was my understanding, it was the Council of Ministers, there was some input from the bailiff and this was all part of Liberation 75.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Sorry, it was something put from the bailiff, what was that bit?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There was input from.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Oh, there was input from the bailiff.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

In terms of the existing Liberation Square which you said is tired if that had to be refurbished what would be the sort of spend that would be needed to bring that up to standard shall we say?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

It would depend what you want to do there, but I think you are in the one, two and a half millions, that sort of money.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, so what I am getting at is we could end up spending a significant chunk of what is being proposed to spend on this project on just upgrading and not really achieving very much. And the other point was I think since you presented last there has been a change in policies to where the buses might turn, what is the latest incarnation about that?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

One of the key issues as John mentioned was about closing that road and the effect on the double-deckers. We had a plan where we were going to take the bus turning area and what we intended for them to do was to route around in a circle and come round the taxi rank and so they are then heading west outside of the bus station. When we presented that to the businesses in the area there was very little support for that. Like the objections at planning stage so we had another little think about that and went back to the bus station and there is no idea solution to it, that is for sure but the one which we presented to the engagement day was for the double-deckers which are coming from the west only. They would come down in front of the bus station, they would drop off outside the bus station on the side of the road they are stopping on which we had done before. They would then go empty down Conway Street, round Library Place and come back down Mulcaster Street and then head up, stop outside the bus station facing west.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Would there be the merit in having a drop off in Library Place because that strikes me that would be a quick win, people would be very delighted to be dropped off in town.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes, I think the simple answer is yes, I mean we did not get that far in terms of the detailing, we did not get to detailing.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

But likewise in terms of mitigating the effect on taxis and taxi fares could a slip road be incorporated just west of the tunnel to accommodate some east going taxis?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

When we went to the Chamber of Commerce there were some taxi drivers there, both driver and rank, we had some discussions about them about some of the improvements they might like to see. We did have a further meeting set up but again that was cancelled due to the project going on hold. But the taxi drivers were not keen it is fair to say.

The Connétable of Grouville:

The budget went up from £2 million to £3 million, what is the reason for that? It seems like a massive increase.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Again it goes down to the very short period we had to do anything. We were asked to present a scheme to the Council of Ministers late summer with a view to then getting it into the capital programme which was debated on August 4th. The scheme itself had been put together at a very high level as part of the previous future St. Helier group, so it was no more than a concept scheme. So we put a scheme together and we put a number against that with almost no design work, no detailed traffic work or whatever because we simply just did not have the time. We then commenced some of that traffic modelling and some of the issues then started becoming apparent how you can get a solution to closing that road. While it is a solution not many people liked it if I am honest. But what you said is part of the engagement programme in many of our schemes in St. Helier and elsewhere are traffic improvement schemes around sustainable transport policy for pedestrians, cyclists, but this is not that. This is a public realm scheme, it is about creating a new public realm for not only the opening of the 75th Liberation celebrations, it is only one day, but it is for all the other events which are going on in the square and hopefully some other ones. In doing that by closing any major road in St. Helier you will cause changes to the traffic, especially in the evening peak.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

You are speaking about investment into St. Helier, developing St. Helier, and also for infrastructure projects that come into St. Helier coming from somewhere above and not actually where we need, what our priorities as St. Helier what is our urgencies to develop as an infrastructure project, as an

investment and I am not sure how much consultation has been done for liberation with actual St. Helier, how much this infrastructure project we need.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I did present to Constable and also the roads committee on where we were with the project, but as I say we were into concept designs, the detailed design was still ongoing.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

But they were notified or they have been asked actually this is something that St. Helier would be desirable?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

