



# Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny

## Panel

### Quarterly Meeting

## Witness: The Minister for Infrastructure

Tuesday, 12th October 2021

#### **Panel:**

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

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

Deputy G.J. Truscott of St. Brelade

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier

#### **Witnesses:**

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

Mr. A. Scate, Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment

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

Mr. T. Daniels, Director, Jersey Property Holdings

Mr. G. Forrest, Head of Driver and Vehicle Standards

Mr. P. Tharme, Assistant Manager, Driver and Vehicle Standards

Ms. L. Phillips, Senior Policy Officer

Mr. T. Dodd, Director of Transport

Mr. C. Rondel, Private Secretary to the Minister for Infrastructure

[11:33]

#### **Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade (Chair):**

Good morning, Minister, and welcome to this quarterly meeting of the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel. I will start off by introducing myself as chair, Mike Jackson, Constable of St. Brelade and my team will introduce themselves.

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

I am Sadie Le Sueur-Rennard, Constable of St. Saviour and member of the team.

**Deputy G.J. Truscott of St. Brelade:**

Deputy Graham Truscott of St. Brelade District No. 2, member of the team.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

It is over to you, Minister.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Good morning, Chair, it is Deputy Kevin Lewis, the Minister for Infrastructure. If you would like to introduce yourselves, team.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

I will go first. It is Andy Scate, director general for Infrastructure, Housing and Environment.

**Group Director, Operations and Transport:**

Ellen Littlechild, group director for Operations and Transport.

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

Tim Daniels, director of Jersey Property Holdings.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We do have Gordon Forrest, head of D.V.S. (Driver and Vehicle Standards) but I think Gordon is having technical troubles at the moment; hopefully he will be joining us shortly.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

All right, I was going to go straight into vehicle testing but perhaps we will change that around and come back to that shortly and start off, as Tim is here, with the foreshore encroachment policy. Minister, we have now received your Ministerial response to our Scrutiny report on the foreshore encroachment policy review, which was published in January this year. Please can you advise the reason for this significant delay and when you intend to present the Ministerial response to the States Assembly so that the response can be made public?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Indeed, Chair, I would like to thank the panel for their patience awaiting my Ministerial response to the foreshore debate. If I could hand you over to Tim Daniels who is director of Property Holdings.

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

Thank you, Chair. The reason for the delay, unfortunately, is the state of the manning resources. The policy itself is relatively straightforward. The Minister's powers are limited to the ability to grant a licence for minor encroachments and to demand the removal of major encroachments. But the issue that we have is effectively communicating that to the large number of people who live on the foreshore and who will in some way or another be affected by this new policy. I think we established that the requirement would be additional personnel in Jersey Property Holdings, perhaps 2 individuals, and additional individuals within the Law Officers' Department to get perhaps an additional body there. The organisational model, the reorganisation of Jersey Property Holdings, is continuing; it has taken some time, the consultation with the employees who have required thorough briefings. We are just in the process this week of confirming the tier-3 appointments; however, there is still a gap in the tier-3 responsible for the estates management and maintenance. So, unfortunately, we are constrained in our ability to do the work and I think, as we understand, it is a considerable piece of work.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Thank you. You referred to various elements which can be interpreted as challenges. You informed the panel during our previous hearing that you are working through several challenges that were resultant of the adopted proposition with the Law Officers' Department and the Law Society to determine the best approach to address these. You anticipated receiving a proposal and would revert. The lack of resource from the Law Officer's Department has stimulated that lack of response, do I understand that correctly?

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

Absolutely. We have made contact with the Law Society and we have a discussion period set up - I think it is for the next couple of weeks - but, as I say, the lack of people that we have to do the work means that the progress is slow. I am as keen as anybody, to be honest, to get to the bottom of this and to be able to draw a line under it and move on but unfortunately the pressure of work coming out of COVID, the number of other major projects that we have on the go at the moment means that at the moment I cannot prioritise the foreshore.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

So really you are unable to give us any sort of timeline as to when any proposals from the Law Officers' Department could be received? I imagine it would seem impossible to pin a time down.

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

I regret, Chair, that I am unable to do so.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Apart from waiting for that, having received that, what might be the process regarding the implementation of the revised policy and the expected tangible results?

