



Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny

Panel

Quarterly Hearing

Witness: The Minister for Home Affairs

Friday, 9th October 2020

Panel:

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

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour (Vice-Chair)

Deputy T. Pointon of St. John

Deputy M.R. Higgins of St. Helier

Witnesses:

Connétable L. Norman of St. Clement, The Minister for Home Affairs

Deputy G.C. Guida of St. Lawrence, Assistant Minister for Home Affairs

Mr. J. Blazeby, Director General, Justice and Home Affairs

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

Ms. A. Fossey, Acting Superintendent, States of Jersey Police

[10:02]

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

Welcome to the quarterly public hearing of the Minister for Home Affairs. We will start off by having a brief introduction and then we will crack on with the questions. I am Deputy Rob Ward and I chair the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet of St. Saviour (Vice-Chair):

Deputy Louise Doublet, vice-chair of the panel.

Deputy T. Pointon of St. John:

The Deputy of St. John, Trevor Pointon, and I am a member of the panel.

Assistant Minister for Home Affairs:

Gregory Guida, Assistant Minister for Home Affairs.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Constable Len Norman, Minister for Home Affairs.

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

Good morning. Julian Blazeby, director general, Justice and Home Affairs.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We will have Deputy Higgins as well. I think he is just transferring across to this call; that he seems to have gone astray somewhere, so he will be joining us. To start, concerning police governance, the Minister highlighted in his work programme letter to the panel that the Comptroller and Auditor General's report on the governance of the States of Jersey Police: "A recommendation was made to increase the independence of the police from the Government and to strengthen the role of the Jersey Police Authority." Considering that the Minister for Home Affairs has agreed to implement these recommendations, among other recommendations as well, what specific work has been undertaken so far to action the recommendations agreed to, Minister?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, thank you, Chair. Work has been going on. One of the first things I did when I became Minister for Home Affairs was to confirm that, as Minister, I accepted totally all of the recommendations of the Comptroller and Auditor General. Since that time the policy people have been working on the reform, on the draft laws, the laws that needed changing in the police law and so on. As you quite rightly said, the basic premise is to reinforcing law, to clarifying law, that operationally the police are independent of the Minister, of the States and of States Members; there is no political interference in their operational matters. That work is now nearly complete. The draft law was reviewed about 2 weeks ago. It is now back with the law drafters for some relatively minor changes, so it should be ready to lodge in the next month or so.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

The draft law is the vehicle for the actions to be taken from those recommendations as well then.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, absolutely. Everything that the Comptroller and Auditor General recommended back in 2018, I think it was, will be implemented, subject to States approval, in the law that we are bringing from States later this year.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think sometimes what we do is we see draft laws and we see the intentions of them but the front line implementations, the actual changes, take time. What is the timescale to see the specific changes to have that independence bolstered up or increased, as opposed to just the law?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, I think it is not necessarily bolstering, it really is confirming what is the practice. At the moment I could have more influence with the police than I should have. I, as Minister, can decide what rank police officers should be and how many there should be in a certain rank. That is not really a job for a Minister, that is a human resources issue; that is a matter for the chief and the senior management team. All of these things will be implemented, as far as I am aware, as soon as the law is approved. Any changes that are necessary to the administration will be made at the same time, that there should not be any delay. In fact I have already signed with the police chief a protocol between the Minister for Home Affairs, the Home Affairs Department and the States of Jersey Police and the Police Authority, indicating how we will behave, if you like, now and once the law is in place, confirming the operational independence, which is the top line, if you like.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes. Okay, and that is the States of Jersey Police Law 2012 that will have to be amended for the recommendations. You noted that prior to that a consultation would need to be taking place with stakeholders, what progress was made in that consultation and who have been consulted?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

It is mainly the Police Authority, the States of Jersey Police, ourselves, the Police Association and so on, everybody at that sort of level and that has been done over the last couple of years. There is no disagreement between us, as far as I am aware. There might need to be some changes, if you like, to the membership of the Police Authority because there currently are 2 States Members on that Police Authority. When you are thinking about the operational independence, I am not sure if that is appropriate; that will probably be one of the things we will debate in the Assembly.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, and that consultation, I am always very interested, we hear the word "consultation" a lot but for me I am very practical and I need to know, so what does the consultation look like? Was it via

email, was it a questionnaire, was it face-to-face meetings? We are very interested to get a real understanding of what the consultation process is, whenever it happens.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, sure. At this sort of level I think you need to bear in mind that this was not a deep, heavy public consultation exercise because all of the parties were the same mind. It did not need a great input to make it. A lot of it was done through face-to-face talks at our normal meetings because I have regular meetings with the police chief, I have regular meetings with the Police Authority. Discussions have taken place at that level and there has also, of course, been other meetings at officer level as well, which has culminated in the amendments to the law, which, as I say, hopefully will be lodged within the next few weeks.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am just going to ask you about it, you did mention about the lodging of the law, so the consultation is complete. You have your amendments to the law and that is about to be lodged; I am correct in thinking that.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

That is right, it is currently back with some amending with the Law Drafting Department. As soon as they are able to complete their work I will be able to lodge it.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Deputy Higgins, you had a question in there, sorry, can you just clarify what you mean, if you could, which document?

Deputy M.R. Higgins of St. Helier:

It is the protocol, Minister, we are talking about for the chief of police and so on; it would be useful to see that. Also, can I ask on the question of consultation, why the Minister has not gone out for public consultation on it as well?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

It did not seem to me to be necessary. What we are doing is reinforcing the operational independence of the police. Really that is a given, as far as I am concerned, that there was no need, in my view, for wider consultation. If there are any issues in the draft law, of course it will be lodged and it will be up to anybody that is able to make representations before it is debated.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, I think that is just about everything on that that I wanted to ask. Deputy Pointon, do you want to move on to your questions regards offender management?

The Deputy of St. John:

Minister, we have spoken at length in the past about developing an integrated offender management system, namely with the police, probation and prison service. Could you tell us what developments there had been in relation to this project?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, of course. It is a very important project, offender management, because the main aim at the end of the day is to try and reduce reoffending and to make sure that people who have been in the criminal fraternity have every opportunity to be rehabilitated. What has been happening recently, we have got a relatively new chief probation officer and the director general of Home Affairs has been working with him. What they are going to do now is to set up a small working group to discuss the recommendations of the review, which you remember was carried out just before COVID struck, which is a very helpful document. The chief of police will be leading the workstream on that to have a fully integrated offender management system. It is the wish of all the agencies, probation, prison, police, that they should be successful then. It is a very important piece of work.