What is key here is we are the delivery arm of this. We get given a political decision to do this and we then do it to the best of our ability, now as Chris pointed out the timeline has been quite short. The budgets from this have varied from I think I have seen a £5 million budget at one stage, and so because it depends on the scale and the quality and what you are trying to achieve. So the budget is hard to nail down, and the further you get along the more you can make it. This is not instead of a St. Helier regeneration project, this is a project which was politically we were asked to do and we have used our best endeavours to deliver it. Now the ambition for the Government plan, the ambition for St. Helier is a massive amount of investment in more open space, more public realm, more sustainable transport, make St. Helier the preferred place to live and work compared to other places. Our sustainable transport policy is about the electrification of our fleet, electrification of the vehicles that go round St. Helier and minimising those vehicles. So we are looking for St. Helier piece along with Fort Regent and various other things is about reinvigorating life for residents of St. Helier. Those are all big spends, anything that involves public realm and infrastructure is a massive cost. But the benefit of it is a 50-year benefit, you do get a long term benefit and the assets do not make any money, but the people's lives around them change and transform, so if you look at the town park which was a Millennium project that was delivered 10 years after the Millennium.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

You cannot say this project is a part of it.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I disagree, it is a bit like electrifying our fleet, it is part of the sustainable transport policy. It is a tactical move, if you wait until a policy is developed and finished before you start anything nothing will ever happen in Government, you will develop the policy and everything will be done 2 years from now, then we will say right, let us start building it 4 years from then the tale of building stuff is a big long laborious difficult process and for a Council of Ministers to actually deliver tangible things which

the public understand you have got to start those projects. Now whether it gets badged as part of that or it is badged as something, we are engineers and builders if we get asked to do something we will do it to the best of our ability. I think whether it is part of an overall total plan I believe it is based on what I have seen and what I understand because it is about public realm, making it a better place to live, it is a place where accessibility to open space is better for children and for the people who live in St. Helier, and the sustainable transport elements tie into this. So I think there is a tangible link to that but we do not have all the plans in place yet because plans take time and money to develop. I think the ambition for the Council of Ministers is not to do loads of plans in the next four years and have nothing on the ground, because if something is not done it will be -

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Can I just ask as well, last question on this, why not a temporary situation? Because as you know I have lived in towns in Europe where squares become a square for the day because there is a big event then it is back to being a road down the middle of it for the rest of the week, so why is that not being considered or has it been considered?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

What, are you talking about leaving the road open? That's what you have got now.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

It could be shared, no, no, no, but you can close it and open it as you require.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

That is what happens now, a lot of the slip roads are closed around there on a regular basis.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

So, why are we doing this?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

It is a possibility. There is not the big town plan but in the previous Government future St. Helier was put forward as one of the key priorities, and we sat on that group which had political and officer attendance on there, and we fed into that to try and provide our input into the bigger type picture. It was unfunded, and there was a list of prioritised projects put forward by that group with a view to then delivering those in future what were lead-in-term financial plans, in this lead-in-time financial plan, which was the joining of these squares together, and we were charged with putting some capital bids in for that which we did but it did not receive any funding. So we can put our input into the plans but they have got to be funded otherwise we cannot clear them.

[13:00]

Deputy K.F. Morel:

When I was talking about temporary I mean so it can look more like a square, bollards come up, that sort of thing.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

That is an option, and if that is would be the decision that would be taken but the way the scheme has been designed at present is the main event space crosses longitudinally along the square with a view to trying to provide a better event space and better general day to day activities within the square. So it unfortunately comes down to personal choice, whether you want it as one big scheme, you want it something to what it is at the moment or something in between that. But all of those whatever the decisions come forward and whatever guidance we are given to deliver still has to go through planning. That in itself you get more than three planning responses but I am sure this scheme will get a lot more than that, you are then into it is going to committee, you have then possibly got planning enquiries etcetera so the scheme in itself and all these public realm schemes have got a long way to go before you can actually get them on the ground.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

This is why they should not be rushed.