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

The intention, once we have the manpower to do it, is to effectively have a campaign or a project to individually notify people who are on the foreshore whether or not they fall into a category of a minor encroachment or an interfering encroachment, and then to work through for each individual case what that means for the individual. I think we have discussed in the past, but I am loathe to do a public issue of information, because there may be cases where people have made an encroachment but in the past have paperwork or correspondence to show that they have secured the result or come to a conclusion on the encroachment that we do not necessarily have the records for. I do not want to put individuals under the stress of suddenly thinking in a public forum that they are in a position that they were not aware of. So we do need to give individuals the opportunity to let us know what they believe their position is and then we need to work through and resolve those positions. The Minister's powers allow him to grant a licence which is effectively a temporary agreement for the benefit of the rights, or whatever the case may be, or to demand an individual who has encroached to remove the encroachment. Clearly, we need to be able to make sure that we know that the individuals who are affected know what action is required of them.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

That is interesting; I expect there will be much searching for paperwork. Minister - well it may be for you, Tim, again - you will be aware of the recommendations made in our report. Can you advise what further consideration has been given to whether the shoreline management plan is deemed to sufficiently cover policy for the maintenance of seawalls, including where encroachments exist or whether an expanded version of this policy is required or indeed if a separate sea defences maintenance policy is required where encroachments are concerned?

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

The seawall maintenance falls outside of Property Holdings; however, I am aware that it is a comprehensive and effective document at the moment. I know that there are works currently underway on various parts of the coastline under that guidance. So, at the moment, I do not believe that further amendment is required but it will be interesting to see once we do the more detailed work on the private encroachments, if you like, what that throws up.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

We are aware that your officers have met with the planning officials to ascertain how planning obligation agreements might be satisfactorily utilised going forward to ensure adequate upkeep and maintenance of seawalls. Could you update us on the outcome of those discussions?

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

I think the outcome is that the planning obligation agreements can be connected to land encroachment situations and used as part of the resolution. However, I am not sure the P.O.A.s (planning obligation agreements) can be used once the land has been lost. So, in terms of historic encroachments, I do not believe under advice that the P.O.A.s have an impact but certainly in terms of future issues then they can be used.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Going to our recommendation for a suitable formal protocol to be put in place for dealing with planning permission applications relating to these foreshore properties, is completion of that awaiting your further discussions with the law officers or are you able to progress that?

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

No, we are still waiting for advice from the law officers.

[11:45]

We have an informal relationship so that if anything does come out of planning, then we make sure that we are informed and that we are made aware. But in terms of the formal application of P.O.A.s, then that is still something that we need to resolve.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

You indicated that you are trying to increase the resource within your department, can I ask what is restraining that? Is it, yes, we have had COVID but things are getting back to normal? What are the stumbling blocks stopping that progressing?

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

It is recruiting. I have had 2 attempts in the last 12 months to recruit surveyors. Part of the challenge, I believe, is that I have been recruiting to a team that has been in flux. The organisational model has been approved and funded but I am now getting to the point where I am trying to recruit to it. We are finding that there is not a flood of volunteers to come forward. Part of that may be to do with a perception of the directorate, as I say, being one in flux. Part of it is also the fact that the salaries that we are offering are fairly competitive with the private sector, so the recruitment itself is a challenge. We are looking to increase our ability to bring forward students, graduates into the

business but, again, that is difficult because I do not at the moment have people to mentor those individuals at the beginning of their professional career. So I am having to go to local surveying firms for bits and pieces of work but again that is difficult because I have to give discrete packages and it is difficult to give somebody the entire background of a case. So overall recruiting is an issue and the local availability of professionals that can do the sort of work that I want them to do is limited.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

Yes, it is just a question. You are saying that the virus, COVID, has held everything up but this has been going on for ages and ages. This was going on before the virus hit us, so we do not seem to have got anywhere. For the people who are living with this Damocles sword hanging over them, it seems to be very unfair. Had we not got anything on the table before the virus hit us?

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

So if people have problems that they want to resolve, they are perfectly at liberty to come forward with those issues. In the past, as those issues have been raised, then they have been dealt with, albeit perhaps not as speedily as we would have liked. I think the issue is that what we are being invited to do is to address all of the people who live on the foreshore and effectively say that, yes, there is a problem or, no, there is not a problem. To do that will require, as I say, considerable resource.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

Well, that is about as clear as mud. Thank you very much.