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes, we did see that review and it was considered a piece of work but the thing that has struck us, as a panel, was that the review was conducted by 2 members of the U.K. (United Kingdom) prison service, rather than including members of the probation fraternity or, for that matter, the police within the review. Because of that we felt that there is possibly a bias within the report.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Any report that does not come up with supporting your view will obviously be considered bias. But I will just ask Julian Blazeby, director general of Home Affairs, to comment on that because I am sure one of the people who conducted the review was appointed by ourselves, if you like, Justice and Home Affairs, and the other one on the recommendation of the probation service, and I am sure was a senior probation person. Julian, if you could comment.

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, thank you, Minister. Yes, it is a very valid challenge, Deputy, and one we were very alive to and conscious right from the outset when there was an agreement between the then Bailiff and the Minister to carry out this review. It very much was a collaborative agreement to commission the review. As the Minister said, we identified an ex-prison governor to support the review and then we left it entirely in the hands of the probation service to work with the probation board to nominate their

representative to carry out the review. The individual from Northern Ireland, who is referencing the report as co-author, was entirely recommended by the current Chief Probation Officer with support from the probation board. My understanding was that individual was nominated because of his background, both within the prison and the probation service and the nature of their governance in Northern Ireland. We accepted their nomination and they accepted ours, if you like. I am absolutely confident that was a co-produced approach to getting the review right so that it is balanced.

[10:15]

The Deputy of St. John:

Thank you for that. What are the options that you have highlighted or you have identified in relation to the offender management system? Where are you in relation to, I believe, the integration that you are considering in relation to the offer from police, prison and probation?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

It is too early to say. The important thing is that there is a close working and integration between the departments on offender management using the same programmes, the same tools and looking for the same outcomes. How that looks from an administrative point of view will come out of the review that will take place between all of those agencies involved, we say the prison, the police and probation. But we are not going in there with any predetermined idea of what the administration should look like; that will come out of the review. Of course that review will also involve the courts as well because the Royal Court, who currently have administrative control over the probation service, they have a particular interest in this.

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes, and it, of course, is something we will explore further because I think it is an essentially important part of offender management and we will be speaking to probation and to the Bailiff's Department as well to discuss this. We will come back to you with further questions about it.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, quite rightly too and I hope you will also speak to the police and the prison service as well because all of those agencies have got a serious part to play in offender management and helping to keep the Island safe.

The Deputy of St. John:

Yes, I am always wanting to be inclusive, I had meant to include all of those as well in the list.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I am sure you did, yes, I just want it for clarity, yes.

The Deputy of St. John:

Thank you. Chair, I have finished there.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

On the question of offender management, Minister, can you explain how the prisoner at La Moye managed to make 256 telephone calls to his victim, as was recently alluded to in the Royal Court by the Deputy Bailiff? How can you ensure that that does not happen again?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I have to say, Deputy, that the article in the *Evening Post* was somewhat dramatic but, nevertheless, it did happen; it should not have happened and lessons have been learnt from how it happened. Procedures have been put in place to try and ensure that it cannot happen again. You can never say never but the prison service and the police have learnt a lot from what happened there and have put in procedures. You will forgive me but I do not want to go into detail in public about how this happened because that could compromise security but would be quite happy to give the panel any information that they would like about this particular incident in a private hearing. I am sure you can understand the reasons for that.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

I can and I accept that offer, thank you.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think we are going to move on. Deputy Doublet was going to ask some questions regards the combined control room.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Yes, thank you. Minister, in a letter to the panel regarding your work programme, you informed us that a high-level analysis had been undertaken of the combined control unit systems to determine where they were needing replacement or upgrade. Can you outline to what extent this analysis was undertaken and what it entailed, please?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes. I wonder if I could ask the director general to give you a briefing on that. He has been very much involved in the detail of it.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Please do, yes.

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

Thank you, Minister. Albeit we had the challenges of COVID that slowed things up, as you will appreciate, have delayed things. There has been a lot of work still ongoing in the background to ensure we can keep momentum going on this project. The handover analysis has covered 3 areas really: one is around resources and control and so what does a combined control room look like in the future? One is around the telephony, so what is the correct platform to base the 3 services working the control room on, and that needs upgrading and introducing? Then the third element is looking at the computer-aided dispatch system: what is a modern and integrated system that can enable any controller to take a call and dispatch any 3 emergency services from the combined control room? Those pieces of work and the high-level analysis have been very thorough in terms of looking at all those different elements. The elements of the telephony is progressing well and will be introduced shortly. The resources will follow once the I.T. (information technology) platform has been agreed, procured and introduced. Obviously then that will combine with a new resourcing model that will enable us to, as I say, manage all the calls that come in and dispatch emergency services across a multi-agency team within there, as opposed to individually services at the moment, dispatching from ...

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Can you just explain in layperson's terms, what is the control room like now and what are you aiming for it to be like after the work is done?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes. Control room now all sits within one building in police headquarters. They all sit in the same space but they sit as 3 individual services. If you walked into the room you would be able to clearly see where the police are sat, where the fire staff are sat and the ambulance staff are sat. Albeit they are co-located, they are working individually under the same roof. When a call comes in the police will handle their own police call and separately fire and ambulance will come into their own dispatches; that is how it currently works. They are working off different I.T. systems as well, so the police system is completely different to the fire and ambulance system.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

When you say "when a call comes in", so is there not a filtering system? Does it go via Jersey Telecom first?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

It does, that is right. J.T. (Jersey Telecom) manage all the 999 emergency calls and then they get sent to either the police element or to the fire and ambulance element.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

After this redesign, will Jersey Telecom be involved in that filtering system at all?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

The other element to this is, what do we do with the 999 system, which is slightly separate to the combined control room project? You are quite right to raise this. In a detailed piece of work to look at, do J.T. continue to manage the 999 system? Do we take that in-house in governance? Do we take it, therefore, straight into the control room or do we, for example, outsource it to an off-Island provider like B.T. (British Telecom) who deliver all the 999 services in the U.K.? Quite a complicated and detailed piece of work involving a number of different stakeholders. That piece of work is ongoing currently and we will have options over the next number of weeks as to what we do. But that will not impact on what I was describing in terms of the current status of the control room now and then what we are trying to achieve. Shall I go on to talk about what, hopefully, the control room will look like?

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Yes, sorry I ...