The Connétable of St. Saviour,

You are saying that Liberation Square looks tired, yes, I gather it does but there is a wonderful mosaic on the floor of the amphitheatre which has been covered with sand. It is to protect it because it is damaged, well, why do we not repair it to stop it looking tired? Why do we not just help it? That is ridiculous, it is ridiculous.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

When the amphitheatre was put in there was the sunken area, in there there was the compass at the bottom, and that was with Italian tiles. You know with people using them and we had skateboarders at the beginning and things like that they gradually got broken up and you could not replace them, the suppliers were gone, we did patch and repair for quite a few years afterwards when we could but again as the liberation event got bigger we were filling in the amphitheatre, putting seating on every year, that in itself caused some issues. It became a cost thing so what we have done now we actually filled the amphitheatre and left it there and certainly from the public engagements which we did I spoke to quite a few people who really like it as it is now compared to what it was. But unfortunately councillor it does come down to personal view again, you either like

it as a sunken bit or you like it as it is level or you do not like the amphitheatre or you do and that is why these schemes are very difficult to actually get over the line.

The Connétable of St. Saviour,

Yes, but in that case that was a total waste of money but it was lovely. I am sorry, that mosaic and everything was lovely.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

It was 25 years ago now.

The Connétable of St. Saviour,

Yes, but I am old and I remember these things, sorry.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

From the budget that has been allocated which is £3 million, if the project will be stopped now how much has been spent and will be approximately?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

About £100,000.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

£100,000?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

And are you still planning to get money from S.O.J.D.C (States of Jersey Development Company rather than from our own coffers?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

That is a treasury decision on that.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

But it has not been taken yet?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

It has not been taken no.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

If I may move us on to even more controversial things. Given the recent announcement of large works, large events no longer be able to be held at the fort due to health and safety concerns what work is being carried out to resolve these issues?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Fort Regent is very close to my heart and it is my desire to I do not think I can say restore Fort Regent to its former glory but I would like to get Fort Regent up and running again in the not too distant future too, it's I think it is about 113 or thereabouts, but I really would like to take it back up to its full capacity of several thousand people watching the biggest shows because that is the only large scale venue we have on the Island and it is my desire to have that reinstated. It will take a while, it will cost a lot of money, and to that end I have handed over infrastructure responsibility for Fort Regent to the Deputy of Trinity as a stand-alone project who is a very capable man, and will be handling infrastructure on a day to day basis.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What is your view assistant minister?

The Assistant Minister:

My view as an assistant minister I believe it should be kept open, and we have gone right the way through all the aspects of making sure that the people that are using it at the present time are well looked after and all the work that has being asked to be carried out has been carried out and that is correct Tim is it not at the present time?

Interim Assistant Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

We are still in the process of finishing off the lighting but we are mitigating the challenges and we have probably got another couple of weeks or so to finish the lighting. But the work is carrying on apace.

The Assistant Minister:

What we have done is that we are saying all the large events have been cancelled until the 20th of June. But can I just say there are discussions going on with people who have asked where do we stand after the 20th of June. I think it comes down to your department sir does it not that if it is okay we will have to do an assessment each time anybody did use it if we can go to the 1,170, but can I be specific and say that the maximum that we are likely to ever have up there at the present time with the present works being carried out is going to be 1,170.

Interim Assistant Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

As it stands there are no events to be held at the fort because of fire safety reasons we are mitigating those requirements. We are putting in safety lights, we are also looking at the fire alarm system and the evacuation system. If that work is completed satisfactorily we will then be in a position to reopen the fort for events. We do not have a time at the moment, we have thrown as many people as we can, electricians from across the Government at it to get the lighting in as quickly as we can. We have got an engineer, a fire expert from the U.K. who is looking over it and assessing it for us and advising us on the actual fire alarm system. But once we get to that position that still only takes us up to 1,170 occupants. To get beyond that there requires quite a lot more work. The roof was designed 40 years ago, it does not have any smoke extract, at the moment a large number of the evacuation routes from the fort are actually up over the ramparts which takes you up into the smoke, so about 20 per cent of the roof needs to be a fire vent capable, that is clearly a lot of expense in a very old structure. So at the moment we are getting to a position where we can safely guarantee the everyday use of the fort then safely guarantee events up to 1,170 and once we get to that point there is then a wider consideration about what we do for the future.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Given that this all has come on a bit suddenly what led to this, I mean the fort has been used for many years, obviously the buildings of the State have inspections from local safety fire service and so on, why did we suddenly get into a desperate situation it would appear to the general public?