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

Apologies, Connétable.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Yes, we are concerned that there are people obviously wishing to transact properties and are keen that they are not held up. I do not know if I can ask you, Minister, or possibly Andy Scate to comment on the recruitment process, because I know this is not the only area of your department that is being affected. Maybe a new broom at the top may change things. Would you have any comment on that?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Obviously, we try to recruit locally wherever we can but there is a recruitment problem. Would you like to comment on that, Andy?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

Yes, I can. I think, as the Chair has raised, we have got recruitment tensions across all of our professional areas really whether they be in property, whether they be in regulation, whether they be in engineering. We are attempting to recruit. We are currently holding vacancies of 20 to 25 per cent across I.H.E. (Infrastructure, Housing and Environment). That is a little bit higher, that percentage, in property. There are a number of reasons I think for that: trying to attract staff from off-Island is difficult because of cost-of-living issues and availability and just a lack of availability of staff on-Island is also affecting us. So we are in a revolving process of recruitment. We are trying to attract people, we are looking at our offer, we are looking at what we are paying. Obviously we need to live within the wider States pay bands, so to speak, but we are struggling, I think, as just a very honest answer. We are not receiving the amount of applications from local candidates that we would hope, so our only solution in the longer term is to grow more school leavers into some of these professions. That has got a bit of a slower burn because obviously we have to attract them and then train them but we are not seeing the level of applicants that we have seen in the past, certainly from off-Island either. Yes, it is a tension for us, it is a potential problem for us as well. Thank you.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Of course we have tried, as Andy said, wherever possible, to try and recruit locally but it works both ways because of the cost of housing locally. We have lost some key personnel to the U.K. (United Kingdom) obviously where housing is much cheaper and possibly cost of living in certain areas is cheaper. So we have lost 2 that I know of in the last 3 months.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Thank you. Just to conclude that, in terms of the policy regarding employment, is that administered by the Chief Minister's Department or States Employment Board?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

Yes, effectively the employer is the States Employment Board so we live as a department within our corporate rules on pay grades, bandings, so on and so forth. We are getting support for some targeted recruitment campaigns in certain areas. So we have got one out at the moment in engineering, for instance, to try and attract engineers. We have also got some targeted approaches going on in regulation now and I think the same will need to apply to property now that the new structure effectively has been set. We need to try and attract; so we are trying everything in our armoury really at the moment to try and get people here.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Thank you. Before we move on to the next stage, Deputy Gardiner.

**Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier:**

Thank you, Chair. We know that the recruitment is an ongoing problem for years, it is not new, and I would like to ask the Minister if he would like to comment, what are the long term, or at least medium-short plans has your department submitted to make sure that in 3, 4, 5 years' time we will be in a better place? Because Jersey might not be cheaper and probably we will not be as attractive as other places in the U.K. So what plans are in place, at least what are you planning for the next year from now on, and would you have the funding for these plans to make sure that in the medium term we do have staff recruited?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Well, as the director just pointed out, we do have a 25 per cent deficit and, as I have mentioned, we try to recruit locally wherever we can, apart from looking after the local population which obviously is key to us, that we have less chance of losing people to other jurisdictions if they are home-grown local. I am very keen to take on apprentices and people at the bottom and training them up through the department. We have had several people who have been trained up through the departments and to take on senior posts when they become available.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

What I am trying to say, we know the problem exists, and I know that everybody is trying hard, but would you have any specific plans how to address it going forward? Not just: "We are trying but it does not happen." We need to break this circuit.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It is happening but not as fast as we would like. Andy, would you like to comment on this?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