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

No, that is fine. If all the elements we get right and we should deliver the project, ultimately you will be able to walk into that room and you will not be able to differentiate between the staff in terms of whether they are police, fire and ambulance because there will be a similar resourcing model, probably all wearing the same uniform, for want of a better expression, that is not necessarily a service uniform, and they will all be able to answer any calls. A 999 call will come in that requires a police response, any one of the staff you will see in that room in the future will be able to answer that response, record it on the computer system and dispatch the appropriate resource to it, similarly across fire and ambulance, which is obviously quite different and indeed use the same computer system that will manage all 3 services, as opposed to the individual approach I have described.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

What is the driving force behind these changes? Is it to make efficiencies?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

Ultimately, it is to provide a better service for the public because we have looked across other jurisdictions as to what their control rooms are. Guernsey have a combined control room, so do the

Isle of Man. When you are dealing with a small island like ours, often we are sending more than one service to the same incident and currently we have people having to ring up people or in this case shout across the room saying: "I have sent an ambulance to that, we need the police." Having a joint control room that can deliver a better service quicker in a safer way and sending the right resource without having the different systems will generate a quicker response and the right response at the right time. There may well be efficiencies within that because you would appreciate we are having to duplicate efforts at the moment. The main driver is to get a more efficient and effective service to the public.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

It has helped already having the controllers in the same room because at least they are able to speak to each other and decide between them the appropriate resources that need to be sent to a particular incident. Because until last year, obviously the fire and ambulance controllers were in a different building from the police controllers and, as you said, they had to communicate electronically or by telephone. Now they can physically talk to each other, which is a great advance. But it is going to take a little bit of time to get the systems right but once they are right and the systems to working as one, it is going to improve things even more.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I see Deputy Higgins is asking in the chat, how many less staff will this result in?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

They have not.

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

No, we have not gone through the resourcing model yet. It is not predicated on we will have less staff. We will have the right resourcing model to ensure we can deliver an effective and efficient 999 emergency response. There is no way the Minister would allow myself and colleagues to deliver a system that was understaffed and, therefore, meant the service was any less efficient than what it is now. But we have yet to work through the model and that of course depends on the type of system that we are going to procure.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Is it likely to be more staff, less staff? What is the most likely scenario?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

To be honest with you it is impossible to say but you asked a question just now about whether the emergency call should come directly into the control room. If that happens there will be additional

resources needed because there will be no triaging by J.T., so that is one issue which will be a matter of debate over the next few weeks and months. There will be a decision made at operational level about who needs to be in the combined control room at any one time. Do you need people of a certain rank, certain experience and so on? It will become very much an operational issue. But this is not, and I stress, about making efficiencies in the terms of reducing the number of people in the operation. It is about providing a better service for the people of the Island.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Thank you. I will let Deputy Ward come in.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, and sorry to interrupt there, just a couple of things have come up from that line of questioning. The first one, something I noted personally, we visited the ambulance station and were there when there was a call. First of all, just to compliment the way they reacted; it was incredible. But there was a silence and there was a focus on what they were doing. Is there any risk that with a larger room with different people doing different things that it may be noisier, it may be more difficult to focus? Have you considered that as one of the issues? The second thing is, I think I would like to ask the difference between efficiency and effectiveness because you keep using the word efficient and that, to myself and perhaps other members of the panel, does ring alarm bells regards staffing numbers. If it is more effective, would you agree that perhaps it may mean there are more staff to have a more effective system, particularly as people are training across a specialism, so to speak, police, fire and ambulance?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, Deputy, I think if we need more staff to keep the Island safe you will not find me wanting. You will remember in the last Government Plan I convinced the Council of Ministers and the States to increase the numbers in the States of Jersey Police force because I thought they were under-resourced. If the evidence is there that we need more resources, I will make sure that they are fought for and do whatever I need to make sure they are needed to keep the Island safe and that is very, very important to me. When I am talking about efficiencies in this context, it is not about saving money; that has never crossed my mind. It is providing, the word you use, a more effective service for the public. As I said just now, even having the controllers from the ambulance and fire in the same room as the police increases the effectiveness and the efficiency. You are quite right, the kind comments you made about the ambulance service and the same applies to the fire service and the police; they are very effective.

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

If I could maybe just add in terms of the first point you raised, Deputy, around the noise and the people in control rooms. Currently they are very disciplined and they are used to dealing with the call and being quite focused, as you say, on their individual issue. Then they are talking to colleagues across the control room when they need additional resources to add or different services to respond. The new telephone system we are introducing is a very intuitive system and enables people to have headsets and to manage the noise right down.

[10:30]

This technology is used in much larger control rooms and indeed in busier settings as well. The technology enables staff to concentrate on a call, manage it through an integrated headset to enable them to deal with it without interfering with colleagues who are sat reasonably nearby, as well as a different service; that is all manageable. It has really been a collaboration between both the police, fire and ambulance very much working together to iron out some of these more personal issues, whether it is personal hygiene, whether it is rest breaks, making sure people have time out where they can relax away from their desk and then get back to it. All of those issues have been worked together in a collaborative format, which has really been very beneficial.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Can I pick up on something that was mentioned about the way that changes might happen, so when the public call in with a 999 call, at the moment they have to say whether they need ambulance, fire or police, is that correct? Jersey Telecom provide that service. I believe there was a failure in their systems in the summer where the public were not able to call 999 from landlines. I just wanted to ask about do you have a service level agreement with them, Minister, and how much is the States paying Jersey Telecom for that?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

I think the Minister is indicating and I am happy to answer that question. You are absolutely right in terms of the failure; it was made public in the earlier part of this year, I think it was, and probably the latter part of last year. That of course caused some significant concern for both the Minister and myself and the service heads of each of the 3 emergency services. We have been working very hard with Jersey Telecom to ensure those sort of failures do not happen again. I think you will be familiar with the fact that the regulatory authority has got involved and is investigating those failures because of the serious nature of the failure in terms of Islanders not being able to use the 999 system. I am pleased to say that the hard work that J.T. (Jersey Telecom) and colleagues have been involved in has settled the system down and we have not had any failure since then and we hope that continues. At the same time, we are absolutely looking at the service level agreement you referred to, how they manage the calls, and indeed what it was said earlier on, the solution going

forward, does that stay with J.T. or is there a different and maybe an improved solution. There are service level agreements in place. The agreement has been around for a number of years in relation to J.T. providing the 999 service. It goes back 5 or 6 years. I am not sure whether that comes at a cost at all to us because obviously J.T. being a States-owned entity, but we can get into the detail of that, we can provide you with that after this meeting.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I just wanted to ask the Minister about that, if there is a cost and if there is not a cost; I am just wondering about the dynamics of J.T. being a States-owned entity. Because, as I understand it, in other jurisdictions where there are similar arrangements, there would be a penalty for a systems failure such as this. Minister, I just wanted to get your views on this because it is obviously quite important this does not happen again.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