Interim Assistant Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

The construction of the fort when it was brought into use in the 1970s the arched rooms that go back off the main space had asbestos inserts as a fire retardant feature. When that was being put in the showers were being constructed, so the infrastructure of the fort was being constructed and it was all encased in asbestos. We got to the point earlier in the year where the shower systems were actually failing, and it was not just the shower heads, it was the runs of water that were bringing water into those locations which actually required the pipes themselves so the whole runs of pipes which went throughout the fort were failing. To replace them we started to remove the asbestos, realised what the scenario was. The mitigation at the time was to just block off those spaces which then blocked off egress from the fort to some of the fire exits. In that context our duty of care was to then reassess what that did to the occupation of the fort.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I note that there is a plan to take the swimming pool down and fill it in. Has consideration been given to using that space as a skateboard park?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

There are lots of things in the pipeline at the moment. I think things are changing slightly, the plan now is to bring the pool down to the ground. It was planned at one time to leave a plinth but I think that is ...

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I can answer that one. The swimming pool will be taken out, the full structure taken out and the glass and steel built back up to the gradient of the main profile of the field. There is no overall master plan at this stage for the fort, so if a skateboard park would have gone there it would have to have been an individual planning application. So at the moment that is a straight demolition and just a backfill to wait until a decision is made on the overall fort and is put into the context of the overall planning of the fort. A new skateboard park we have been working closely with the Jersey Skateboard Association, and we have been discussing with them and we are working towards a capital bid for the Government plan for a skateboard park.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

So the building is not fit for purpose and needs demolishing, it needed demolishing 15 years ago and it definitely needs it now. It is riddled with asbestos, has problems with the security so it needs to come down and it will come down over the summer holidays.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

The tenders are back for the demolition next week and so someone will be selected and move on to the demolition during the summer months.

The Connétable of Grouville:

If it is taken down and you have not got a planning application in for what replaces it it may remain a greenfield.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Possibly, but the thinking was in the old days that that space would be reserved for planning purposes but I understand, Andy do you want to expand on that?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes, when we discussed it with planning because there was originally some thought about leaving the ...

Group Director, Regulation:

Yes, its history is always going to be taken into account in any planning decision. I think the biggest issue the site probably faces is the public perception is then clear, so I think it would be good to get

some ideas as to what it would be used for back as quickly as we can. But its history is it's a formerly used site, that will be taken into account in any future decisions, so putting something back there is likely, I think the biggest challenge is probably going to be what it looks like in terms of the skyline. It cannot be any worse than the current building so yes, we are not ignorant to the history, it is a built piece of land, it is a built site. It is fully understood in all of the guidance we have issued up until now and the emerging variations of what the fort could be, it was always anticipated there was something going to be put back on that piece of the fort so I would not be too worried about not being able to do anything with it, I think it is just what the skyline would look like.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

Excuse me, why are you bothered about the skyline there when the rest of the Island seems to have been swept under the carpet, nobody cares about the skyline? There was and we have already established I am old, I can remember that you were not allowed to build above the skyline. Now it seems if you have got x amount of money in the bank you can do what you like on the skyline on this Island. So why is all of a sudden the Fort Regent ... sorry, but you just happen to be in the place.

Group Director, Regulation:

Yes, no I know, I am just saying it is a very visible piece of the skyline for many people so we do have skyline policies, and I do not think we have thrown them out of the window.

The Connétable of St. Saviour:

Do you not? Well, I think if you were to ask a lot of the islanders they would think you had, not you personally but it had gone.

Group Director, Regulation:

I think that piece of St. Helier is probably the most visible piece of skyline for many people, that is the first thing that people see either coming east or west. So I think all I am highlighting is that site is going to be very visible and therefore it has got to look quite beautiful up there whatever is designed I think because it is going to be with us for a significant period of time.