Yes, I think that the normal process is that we will put adverts out and see if we can attract anyone based on our normal pay grades. We do have other things available to us like market supplements and things like that that we may need to offer more money payments and supplement payments to attract staff. We are also now looking at targeted recruitment campaigns, certainly into places in the U.K., for instance, that would have direct air links to the Island so that we know it is easier for those people living in those areas potentially to travel to the Island. So there is a bit of targeted stuff going on. There is also the ability for us to use market supplements, so we do have those running in certain areas. We obviously do not want to do that across the board. We will only go that route if we absolutely need to because obviously it costs us more money. The longer-term plan, again, we have just taken on a member of staff within our office of our director general, which is the departmental-wide support team looking at our development plans and our resourcing plans. So we are working with H.R. (Human Resources), the People Services Department, to see where again we can be a bit more targeted. We, for instance, have been into regulation, we have not been able

to secure local staff in regulation, so we have had to go out for licences in some of those areas. So, I think it is a bit of a mix and match, Deputy, really, but we are trying to deploy the tools that we have available and see if that will work.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Thank you. Can I move on to the vehicle testing subject, Minister? During our previous quarterly hearing, the panel was informed that the business case to determine whether the testing for private technical inspections will be carried out by the Government or a franchise option. This was due to be concluded by the end of July. Can you briefly outline the outcomes of the business case and whether in fact a decision has been made if a franchise is the preferred option? How was the tendering process begun?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes, certainly. Well the officers at D.V.S. have briefed me on the options appraisal. If I can hand you over to Gordon Forrest who is head of Driver and Vehicle Standards. Are you there, Gordon?

**Head of Driver and Vehicle Standards:**

Good morning. Thank you, Minister. Good morning, Chair; good morning, panel. First of all, can I apologise we were not available earlier. We had technical problems and we have relocated to another room.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

You have a very interesting background, Gordon, I am not sure if that is intended but ...

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

A nice shot of the wall and ceiling.

**Head of Driver and Vehicle Standards:**

Sorry, I have still got a technical problem there. Am I on camera?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

There is a picture.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

Never mind, we can hear you.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

We are not too worried, we can hear you, it is not important.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

You can carry on, Gordon, that is fine.

**Head of Driver and Vehicle Standards:**

Surely you can survive without seeing me. All right, so the last time we updated you in July, we had carried out the expressions of interest exercise and we had established there was interest both on-Island and off-Island to carry out inspections. What has changed was in August we were informed that there had been a reprioritisation of capital funding and that the funding for the inspection centre had been removed from the capital programme. So what we did, we went back out to those who responded to the expressions of interest and asked them if that affected whether they would tender or not if a franchisee had to bear the cost of constructing the test centre. Three of the 4 who responded to the expressions of interest came back and said it would not make any difference at all; however, clearly there will be an additional cost to the inspections. So, that held us up for a period of time but now we are in the position where we are just about to launch a procurement exercise and go out to tender to select the preferred supplier and we are working very closely with government's commercial team over this and that is where we are at the moment.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Would you suggest that small to medium-sized local businesses will be disadvantaged by this process?

**Head of Driver and Vehicle Standards:**

We have interest from ... sorry, I am not sure if I quite understand the question, Chair.

[12:00]

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Well I just wanted to understand how you will ensure that small to medium-sized local businesses are not disadvantaged particularly with this revised process now having obligated the tenderers to provide the costs of putting up the building, I presume, is what you are saying.

**Head of Driver and Vehicle Standards:**

Well the 3 responses we have had since we went back out were from large businesses, 2 of which were European concerns who specialise in carrying out inspections, P.T.I.s (periodic technical inspections) and one large business from on-Island and, in reality, it has to be one of the larger businesses.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Yes, so they are being disadvantaged, it seems to me, and ruled out of the process by the decision. The decision to remove capital funding, Minister, you may have a comment on that, why has that taken place?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes, that was quite recently. Basically a lack of funding for the department as a whole but we had to make ends meet, so that was removed centrally. Do you want to comment on that, Andy?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

Yes, I can, thanks, Minister. Yes, the capital programme is only so big so we need to make sure that we putting the capital in various places of priority. We do feel that we have got a different solution to capital for this project and therefore, as a result of that, we have taken it out of the government spend capital programme and looking at a different option to deliver it via the supplier. I just wanted to, if I can, also add a comment about the small and local businesses. What I would say, we just need to be clear, that we have been out for expressions of interest, so we have not had small and medium-sized businesses in the Island express the interest on doing this level of business for us. So, as the team will explain, I think the scale of testing required here does require a certain size business to undertake it.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Thank you. So, it takes it to the franchise option, which you mentioned earlier. We heard before that you were actively considering sites but it was difficult for you to divulge the detail. Would you be helping the franchisee in identifying the site for the testing centre? I do not know who would be best to answer that.