It is very important it does not happen again and just to give some reassurances that the first outage we had we were able to track and trace the people who had attempted to make 999 calls, while the system was down. There were no significant issues; there was a slight delay in getting one person to hospital but there was not a problem with that. The second time, the way the whole system went out, we could not track and trace calls that had been made, but as far as we are aware there were no significant problems because of it. But, nevertheless, it should not have happened and, as far as I am concerned, it must not happen again. I have had 2 meetings with the chair of the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority who are investigating the issue. I believe J.T. have probably broken their contract with us and it will be up to the J.C.R.A. (Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority) to make a decision as to whether there should be a financial penalty to J.T. or not. That is for the J.C.R.A. I am not sure, I do not think it will be too long before their final report is out, but I have had 2 meetings with the chairman and they are taking this matter very seriously and, in fairness, J.T. have taken it very seriously as well. They do not want their reputation tarnished by incidents like this. So hopefully everybody, but J.T. in particular, have learned from this and we will not see a repeat. The problem is, as you know, you can never say never. That is the problem. But I am sure there will be a much better resilience going ahead.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

What is your personal view on whether there should be a penalty and whether it would be less likely to happen in the future if there were penalties?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I do not want to pre-empt what the J.C.R.A. are going to do. Clearly, if there were penalties, it would focus the mind. But, quite honestly, I am convinced, because I have had meetings with the

managing director of J.T. as well, and I am absolutely convinced they are seriously embarrassed about the whole situation. Whether there is a financial penalty or not, they will ensure to the best of their ability that this does not happen again.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I just want to ask on a slightly different note now about something called a C.A.D. (computer-aided dispatch) system, which was in the 6-month progress review of the Government Plan. So thank you for your answers on the previous topic; this is a new topic now. Could you just explain what is meant by C.A.D. please?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

It is related to the topic of the discussion we have just had. I am afraid this business is riddled with acronyms so C.A.D. is computer-aided dispatch system. So every emergency control room across every jurisdiction has a computer-aided dispatch system that enables ... when 999 calls come into any emergency control room, it is a system that you can start to log the calls. Take an ambulance, for example, where you log the symptoms, work out what has gone wrong, and then the computer will decide on the most appropriate form of dispatch. So C.A.D. is the acronym, it stands for computer-aided dispatch system. That is the platform that we are hoping to procure that will be across all services so we can have omnicompetent controllers who can dispatch police, fire, ambulance through the platform, which will be a C.A.D. system.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I can see the chair popping up there so I will let him ask the next question or move on as he sees fit.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I was just popping up and getting ready for the next set.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Just looking at the time, I think we should probably move on, should we not?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

You are right, thank you. Some questions then on a really important topic, which is the Domestic Abuse Law. In July's hearing you highlighted it was a top priority but work was delayed due to COVID. However, the officer working has now returned full time, so can I ask what further progress has now been made on the draft legislation given you have somebody full time back again?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I have had meetings with the policy person who is dealing with this issue along with Deputy Guida, the Assistant Minister. The law drafting instructions are now being written and will be going to the law drafting people in the next few weeks. Then, after that, when the law comes back, it does not have to be approved at that stage, will then go out to public consultation. We have already done a lot of consultation with various interested bodies and States Members. We will then go out to consultation. As I said before, I expect that early in the new year. It is progressing very well.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So early in the new year for the draft legislation to come to us?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

It might even be before that to you but that is when we intend to go to public consultation. But as soon as I have it back from law drafting clearly you will have it.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

You mentioned that, in relation to the Domestic Abuse Law, the consultations had taken place with local bodies. Can you elaborate on which local bodies were consulted and perhaps give some of the outcomes from that?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

There are a lot of them, Chairman: the probation service; Women's Refuge; Victim Support; J.M.A.P.P.A. (Jersey Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements), S.A.R.C. (Sexual Assault Referral Centre), Liberate, the Safeguarding Board, a number of States Members including Senator Vallois and Deputy Gardiner, the education service, the Children's Commissioner, the legal profession, various lawyers. So it has been pretty widely consulted upon starting from the very basics, do we need a Domestic Abuse Law? If we do, what sort of law does it need to be? So all that work has been done. I am not sure if Deputy Doublet was involved, but I know Senator Vallois and Deputy Gardiner were involved with the person producing the law drafting instructions. We have done all that work. Quite honestly, Chairman, I have said this before, it is a top priority for myself and the Assistant Minister. I want it to be, I am not sure if this is the right phrase, but a piece of flagship legislation that other jurisdictions will be able to look at and say: "Jersey has got it right." I am really looking forward to bringing this as soon as possible but, as I said to Deputy Pointon in the past, I want to make sure it is absolutely right as well because it is such an important and vital piece of legislation in my view.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

The consultation was to highlight any local concerns and, as you have suggested, just to ensure there were no considerations missed. Were there concerns that were highlighted that were themes in there, some areas that were obviously highlighted from that consultation?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

The main concern, and it comes back to the Council of Ministers' priorities, is making sure that children are protected, putting children first. But then there is also discussion about how wide the law should be drafted. Should it include carers, for example, and not just abuse between partners. Abuse of children. So all of that we have discussed and evolved and it is very important to me and to the Assistant Minister that the people involved in these difficulties are given a high protection. The other area, which again I have mentioned to you before, is we want to include coercive and controlling behaviour in the law because that is an essential part of abuse, which is not always so obvious. All of the agencies were quite strong that, in this law, if there is a child involved, that would be an aggravating factor for the court to take into account.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

You talked about a public consultation. When do you think that will be likely to happen and for how long? I ask that simply because we have noticed that with Scrutiny reviews it is taking longer, because of the COVID situation and so on, to engage people and we are giving a little longer time. So when do you think that will happen and how long would you give that public consultation?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I am hoping it will be, and I am expecting it to be, and I am quite determined it will be at the latest at the very beginning of next year. We are not all that far away from that but that should be because I want to see this on the statute book certainly next year. The standard time for consultation is 6 weeks, if I remember rightly, so I would not want to do less than that. But again I would not want to stretch it out too far because I want the law implemented. But obviously we will discuss with you what would be appropriate. Did Deputy Guida want to come in on this?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I have not got the chat open. I am looking at my questions.

Assistant Minister for Home Affairs:

Nothing to add except that we did a small consultation before we started this. There were questions asked to see which direction to go through before then we got in contact with the agencies.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Deputy Doublet, did you want to come in with a question there?

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Yes, please. I just wanted to ask about the nature of the consultation. I agree, Minister, it sounds like you have consulted widely. But I wondered about domestic abuse victims and perhaps people who are experiencing domestic abuse but have never reported it. That category of people might possibly be among the hardest type of people to reach. We all know the perennial problem of reaching the hard to reach.