Deputy H. Raymond:

Just all I was going to say is that it was agreed with Treasury that there was a Fort Regent steering committee set up with regards to a lot of the officers and a lot of the Ministers. That took place on the 28th of March, the workshop reviewed a long list of things that we could do. There was a list of 10 and the leader in fact was the Council of Ministers and the objective was to just agree a shortlist of what you could possibly do at the Fort Regent and that is going to come out fairly soon John is it not? We are really pushing the outside people that are looking at it to come back to us before the

beginning of May, the middle of May and so we will have some more work done on it because I think there was a feeling amongst most of the politicians that were around that room on the 28th of March that it is very much part of St. Helier, it is very much part of Jersey and the people that were there were very much concerned that we should try and do something with it that would be beneficial to everybody. So it is being structured across the board and we will obviously come back.

[13:15]

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So would you agree that you are in a holding strategy at the moment?

Deputy H. Raymond:

Yes, we are in a holding strategy, but for the first time **[Laughter]** I am going to say I have been quite impressed, we got people involved and they are coming back within 6 to 8 weeks which is pretty good and there are I think some great ideas coming out which we can use short term as well as opposed to long term.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Is this a U.K. company that you are using for this consultation work?

Deputy H. Raymond:

Yes, we have used them before.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Again, any reason why you did not use a local company to consult on this?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

The last people who have come before have done this sort of thing.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

That is strange because that is the same answer when I asked in the briefing about Liberation 75 joining the squares why do we use an external architect oh, because they worked on the square before. At some point we have got to give local businesses a break and we have got to give them the opportunity to work on something on this Island otherwise they will never be able to work on anything on this Island again because you are always going to somebody who has done it before.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

That is not correct. We use more local people than anybody else, we partner local companies, the reason this company has been chosen because they have actually got a proven track record of doing this type of work in these types of buildings in other places.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Again it is the proven track record, it stops a company in Jersey which is trying to get into something because you are always demanding that they have a proven track record of these sorts of things. Sometimes it is worth just giving a shot to a local company who wants to get a job.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

We give shots to local companies who can do this, but the reality is this scale, the complexity of this piece of work from this initial phase if we can then partner with local companies so they upskill that would be a great benefit.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Let us hope so.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

But for this initial phase what we do is we have found a company that has actually done this before, they have got amazing reference sites and what we are trying to do is come up with a solution which actually is fit for purpose for the next 50 years. So this is a short, medium and long term outcome, what you cannot do is shut the fort for 10 years then have a big reveal because that does not work. What you have got to do is you have got to do the short term needs which has been delivered by most of Kevin's infrastructure staff who have been working non-stop on the fort which I think has been an excellent collaborative process. So we are going make sure that the fort stays open over this period, we have then got medium term options in terms of getting better access in developing solutions that bring people back to the fort and then the long term is finding a combination of things that happen in the fort which reengage the public of Jersey.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

What is the name of this company?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Which company?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The company that is carrying out the consultation for the fort, Fort Regent.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

It is IPM.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

IPM.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Have you considered the option to use services of the local company with maybe some supervision from the top U.K. company so really to bring up to speed and develop and to get ideas from a local company?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

We work in partnership with local companies. If local people do not have that skillset what I try and do is I bring in a partner organisation and they partner with a local company and that is the track record I have had for the last 15 years of being here because we need to make sure that we do not source everything from the UK.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Is any local company involved now in this initial stage?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Not in this initial phase no, but this is a very small piece of work relative to what is going to happen in the future.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Are you confident that local companies will be involved with future development?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

That is what is tied into our procurement strategies to do that with local companies. I think it is something that we certainly as D.F.I. have fundamentally changed on the Island from what used to happen.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I am going to take us to the west Minister. P33 asks you to consult with stakeholders regarding designated areas for motorhomes used around the Island as well as bringing forward policy guidelines. What are your views on this?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