**Head of Driver and Vehicle Standards:**

Shall I take that, Minister?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Okay, Gordon.

**Head of Driver and Vehicle Standards:**

We do not really have much more concrete information for you on the site other than, as explained before, La Collette does not seem to be an option; most of it falls within the blast zone. So we have identified one site which we are continuing to work on and hopefully by the time we go out to tender we will have that site which we can put forward within the tender. If we have not, we will have to move everything forward and help the franchisee with the site.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

I suppose if you will have been considering short lists, what criteria need to be applied to identify an appropriate site, do you think?

**Head of Driver and Vehicle Standards:**

Well I think it has to be the right size, first of all. It has to be convenient: access is very important. The size of it: it is really important that it includes enough area for queuing up of vehicles and vehicles exiting the actual test station. So it is not just a case of the area of the test station being sufficient, you are probably talking about twice the size of that to cater for the number of vehicles queuing up and exiting afterwards.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Indeed, we all know how sensitive site selections are, so the public will be interested to know what options there are. You indicated at the last meeting that resourcing levels were very dependent on the way taken forward, whether it will be government-run or franchisee. It seems to me that there will be a level of staffing required. Will this be obtained on-Island or would a franchisee, if an off-Island franchisee be chosen, need to bring their own staff and would they need to receive housing qualifications?

**Head of Driver and Vehicle Standards:**

I think the clear way ahead is we are continuing to discuss with Skills Jersey the Island's developing programmes for on-Island training to carry out P.T.I.s as previously discussed, as well as trying to put something together to get more mechanics into the industry, which is the bigger picture. So we would envisage that the vast majority, if not all, of the people carrying out the inspections will be from on-Island. However, if an off-Island franchisee were to be appointed, then clearly they may have to bring one or 2 management with them to help run it. But the vast majority, 95 per cent, we are looking to provide from on-Island training.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

I appreciate things have drifted because of the COVID situation; do we have a timeline for final implementation of the testing programme?

**Head of Driver and Vehicle Standards:**

Well we have it in domestic legislation that we should be starting to test by April 2024 and at the moment we are okay with that.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

We did have projected costs to the general public of having a private car test, do you think that is still on track?

**Head of Driver and Vehicle Standards:**

It is very difficult to say, Chair. I think there is a lot of room and manoeuvrability within the tender process for government to put forward a preferred cost per inspection and then what may come out of the tender process is a further discussion whether to support or not.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Yes, clearly members of the public will be keen to know what that might be, and I think it has to be affordable. The necessity of a franchisee having to fund the building could easily be translated to the general public and I am slightly apprehensive that that might be the case. Minister - and I thank Gordon for that - I am going to move on now to Our Hospital. Could you briefly update us on the new hospital design in relation to the changes to Westmount Road and the impact regarding access?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes, indeed, Chair. The proposals for Westmount Road are part of the hospital project, so the next major item is for the project team to submit a planning application for that. If I can hand you back over to the group director, Andy Scate, for detail.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

Thank you, Minister. Yes, so in terms of the design, we are in a process now; mid-October we are hoping for the planning application to be lodged in time for around mid-November time. So it might be the second, third week of November; it is that sort of timescale. The final design is going through its last final bits of polishing, so to speak. So in terms of the road, I think the design has not changed from the main layouts that have been shown to States Members and the public as part of the exhibition. We have a virtual exhibition that is now open on the proposal, so the road design is now fairly firm. The building has changed; there was a larger building with a larger white roof to it. That has now come down in size and the floor space has been changed due to interactions with the clinicians. So we are in that final last few weeks now for the design to be set ready for the planning application.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Thank you. I am sure that you will not be surprised that I am asking about the road. It is interesting your comment that nothing has been changed road-wise since the first plan was lodged despite several engagements between the residents and Parish and the team. I assume that you will be a consultant, so is there anything as to how it will be addressed, the petition from the Pets Paradise and loss of their parking? Who is in engagement with them?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