[10:45]

But I just wondered if you had made any additional efforts to reach people like that. If you have not, is that something that you could consider and perhaps, by using social media or some other way that people are more comfortable using and would be able to use in a more confidential manner. Has that been considered?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Absolutely and you are quite right and that is really so important. We have, to a degree, done that, not through social media or whatever, but through the other agencies that I mentioned before like the S.A.R.C., like the Women's Refuge. So we have had feedback from them, which obviously comes through the victims. But it will be much easier to do that when we have the law in draft form and we can discuss it, again using those agencies rather than going to the public: "Come and talk to us if you want to." Through those agencies who will have a greater knowledge and experience of victims, even more so than you and I.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Is it fair to say that you will use social media then once you have the draft through and you are consulting it at that stage? Because do you agree that social media is very important for reaching people.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

It is helpful for reaching to some people. It is something I do not want to commit to, Deputy, but I want to say I will very seriously consider.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I think you risk missing a lot of people if social media is not used; love or hate it.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

If that is the case we will do it but I just want to be absolutely satisfied that it is the right thing. I need to think about it a bit more and make sure it is the right thing to do. But I suspect you are probably right but I do not want to say I am going to do something and then think of something later that does not make it appropriate, which I hope you understand.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Understand that. Domestic abuse and the general policy around domestic abuse, would you say that any of the domestic abuse policies in response to the COVID pandemic, what changes have been made? Given that socially there are so many changes and perhaps women are stuck at home and lots of women are leaving employment in greater rates than men. The social makeup of our society looks quite different at the moment. How have your policies flexed in reaction to that in terms of domestic abuse?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Chief Inspector Fossey is in this meeting and she might like to comment on that. But my understanding is that, during lockdown and so on, there were fewer complaints about domestic abuse and assaults. It is gradually coming up again now. But the principles remain absolutely the same. Domestic abuse should not happen and, when it does happen, the perpetrators should feel the full force of the law. When this law comes into place, you will see it is going to be a very serious piece of legislation. But I do not know if Alison Fossey is able to make a comment on this.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Could I just pick up on something you have mentioned there, Minister, that rings alarm bells for me? You have said that there have been fewer complaints during lockdown. That rings alarm bells for me because fewer complaints does not necessarily mean fewer incidents. I just wondered if that had also rung alarm bells for you because that to me demonstrates that a different approach is needed if people are not reporting things that are happening.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, absolutely. There was a concern expressed by myself and the police at the time. It did ring alarm bells and that is why we have to make sure it is as easy as possible for people who are subjected to this sort of abuse to get out of there, as it were, and to ensure that the perpetrators are removed from being able to cause the harm.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

What policy changes are you planning on making to make it easier for people to report? I believe Deputy Gardiner has suggested some and there are others in other jurisdictions where the policy

has been changed to make it easier for victims to approach services. What will you do to make it easier?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

It is making a greater awareness, is it not? It is a matter of getting as much publicity about the facilities and the support packages that are available to people in this area, be it the S.A.R.C., the Victim Support, the Women's Refuge and so on. Indeed, I think it is next week there is a campaign starting, which was the police leading on this particular issue, to ensure that the public do have this information and how seriously they take this crime.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Are we able to hear from Alison if she is there?

Acting Superintendent, States of Jersey Police:

Yes, sure, I am here. So there are a couple of points to pick up on there. So this year the I.D.V.A. (Independent Domestic Violence Advisors) service has received quite significant investment from the Government. That has resulted in us being able to provide a better service to victims of domestic abuse. Where the police complaints have declined over COVID, in fact the referral rate to the I.D.V.A. services increased quite dramatically. So victims are receiving support but just in a different way, so they are contacting the I.D.V.A. service. A lot of that was because during COVID the I.D.V.A. service reached out and did online chat, which was really quite successful in engaging with victims. In addition to that, they are, as part of the campaign, which is being run by the Safeguarding Partnership Board next week, following that the service is going to launch "Ask for Anne", which will be a mechanism for victims to be able to reach out for help in a number of different ways through their local supermarket, through pharmacies, through various other premises, by asking for Anne. So at the moment we are in the process of upskilling the staff in those premises so that they are very clear, they know what they have to do when that rolls out in November. So that is 2 initiatives that are ongoing in addition to the campaign, which the Minister touched upon, which is going to be in the next 2 weeks that launches, run by the Safeguarding Partnership Board, and will really focus on where victims can go for help with regard to domestic abuse.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

That is great news to hear of the increased investment. It is not great news obviously to hear that the I.D.V.A. is receiving increased calls. But it sounds like the approach that you are taking is flexing to the COVID situation. Would you mind keeping the panel updated on those and how they are going please, because we would really like to hear about that? Thank you.

Acting Superintendent, States of Jersey Police:

Yes, no problem.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We are going to move on. Deputy Doublet, it is your turn again because you are going to ask some questions regards Dewberry House.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I am indeed. So Dewberry House is the Sexual Assault Referral Centre and it has been stated that it is not fit for purpose and alternative sites were being considered. In the 6-month progress review of the Government Plan, feasibility scoping is underway, as I understand it, and should be completed by the end of this year. But, Minister, has the project been partially deferred? Am I correct in my understanding there? What does that mean in respect of the timeline for this project please?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

It certainly was delayed, as everything was effectively delayed because of lockdown and so on. But I have recently met the managers of the S.A.R.C. and the Domestic Violence Report Service, and you know, Deputy, as well as I do, and it is worth saying in this public forum, they are really doing some excellent work and providing essential support to victims. But you are quite right, the scoping work is going ahead through Property Holdings and our department, but we are trying to find the right site to be developed for the S.A.R.C., a victim hub where any victim of any crime can get support, and of course the child health model. Clearly it has to be very close to town where most people are but again it is a very exciting project. We have the finances for the feasibility study, for the scoping and so on, and then we will move ahead with the development. We have a project manager in place and a project board is being established. So it is being progressed as best we can. Again, a very important project. It was born out of the childcare inquiry, the S.A.R.C. Temporary funding was given to it. I remember a senior police officer coming to see me soon after I became Minister worried that the funding was going to run out and I remember saying to him at the time there is no way that facility is going to close. So it is something that is very close to my heart, something that needs to be developed and is being developed even with the limited property facilities that they have. But when you are dealing with a capital project of the size and importance, it does take time. There are one or 2, which I will not mention here, properties that have been looked at, which might have serious potential. So hopefully we will get it going as soon as possible. But the service of course will continue irrespective of where it is situated.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

That was going to be my next question, so thank you for answering that. So is it 100 per cent it is going to be in a different location, in a different building?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

To be honest with you, I think it is going to have to be. Because I have been down there, it is a very difficult building, it is limited in size. Also, to get from one part of it to another part, you have to go outside. So it is not very satisfactory. I want to see something that is either purpose-built or can be adapted to be much more suitable than it is. It has done a great job but, let us be honest, it is the people involved in it, Laura and so on, who have done a tremendous job there to support victims of sexual assault.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Of course you will be ensuring that there is disabled access to the new building, because there currently is not to this one, is there?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

No, this is an old building and of course we would wish to do that, but it is also a matter of law that we would be required to do that nowadays. We are much more enlightened than we used to be when those places were built back in Victorian times.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

I think we can move on from this now unless, Chair, you want to ask anything else?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

No, we got some good answers there. What I was going to do is I was going to move on to talk about the police force structure and resourcing, just trying to balance the time we have, because it is such an important topic. Deputy Higgins, do you want to lead the questions on that?