[Laughter] Nicely anticipated Tristan, well done. You know the history that as Minister for Infrastructure I was approached by the Constable of St. Peter who basically would like for us to help the community with its accounts down there but he was at the end of his tether. After consultation with officers it was decided and the environment minister indeed it was decided to make the car park area a 12-and-24 car park which would deter long-term parking down there. Most people obviously very well behaved and very respectful but there was an element that ruined it for everybody else. For instance if you have a mobile home or a motor home in the UK or abroad you have to by law park 20 feet apart because you have gas canisters on board. In case there is a fire they were parking down at the port about 3 feet apart when it was really, really busy and with the wind coming off the sea it could have been a disaster waiting to happen. There were reports of people using the dunes as toilets which seems ludicrous as we are employing wardens to stop people letting their dog defecate in the dunes when we have humans further down the bay doing exactly the same thing. I mean we were all young once, I can imagine it is really great if you are going as a young person watching the sun come up at Le Port but the sheer weight of numbers of people involved down there meant that something had to be done.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you believe that anywhere else could be identified to accommodate those who wish to stay the night?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is possible yes but that would be down to the environment minister and the parish authorities. I mean it always has been illegal as you know to sleep in a vehicle in Jersey and when you buy a motorhome I think you agree to that, you sign up to the fact that the motorhome will come from the harbour to your home and it is then locked up or secured behind a fence. When you wish to use it is brought from your home to the harbour and away. It was never intended that motorhomes would drive around the Island and indeed people would sleep in them on the Island. But if you did wish to do that we have two or three really wonderful campsites if that is what you wish to do who have heavily invested in recent years.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It seems to be limited to the west though. If I can just move a little bit further down the -

The Minister for Infrastructure:

But there are meetings planned however.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Indeed, good, I am pleased to hear that. The sea defences and climate change, it is quite pertinent down now. What is the department's policy at the moment in regards to the treatment of our sea defences?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The defences that happen down in the St. Peter area I think have been absolutely fantastic with the wave deflectors the teams have done an absolutely fantastic job with the overtopping and there is a wonderful photograph, I will try and find it for you where on the end that has not been touched yet the waves are flying over the wall and on the section closer where the wave deflectors are there the waves are actually flying back the other way.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Will you be putting that into operation in other areas?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

If need be and budgets are there that would be great.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Assuming our sea defencing budget continues then we will be looking to manage and adapt the existing sea defences and in the climate change policy which we are developing with the environment will be complete by the end of the year, it is not surprising that climate change is happening. We are certainly seeing more damage in the last 10 years than we have seen in the last 50 years on our existing sea defences. We have got a mixture of the granite sea defences and German sea walls which neither were designed greatly in terms of the actual defences. So we are looking to adapt and manage those and hold the line with them but certainly in the coming years we will be having to raise sea defences. The Gunsite we raised it 150 millimetres or 6 inches and that was left to be raised higher so that could be added on to in the future. But we do not want to be taking the walls up to the absolute maximum height, the predictions for climate change are depending which camp you sit in a bit variable at the moment. But we certainly are seeing differences in weather patterns, we are getting longer hotter summers, increased storminess, storms from directions we have not seen causing damages. So we are going to have to change and our sea defence strategy which was written in 2002 was about fairly simply holding the line, repair what we have got, maintain and keep that in place. Our sea defence strategy going forward to reflect climate change will see changes to those existing defences, they may not all be made higher because we have got lots of infrastructure behind those in terms of private properties and lots of public amenities so that it may be building something in front, it might be something different but that is what this policy which will be complete by the end of the year will start giving us guidance in which direction we go in.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There is also mention of the sea dates going in down there at Belmont.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes, the works which we did at the Gunsite and what happened there is that the water comes over the wall at the gun site, the Gunsite road runs back down to the main road, that then drops down into the Beaumont Junction, the Beaumont storm water drains there go into the pumping station which because we got the big storm is being beaten so all those properties flood. So the Gunsite was a priority project which we dammed the wall now and there is a second section of wall to be done as well and that is hopefully preventing the water getting over on to the promenade, but following the last set of floods we implemented fairly rudimentary but taking out some big sandbags and putting them there to stop the water running back out on to the main road. That has been replaced now with a tidal flood gate which can be just pulled in and shut and opened as required. That has been going in place over the last few weeks and months.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Good, I noted probably down at St. Ouens talking about the poor bit further along you have got railings along the sea wall there in what I have described as a parlous state, what is the policy with regard to replacing that sort of thing? Because in this island of tourists it gives unless you are adopting the rusty look but it certainly is ...