Yes, sorry my comment related to what has changed to date effectively. The latest images that were released for States Members in the virtual exhibition, we are pretty much where we are with that; it has not changed since then. There are still ongoing conversations going on with the pet shop especially. I think we will have a solution to parking for the pet shop but that is literally still in a process of redesign at the moment. So we do not have anything to release yet but there are conversations going on with the shop and the users. In terms of the main road, the road going up to the new hospital site is effectively the design that has been shown already. So it is one lane either way with the footpath and cycleway running alongside going up the hill.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

A follow-up question. I have, as the chair of the St. John's Road Safety Board, received a response from the hospital panel that: "We are not looking into the St. John's Road, we are concentrating on Westmount Road." From my perspective it is very difficult to think about the traffic for one road when you are not incorporating the safety of St. John's Road and Tower Road. As the department who are responsible for traffic of this area, what is your take on it?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

Yes, if I can, Minister. What we need to be careful of obviously with the hospital scheme itself, that it will increase transport into the area, so a lot more people visiting and using the facility. So we do need appropriate traffic management to exist north of the hospital site, whether that be Tower Road into St. John's Road into those areas, so the traffic management around the scheme is going to be very critical. We need to balance off, we do not want too much traffic coming through the northern area of the scheme because that has an impact on residents, hence the access is to the south via Westmount down to People's Park. But obviously we do need appropriate traffic management in the areas around Tower Road, et cetera, to stop people rat-running and things like that.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

So, as a department, would you look into all areas as a whole when you are addressing the traffic problem or you, as the hospital team, will concentrate on the Westmount Road?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

Yes, so the planning application is going to need to address the transport impact of the scheme, so that has to be an answer that is put forward in the planning application. It is a key issue for the public inquiry when it sits as to how the transport works. Firstly, we have to be able to understand or explain how the road up to the new hospital will work but also we need to really explain how there will not be any negative impacts on existing residents north of the hospital. So, yes, the traffic

management and traffic studies, they have been widely done, it has to look at the transport network as a whole.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

This is possibly for the Minister to answer because when you are talking about traffic, or I may have got the wrong information, is it true that demolition has already started up at Overdale, so we are going to be experiencing trucks and things going up? If I am wrong, then I apologise, but surely the traffic should have already been alerted and we should know what is happening being as the demolition has already started up at Overdale? Can the Minister answer that one?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Not to my knowledge. Do you have anything on that, Andy?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

No, so the demolition has not commenced, Connétable, but the planning application for the demolition has been submitted, so demolition is a development act effectively which needs consent. The planning application has been lodged for that consent, so demolition will only start once that planning application has been approved.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

So that planning application will not include the road problems, the traffic problems? So the big trucks and the diggers and everything going up to do the demolition will go up in what already is existing?

[12:15]

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

It will have to utilise the existing road network but it will not be the scale of traffic that the new hospital will generate.

**The Connétable of St. Saviour:**

That is not what I have asked. You are expecting heavy trucks and diggers and everything to go up the roads that are there now?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

That is correct, yes.

**Deputy G.J. Truscott:**

It is just regarding, we are all very aware how the Planning Department are currently overstretched, and the last time I think I checked there were 520 applications still in the pipeline. I was just wondering how much resource have you diverted to the hospital application when it goes in. Will that resource then have a knock-on effect with all the other applications currently in the pipeline?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

Yes, for our other Minister within I.H.E., what I can say, Deputy, is that the planning application team are expecting the application to be received. Obviously they are aware of the timescale. In terms of the process, they have indicated to us that there will be a dedicated case officer who will deal with the planning application. It then goes into the inquiry process, so it is unlikely to have an impact on other planning applications because I think the team are again resourcing that differently. They are out for recruitment, they are looking at consultancy advice, they are looking at a variety of ways of dealing with their planning backlog. I am told they have identified a planning officer that will deal with this planning application. The majority of the work then will be done through the planning inquiry itself going into next year and the inspector then takes charge of that process with the programme officer for that inquiry. So, as an applicant, the hospital team will need to be part of that obviously and the planning officer on the other side will need to be part of that. Undoubtedly, it is a big application, it does involve a lot of work, but I am being assured by the planning team that they have the resource to deal with this, mindful that they are trying to recruit for a range of applications at the moment as well.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Thank you. If I can just comment on a couple of traffic issues while we are talking about them. One is, and I have mentioned it several times before, the traffic to the proposed hospital from the west just does not seem to have been provided for. In discussion with others, and my own experience, it seems that the best route is to turn into the Inner Road at First Tower and approach the West Park roundabout from that angle. Has any consideration been given to remodelling the First Tower traffic junction to incorporate that? It has been mentioned in meetings before but there is clearly a resource issue and I wondered whose budget it might come out of.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Well this is part of the Our Hospital project but they are very cognisant of that and I believe plans are ongoing for that. Just to illustrate, Westmount Road does not come under infrastructure, that is a Parish of St. Helier road. Then obviously the Our Hospital group will come to some agreement with the Parish of St. Helier regarding strengthening that road and making it wider for obviously the traffic that will be going up to the hospital. I do not know if you would like to add anything to that, Andy.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