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Minister, can you tell us, with regard to efficiencies, what effect the efficiency savings are going to have on police numbers?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

When I am saying police numbers, I fought very hard over a year ago with my colleagues from the Council of Ministers to increase police numbers. We were down to around about 190 warranted police officers and I was convinced by the management team at the time, this was before Robin Smith was appointed, and the Jersey Police Authority, that really was not sufficient. It was creating stress and tensions within the police and they were being asked to do more with less. I convinced the States that the numbers should be increased to 215 warranted officers. At the present moment, with the 10 who were sworn in this morning, and I think the chief of police is on the line now, we now have 212, I believe it is. So we are getting very close to having a full complement of warranted

officers. On my watch, Deputy Higgins, there will be no reduction in the number of frontline police officers.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Can I ask you to explain then the structure at the moment, how many officers do you have on the beat at any one time?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I think Robin Smith is on the line, so he will be able to answer that more than me. But that will vary. I went out with the States of Jersey Police 2 or 3 Saturdays ago at night. We have a very different night-time economy to the last time I went out with them. But, if I recall rightly, we saw 10 to 12 officers, and Deputy Guida was with me, out and about that evening and in the early hours of the morning. At another time, perhaps at 3.00 a.m. or 4.00 a.m. on a Wednesday morning, might not need that number.

[11:00]

So it will vary depending on the operational requirements of the police at the time. But if the chief officer of the police is on the line, perhaps he would like to add to that.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

Thank you, Minister. Sorry for being slightly late, but it links to this question, I have just come back from the Royal Courts where the Bailiff has sworn in another 10 officers. But just to add to that question for the benefit of Deputy Higgins, that now completes 30 new police officers during a period of real challenges with COVID, our second cohort come back from Norfolk in a matter of days. For the second cohort in a row, one of our officers has been given the Baton of Honour, which I am delighted about, bearing in mind they are there with a number of other officers as well. Indeed, we received an email this week, or Mark Hafey did, from Norfolk, from the chief inspector in charge of training, asking us about our recruitment policy, given that the quality of our candidates were significantly better than any others. I am really proud of that, very much so. So, in terms of that, that means 30 new additional police officers in the last few months. We will look now to train them in Norfolk. That has gone from around about 190 on my arrival and, thanks to the Minister and indeed officers here, to be able to increase that budget. We decided to go ahead with that even with COVID and recognising that there would be budget challenges as well. The Minister and I explained that to the Chief Minister, that we thought it was appropriate to continue with recruiting and I am really delighted that we have. They will all be online into the new year. In terms of the specific question around how many do you have on duty? Of course, as the Minister has described, that number fluctuates. So, for example, we are looking to enhance our community teams, we have

interviewed and now I think we have only got to find 2 more spots for that. In fact I saw 2 of our town centre teams in St. Helier about an hour ago and they police the town regularly. So we have got 6 now in the town centre which, we did not have with the 2; I am really keen that we have that appropriate visibility. We can deploy anywhere between 6 and 8 and sometimes 10 depending on the time of day, but of course it is not just uniformed officers. There are patrol officers, response officers, we have got armed officers as well; ordinarily we have got one or 2 teams in a 24-hour period. Then of course there are the officers that you do not see and indeed, more importantly I guess, what the villains do not see, so we have a number of plain-clothes officers on duty at any given time, all of which help to keep the Island safe.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Can you give us an indication of how many officers are, for example, with the Financial Crimes Unit? Because I attended a briefing recently where it was said that the Island had not fully responded to all the suspicious transaction notifications they had received, and that was a concern and they wanted to try and get that in order before the MONEYVAL investigation. So could you also give us again a bit of other information about other non-directly facing the public in terms of officers and their roles, whether it be criminal investigation in terms of forensics or whatever.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

Deputy Higgins, that is a really good question. I have not got all that information to my fingertips but I will happily give it to the panel so you can get a sense of the full extent of the amount of police officers. You make a really good point. Sometimes the police service use the phrase front line and often that is mistakenly seen as just the officers that you see, but I also see additional officers in our combined control room who I also call front line. They are the first people that take up calls for people and Islanders who need our help. I will happily provide you with some more information on that, including the resources that we have that are dedicated to financial crime, and I will provide that to the rest of the panel if that would assist.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Yes, it would assist. Can you give us an indication too of the structure of the police force? What structural changes have you made or are about to make?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

Very recently, in fact as of 5th October, we have looked at our senior team. That is the superintendent, the D.C.O. (deputy chief officer) role, the deputy role, our superintendent structure and indeed our chief inspector and inspector structure over the last few months. As the panel will be aware, that was with the agreement of the Minister and indeed the Police Authority and the chair, Jason Lane, considered about whether or not to have a deputy chief officer role. What we have

decided is that we have postponed the recruitment of that post largely in light of some concerns we have around COVID and COVID costs and our determination to deliver the 30 police officers. So I have introduced what I call the designated deputy role; that is still being carried by James Wileman, who has resorted back to the Ops post as a superintendent but is the designated deputy for States of Jersey Police. With that in mind I have also looked at the other superintendent posts we have. It has been long mooted with me or discussed with me that at a senior level we have a number of acting positions and there was clearly a determination to try and remove those and give stability to our staff. That has now been done so we now have all superintendents. We have now just one acting chief inspector. We have changed some of those portfolios around and we will in the new year make a saving of one chief inspector. So we have looked at the portfolio of inspector and chief inspector in the same way in very recent weeks, we have also looked at the inspector roles. I invited expressions of interest from our inspector ranks and in the last few weeks, in fact the beginning of this week, we have looked at how we can better provide succession planning for some of our inspectors. So a number of inspector posts have changed; I think it is about 7 or 8 into new positions. That is part of my commitment and the commitment I made to the Minister upon my appointment is that we would make sure that we had good experienced officers who had done a number of different portfolios who could step up to the next rank. My final point on that, Deputy Higgins, is my assessment of particularly our inspectors and above - which I reflected to the Minister as part of our regular meetings - is the States of Jersey Police is in a really strong position in terms of experience, ability and that I am very satisfied that, for want of a better phrase, our bench strength is very, very strong. What I want to do is make that even stronger by providing opportunities, often as a sort of 2-yearly process, to if you like per plot, so that the people are having different experiences, so that S.o.J.P. (States of Jersey Police) is in a really good position going forward. Thank you.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

We have got some more detailed questions but I think with timing we will send them on to you and ask you if you can respond to the panel. But I do want to move on to equipment and replacement equipment required by the force. The 6 months progress report of the Government Plan in 2023 notes a partial deferral of this, and I would like to know what the status is of equipment reordered or replaced and equipment outstanding, and how any requirement can be funded. At the very end I am going to ask you about electric police cars because I see one force has already adopted a fully electric car replacement programme and they have had no reduction in ability to respond to incidents. So if you could run through the equipment for us please.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

Deputy, is there anything in particular in the replacement equipment list that is a particular interest that you would like further information on?