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

We change the railings at St. Ouens about once every seven years. For a long time there were no railings there, there were some accidents where people were falling over the walls and having all sorts of terrible injuries, it is lucky no one got killed but the railings were then put in but they are in a very harsh environment down there and no matter what materials we put down there and how we do they need replacing so that will be on the programme to be replaced.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Given that you see in France a lot of stainless steel in these situations has that been considered?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

It has been considered but in the last repair because of the length of it it was precluded. Down there it is not just the corrosion of whatever material, it is the damage it gets from the actual stones and the seaweed which gets chucked up on the sand. We went for galvanised last time, but certainly stainless steel will be considered again but it is depending what cost it can be sort of 5 or 6 times more expensive for big long lengths of railings like that it sometimes precludes it.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Do you know when is it due to be done? It really does not look good?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I am not sure off the top of my head, but I was down there myself listening to all this, and it will be coming.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Anything else on climate? Just going on to last 5 minutes if I may, the One Gov T.O.M minister there is a suggestion that meetings are not being held regularly with other ministers that now sit under the Growth Housing and Environment Department, you have got Minister for Children and Housing, Environment Economic Development, are you meeting regularly?

[13:30]

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Not as a group but I mean there are certain synergies obviously with the environment that would affect myself, not so much obviously with the Children's Minister or anything else. Any comment on that John?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The housing aspect must come under.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Housing does yes.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

The housing aspect.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, I am on that group now.

The Connétable of Grouville:

It would be useful surely for the four ministers to get together, the whole point of this new regime is to get rid of the silos so you need to meet surely.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We need to meet yes, but we meet as a Council of Ministers regularly, but not so much individually, I mean as a smaller group.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What about meeting with your chief officer? But in reality the director general has taken the role of what the chief operating officer used to do. Would you say that or have you been replaced by someone else?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

We are quite a unique organisation, there are more ministers within G.H.E. than there is with any other department. My initial position on this particularly around the Environment Minister is Andy Scate who is the chief officer and William Peggie support the Environment Minister under normal circumstances Ellen Littlechild and Ray as was and Tim Daniels now support the D.F.I. Minister, so and at the moment the reason I am here is because Ellen is on maternity leave, so the Housing Minister is supported by Andy because his relationship within the department is more about housing regulation, and then the economic development minister is supported by Dan Houseago. So my role is one of a coordination role, making sure we get everybody together. It has been tricky getting people together, the challenge has been so what we are doing is we are doing that based on themes, the environment theme is a key one where the D.F.I. Minister, Assistant Minister, Environment Minister and Assistant Minister have been together over a couple of occasions now talking through those issues and I think they were very positive. So what we are trying to do is do it based on a thematic theme not just getting together for the sake of it. Dealing with the new operating model has been done collaboratively with all the ministers and even the Environment Minister who has got some issues was happy with the tier 3, tier 4 structure and the sense that it made. So the way I am looking at this is this is a huge portfolio, and the chief officer role is fulfilled by the directors and then the coordination role is a function for me to do.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

That is quite interesting because I do not think it has been made terribly clear, certainly the Environment Minister has been quite vocal in his opposition to the process to date.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have disagreed on a lot the Environment Minister and myself but we have a consensus on quite a few things namely pollution and we are both determined to reduce pollution in the Island. How we get to that point slightly differently but we are heading in the same direction which is good.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Anything else?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

You mentioned that you would not ordinarily be here, you are here to replace Ellen who is on maternity leave at the moment so when would we ordinarily have an opportunity to scrutinise the work that you are doing?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Whenever you want really, you can call me and scrutiny is a political relationship with the ministers.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

No, I appreciate that but this particular minister likes to come with a whole consort of officers.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is a very big department with a very big portfolio.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

From what you are suggesting one officer we will not get to see will be you.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Well, it is down to the minister, if he wants me here I will be here. Andy's relationship with Kevin is to look after D.B.S but he has answered questions on planning.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Because obviously as you know I chair the economic and international affairs scrutiny panel as well so you feature very heavily whether it is the economic side or the environment, infrastructure and housing side I am scrutinising your work and yet you suggested that I would not ordinarily see you.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

You scrutinise the minister, it is a political relationship is it not?