Yes, I think certainly the Minister acting as the highway authority will need to be comfortable that this application fits within the wider highway network for St. Helier and the wider greater St. Helier. So, the highway team acting as the highway authority will also be consulted and will be commenting on the planning application. So it goes back to, the transport modelling and the traffic modelling that is being done as part of the application will need to answer a variety of questions, capacity being one of them, and how this proposal will fit into the network.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Yes, and if I may lead on from that, and we have until 2026 to sort this out, but in terms of the public transport network, and specifically buses - and I note that the bus contract finishes in March 2026 just before the opening of the hospital in theory - I wondered at what stage you will be having serious discussions really with the object of getting costs for providing bus services direct to Overdale. I speak from the west of the Island particularly because that is my area of interest but other parts as well to incorporate it in the routes. We know there will be a cost to that. At what stage will you be advancing those discussions which of course will have an implication on possibly the First Tower junction as well?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes, well the LibertyBus, our present contractor, I am delighted with. I think they are an excellent contractor, and they are very open to new ideas, but it goes without saying that the hospital is going to be a major construction. You can tell by how many staff we have coming and going from the General Hospital at present, the movements of people that will be required. So the team are really cognisant of the movements of people that will be required and that is in the early stages of planning. But they are cognisant of the amount of people that will need to be moved around.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

If it helps, Chair, I can add, conversations with LibertyBus are always very positive and what LibertyBus will want to do is make sure their network, their buses, go to places where people want to go to. So, obviously there will be a new draw up in Overdale that people will want to travel to, so we of course will be talking to LibertyBus whether that affects any current routings or whether indeed they want to amend any routings to go through the site or past the site. Because it will make sense from their perspective, from a ridership perspective, to serve where the public need to go.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Indeed. I suppose to conclude that one, could you confirm that you will include the necessary provision of public transport to Overdale in the new bus contract which will start in March 2026? So certainly you will be advancing that fairly soon?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Absolutely, that will be part of it, yes.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Thank you. Moving to recycling in schools, Minister. During our last quarterly public hearing on behalf of the Jersey Youth Parliament, we discussed recycling in schools. You informed the panel that you were out to recruit for a recycling manager post which would assist with developing a new strategy to work more closely with schools to support a recycling initiative. Has this post now been filled and can you update us on any progress regarding the facilitation of recycling within schools?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Absolutely. Yes, I would encourage schools to work with their Parishes in the first instance to increase recycling. I am delighted that St. Martin and St. Ouen have now come on board with kerbside recycling. Our department has recently appointed a new recycling manager and if I can hand you over to the group director, Operations and Transport, Ellen Littlechild.

**Group Director, Operations and Transport:**

As the Minister said, Chair, we do have a new recycling and commercial manager starting on 8th November, which is good news for the team. As the Minister said, we are still working very closely with the schools. It is their responsibility to look at their recycled material and we are there to support them wherever possible. We support them a lot through the Eco-Active Scheme and we also run and host lots of visits to our recycling sites to support them in that.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Thank you, Ellen. It was suggested that liaising with the Minister for Children and Education might encourage recycling within schools. Minister, you noted you would be happy to liaise with the Minister for Children and Education on the matter; have any discussions taken place? If so, what were the outcomes of those discussions?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I know officers have had dialogue with schools. I am not sure if they have had dialogue with Ministers at the moment. Do you have any information on that, Ellen?