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

I think we can ask that in detail later but I am asking now, we have been told there has been this deferral or a partial deferral in the equipment. What has been deferred and what are your priorities?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

In terms of the list I have here, I am not familiar with some of the things you have just referred to. Could you assist me with anything in particular and I could give you a view?

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

I do not have a specific list here of items but maybe some of my colleagues might. What I would ask you is if we are being told there has been a deferral of equipment what has been deferred and has it been any priority items?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

I do not have a list of those things that have necessary been deferred. Often those things will be deferred just because we have not been able to invoice them before the end of the financial year. But I will happily look at that list and provide it back to you and the panel. The other thing you mentioned is about electric vehicles. We have an aspiration to move to have entirely electric vehicles; we already have a number as you may have seen. They are relatively expensive but of course the maintenance costs are significantly less. Of course there is the whole issue of climate change and the like, so as an aspiration the States of Jersey Police would like to move to an entirely electric fleet. Of course in the list of things that we are looking to spend capital on - and this does link into your earlier question - we are looking to provide additional charging points for our electric vehicles and we also have a very strong relationship with Jersey Electric who have kindly provided us with advice and, for want of a better phrase, good rates in terms of how we might be able to turn our current petrol and diesel fleet into electric. So it is one area that we are particularly excited about.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Thank you. I am going to hand over to the chairman now who has got some additional questions.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, I do not know if I missed this question but in regards the recent recruits that are joining the force are replacing more experienced officers; is there an experience gap, one might call it, emerging within the force?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

Chair, if I may say so, and forgive me for not being able to join Teams today, there was a bit of a technical fault so sorry I had to ring.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is fully understandable.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

It is a really good question and something that I look at very closely. Of course whenever we get new recruits, while they are never as experienced, certainly not in policing, but they do provide a different sort of energy and so it is really rejuvenating for a force - particularly one of our size - to get 30 police officers in. But you are absolutely right. Although the age profile of State of Jersey Police is, for want of a better phrase, slightly older than we might see in England and Wales, which is something that I have looked at in the past, maybe in the last couple of months because we are looking to develop a workforce plan with our H.R. (human resources) colleagues to better understand what are our skills, what are our abilities, where are our gaps, when do we need to recruit. But I do not have any concerns about, if you like, a skills gap. But you are absolutely right; as soon as a police officer retires effectively 30 years of experience and knowledge goes out the window regrettably, but at the same time if we get new ones in we get a new lease of life. The final point is I mentioned before about what I see is a very high quality of recruits, and looking at them again today in the Royal Court, as the Bailiff had them sworn in, we have a really good age split, so not everybody is just out of school or university. We have a good mix of ages and we have a good mix of gender as well so I am really encouraged, but I am not concerned about a skills gap.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, so this is an opportunity to, if you like, increase diversity within our police force; do you think that has been taken on board and has happened? Could you do better? Is there anything that you have learnt from their recruitment recently?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

I think certainly the gender split is a good split; I have no concerns about that. We also have had Portuguese and Polish and indeed a Hungarian applicant in recruits, which I am pleased about. An ethnicity split is certainly a gap that we have had and only the week before last I invited someone over from England who is a diversity and inclusion expert, somebody I have worked with in the past, in fact probably the best I have ever seen and ever worked with. He was over the week before last and I asked him to do a review of our diversity and inclusion strategy. He will report back in the next couple of weeks but he spent 2 days here in States of Jersey Police talking to staff, looking at our current diversity and inclusion strategy, and will come up with some recommendations. So your question is really timely, thank you.

[11:15]

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just as part of that, and then we will move on because I am conscious of time, part of including more sections of our community is perhaps with shift patterns changing. Is there a consideration if shift patterns are changed for those who may be carers, younger people who may have children, et cetera? Is that something that is again an opportunity to plan into the changes that you are taking on board?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

First of all, we do already do quite a bit of that to accommodate people with families. The way I see it, and this is probably the thrust of your question, it is what any modern police force - any modern organisation - should do. So we cannot be an organisation that sticks slavishly to certain shifts because we will lose the very best talent that we have on the Island, of which there is a lot. So we need to find the right accommodation whereby shifts can work, timescales can work, and also people are able to quite rightly deal with their main priority, which is look after their families or indeed those that they care for. So I am confident we already do that but there are always opportunities to improve.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is one of those opportunities at senior management level in terms of diversity? There are always concerns within any organisation, even as it changes, that there may be a glass ceiling. Are you aware of that? Is that something you are addressing? Again, is it an opportunity to address it?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

Yes, and that is part of the conversation I had with, as I mentioned, a former colleague. There is no escaping the fact that the senior police team here is largely men and we need to work out how we can in the future bring in greater diversity. I am really keen that we do that, but I go back to my earlier point, we have some very, very impressive officers coming through, very, very impressive female officers coming through who are our future leaders of States of Jersey Police. My job and the senior team's job is to make sure that we properly nurture them so that they can take up those posts. Indeed the recent changing of portfolios of all of our inspectors is probably the best thing I can give thus far with that.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Thank you for that. I am going to move on now and just slightly change the topic. There are a couple of questions I want to ask in regards to electronic patient records that we have talked about

before. With reference to the 6-month progress review of the Government Plan, this project seems to be remaining in the scoping stage. Am I correct in understanding that is what is happening?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

The project is still moving forward. We have obviously had some delay because of COVID and that is a very genuine delay. I think the panel is aware we have referenced previously the work with South Western Ambulance Service Trust who have got electronic patient records and have done for a while; in fact they are just implementing the next version of their product. I am very pleased to say that Justice and Home Affairs are supporting the project from a project management point of view. We have had a demonstration of the product that South Western Ambulance Service are currently using which looks good. That has involved ambulance staff clearly, Justice and Home Affairs, business support, and importantly modernisation and digital staff, our Government I.T. colleagues and Health and Community Services colleagues as well from the Digital Health Team.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It would be great if the panel could have the details of that system shared with them at some point; that would really help us. The assurance I suppose we are looking for is the same we had before, which is that the system will link into any future health systems, particularly given the announcement with regards to the new hospital and so we may be getting somewhere. Can you assure us the system will link with any future systems?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, I am certainly happy to provide the panel with details of the product and the model that we are looking at. There has been real joined-up working with Health and Community Services, the Digital Health Team, and indeed Modernisation and Digital's Design Authority. That has all been focused on the fact that it would not be helpful to procure a system that did not interact with and clearly share information with a new hospital system, so all that work is in train. It is all on course to enable data integration. It is still likely that we will have a system for the ambulance service that they can use and they can record data on, on an iPad or something similar, while the hospital obviously develops its own patient record system. But everything is set up with the Design Authority, with Digital in H.C.S. (Health and Community Services) to ensure that when data integration can take place that will work.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, so if ambulance staff are given devices it will be ensured that they are compatible later on?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