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Yes, but ultimately it is the work that you are doing as well.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes, and I will be asked to attend wherever.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Yes, I think we will be making sure you are asked to attend.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

But it is up to the minister to make that call because scrutiny is a critical friend of the ministerial portfolio and there is minister and politician.

Deputy K.F. Morel:

Yes, but we can still ask for you to come along.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

You can.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Well, thanks all of you for your attendance today, it is very much appreciated. We have all had input which has been extremely useful.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Chairman just before we forget there was one subject which we need to study this afternoon about foreshore encroachment. The law society apparently asked to meet your predecessor back in 2016 and wrote again this was in June, and wrote again in October. Will you commit to seeking him out and having a meeting with him to discuss the matter?

Interim Assistant Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Yes, there is a work in process at the moment to resolve a number of issues and we are effectively working our way from a lock eastwards and as each instance is considered it is being looked at and resolved so it is in process.

The Connétable of Grouville:

When we met in the autumn I asked whether when agreements are made whether they are one offs and technically I understand it is not quite true because in the clauses when you get the agreements there are things which says that public may require the encroaching party wall to be removed, remove terracing so it is not really a one off in some respects is it?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, we have just had a discussion regarding sea defences, there are some encroachments that put houses right on top of the sea walls, so obviously there may be a time when the wall may collapse, when we need to take the wall down and rebuild it so obviously we need to be guided by law officers in that respect, have there been any encroachments, how long ago the encroachments were obviously and we take it from there but I will be guided by the officers on that one.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So your reserve is in case of having to replace sea defences I would say.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, well, anything could happen, you will remember not too long ago we lost a large section of wall down at is it Le Bourg, St. Clement where there was I think they were 20 feet sections of concrete wall that were literally thrown around like Lego bricks and people lost the end of their gardens so it had to be determined exactly where they were, there were several walls, there was an original sea wall, there was the newer sea wall built in the 1970s. The land behind was sometimes adopted by residents, it is complex so there is no one size fits all.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

What we have done is there is historical encroachments in lots of areas of the Island and once the foreshore came across to the public then the public decided to try and address some of those but the now did not, but most of them are very individual, they are different to each house, they are different to each property, the current property owners maybe did not do them or whatever, so in conjunction with the law officers and the States team we have taken a fair sample of those, taken a view on how we might address those and we are going to start with the landowners or the property owners on those to try and resolve those encroachments now. Some of those might be to the benefit of the property owner in as much that they may have a sea defence, a public sea defence in front of them which is providing them some level of protection which they might want to stay there and have some surety about that. Other areas people have built their own sea defences, they have built on top of them, some areas they have built over promenades and things like that so but it has been happening for a long time, in excess of 50 years in some cases so to try and untangle all of those is an individual discussion with the law officers and the property owners and their lawyers and so we have taken a sample of those and we are going to see how that goes but it is a long project.

The Connétable of Grouville:

Some property owners might be quite poor people or people who cannot afford to take on the States and it is a bit tough on them.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I would not say it is a question of taking on but we need to clarify exactly what is what, I mean originally it was Crown land which was then transferred to the State a few years ago.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I mean it is not going to be a take on adversarial thing, it is to try and resolve the issues with the property owners. Now the property owners themselves in some cases have got an uncertain boundary which may when they come to sell it cause difficulties. They may want to resolve that but all these cases will require lawyers, lawyer time, court costs so they might just actually decide we will just take the risk and that is why it is very individual to each property and almost every case is different and the ones where we have had foreshore issues and there has been odd ones over the years where we have had to resolve some of these they are not easy cases, they take a long time, and have become very entwined unfortunately. But it is something which does need to be resolved.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Lovely, thanks very much indeed.

ADJOURNMENT

[13:40]