Absolutely, yes. Very much that is the focus, so we are working with the Design Authority, with Health and Community Services. They have seen the system, they are very supportive of what we are doing, and it is very much a collaborative effort.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So we should have some idea of the future health system as well then, otherwise how would you know that it would link in?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

We are reliant on the experts from Digital Health and from the Design Authority and the architecture within the Modernisation and Digital teams. They are the experts who will say what we are looking to procure, or indeed we may have a managed service, that that will integrate with the new system. Of course they are the experts, they are the technical leads, and they are confident in terms that what we can procure will link in with the new evolving electronic patient records for the hospital.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That would also take into consideration the Jersey Care Model which is developing, because there is more care in the communities, to coin a phrase, that data will be so important, will it not?

Director General, Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, that is absolutely critical, you are right. The Jersey Care Model, the Design Authority and Digital Health as well, everybody recognises - particularly health colleagues in the hospital - that this will optimise critical care outcomes for patients. So from the moment the ambulance service respond to a call, going to a home or a setting where they need to treat a patient, start to use the electronic patient record, start to populate that document, and then ultimately that will obviously then feed into the various departments that the patient will be taken to. That will deliver better outcomes for critical care. So it is very much a collaborative effort and I know the panel is very interested in that and quite rightly has raised that in the last number of months. We will continue to keep the panel updated with the collaborative approach.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, well I think compatibility is the key because one of the things that the panel did recommend or talk about was not buying a system that then becomes redundant because that is not a good use of public money, so we are pleased to hear that compatibility has been considered and you are seeing it as the case. That is very good. I will move on again so we can get as much covered as possible to the settlement scheme. In July's hearing we heard that the scheme was being affected by COVID-19, preventing face-to-face appointments from taking place. It was mentioned an online solution has been sought. What is the status regarding that online solution and how is it going?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

It is going very well, I am pleased to say. I was briefed yesterday and the J.C.I.S. (Jersey Customs and Immigration Service) are hoping that it will go live next week on 12th October. It is in partnership with Yoti to enable customers to upload their identification or passport for verification, so that will void the necessity for a face-to-face meeting, although of course that facility will still be available those who do not have the I.T.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So you are using the Yoti system?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, that is what I am advised. We believe we have got quite a number who still need to make their applications and we have launched a campaign to encourage people to do so, and we have seen applications now coming in at a rate that we saw before COVID, so that is good news.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

But face-to-face appointments have not resumed?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

No, they have not, but for those who are unable to access the I.T. systems that will be provided to them.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

What, the I.T. system or support of some form?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

If there are any individuals who cannot access the I.T. system or are unable to do so for whatever reason they will make sure that verification by manual means will be available to them.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Again in the 6-month review of the Government Plan it was noted that the work for the settlement scheme to the end of 2020 required 2 case workers. Is there a possibility that those would be extended beyond 2020? It probably is very likely, and if so how will it be funded?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

It has been funded in the Government Plan until the end of June 2021, so subject to the States approving the Government Plan but we have the funding for that because obviously it is going to be needed.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

What concerns are in the back of your mind in regards to the settlement scheme? I think it is always best to look at the worst-case scenarios, prepare for them and then hope they do not happen obviously. But what concerns do you have regards the scheme and for people on the Island who perhaps have not engaged the way they should or have not been able to for a myriad of reasons?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Well, again, through publicity campaigns, through the various charities, through the Honorary Consuls, we are trying to engage with everybody that we possibly can do so because it is in the individual's interest to make sure that they do have the settled status, they do have the immigrations to be in Jersey and indeed the Common Travel Area. So we will continue that work, and of course we do have a little bit of extra time, the extra 6 months or so, so anybody who has not engaged or has not made an application will be able to do so if there are reasons why they have not been able to do it. We want these people to be here legally, to have the proper immigration status and continue to make the full contribution to life in Jersey.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I notice we have a few minutes left. I just want to say to the panel if there is anyone who wants to ask any additional questions please chip in now. I am conscious I have asked quite a few questions now.

Deputy L.M.C. Doublet:

Not from me but thank you very much to the Minister and all the officers.

The Deputy of St. John:

Not from me either, and again I echo that thanks.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Yes, I would like to thank everyone for the meeting, it has been very good. There may be one or 2 specific questions we will ask later but they can come along from our officer. But thank you very much again.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is great. Before I ask the Minister if he has got anything to add I just want to raise one point, if I can, which is I was spoken to and Springfield School are concerned about the speed of people going past the school, and I am sure that is true of other schools. I just wonder whether I can ask the chief of police to have a few patrols around pick up and drop off times, and to get that message out there to stop driving past schools too quickly because it is dangerous for our children. I wonder whether the Minister would support that and reiterate that point for us publicly because we want to prevent any accidents happening around those schools.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I see my Assistant Minister raising his hand there. Of course we absolutely agree with you. As a Constable I am aware that in my Parish we have these 20-mile-per-hour zones and our Honorary Police do police them from time to time. Unfortunately the last time we did it we did catch a teacher from one of those schools breaking the speed limit, but he was given appropriate words of advice. Of course you have made your point, Chairman, and the police chief is listening in so I am sure your wish will be granted.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Thank you very much, that is good to hear. It is always best to prevent accidents. Is there anything, Minister, you want to raise or your Assistant Minister?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

No, thank you. I think it has been a very good hearing this morning. The only thing I would say, I have just been given some information while we were talking regarding Deputy Higgins' question about spending in the police force. It looks as though the total capital available for 2020 will be expended. I think there were some delays during COVID of accessing certain equipment but I think that has all been sorted and caught up now, from what I can see from the information I have been given. But thank you very much, Chairman, for an excellent hearing.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Thank you very much. We had a number of questions that were submitted in addition, which will be in the public domain as well so that people are aware of that. We are just about to hit smack bang on 11.30 a.m. which is always good to finish on time. I would like to thank everybody for their participation.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Before we go, if we are going offline perhaps the Minister can tell us the information he was going to tell us offline at the end of this thing. So if we go off the public one so we can get the information on the prisoner using the telephone and so on. Thank you.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is 11.30 a.m. so I will call the hearing to an end and say thank you to everybody involved. Thank you very much.

[11:30]