**Group Director, Operations and Transport:**

There has been no liaison with the new Minister for C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills) but I believe, Chair, that is something we should be doing. With the new officer in post, I think that would be a great opportunity to go and meet with C.Y.P.E.S. to understand what their

programme is for next year and, as we said, to try and work closely with them to make sure that they deliver up.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Yes, likewise, I am sure Parishes would be keen to do the same and to develop the conversation to encourage schools to participate. Now moving on to taxi fares for large groups and families. Minister, the panel has received representation from a member of the public regarding excessive taxi fares for families or large groups. Could you outline the policy procedure regarding taxi fares for larger groups?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Well there are some taxi firms that do have mini-buses which they can use but the fares we set are maximum fares; they can charge far less should they require. If I could hand you over to Piers Tharme from D.V.S. Are you there, Piers? It is a bit Eurovision at the moment, Chair, we keep losing people. Here we go. Hello, Piers.

**Assistant Manager, Driver and Vehicle Standards:**

Good afternoon, Minister, Chair, panel. Yes, the segment of fares, as you are well aware, in 2015 there was a major restructure across the taxi industry with the staff, the programme and there was quite a fundamental change to fares on that. What we have recently done is encouraged additional multi-seat provision into the industry because it was an area, obviously with the changes in 2015, the focus was on disabled access and so we encouraged the entry of wheelchair vehicles into the industry. The Minister signed off a policy decision late last year that we were to encourage multi-seat and environmental-friendly taxis. So effectively what we do is when a new plate is issued to a vehicle, that vehicle has to be either multi-seat, disabled access or zero emission. What we do is manage, with advice from the Minister, on that balance, that ratio, so, yes, it is very much encouraging that provision. For a multi-seat they charge at the standard fare rate with the addition that they can charge an additional £1 per passenger over 4 passengers for that journey, so it is only a small additional cost to the families.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

I suppose the question is: what controls, if any, are in place to ensure a larger vehicle is available for larger groups to avoid excessive fares? How can individuals ascertain when requesting a taxi that a single vehicle will accommodate the entire group because there is a tendency just to end up having to double the cost?

**Assistant Manager, Driver and Vehicle Standards:**

Our emphasis, certainly within the department, Chair, is to encourage the companies to make that provision available. Quite a number of the companies offer 7-seat vehicles and that suits their business model for the business that they have out there and available. So, certainly the way forward from our perspective is to put a lot of the requirement on the companies to meet the provision requirements that are out there and therefore they get the business.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

That is helpful, thank you very much. Moving, Minister, to the disposal of face masks. Face masks have been used during the last 18 months or so in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering that the bulk disposal of face masks would not have been an earlier consideration for Jersey, what process has been used during the pandemic to address the disposal of facemasks in a safe and environmentally-friendly manner?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Well obviously we are into reduce, reuse and recycle wherever possible and if it is a cloth mask they can be reused. If they are a disposable mask, they must be disposed of in a sensible way. It can be put with the general litter in the plastic bins and disposed of by way of incineration later on when that is collected. Obviously, waste from care homes, et cetera, with masks and such like, that goes to our clinical incinerator which is at a higher temperature and does dispose of them properly. But we cannot recycle single-use face masks, so it is very important they are disposed of correctly and not dropped in the street to blow around in the wind.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Have any concerns or challenges come to light from your staff regarding these disposals?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Not to my knowledge. As long as everything is disposed of sensibly, put in the bins which can be obviously knotted, put in the vehicle, as I say, and disposed by way of incineration, there is no problem there.

[12:30]

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Thank you. Now the Bellozanne sewage treatment works, Minister. Given the recent news of the collapse of the U.K. engineering Group NMCN who were appointed as main contractor for the sewage treatment works project, can you advise what the Government is doing to ensure this project does not suffer extensive delays and that local contractors are protected financially?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Certainly, the team have been cognisant for some time. Both the senior members of the team and lawyers have been on this, so I am going to hand you over to Andy Scate again who has the detail.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

Yes, just for the panel's awareness, obviously we do have a contract with NMCN Limited for the sewage treatment works project. We are currently going through a process of assessing where we go next effectively. We were informed on Thursday of last week that administrators had been appointed, so that is a public document. Grant Thornton are the administrators, we have had notice of that. We are now assessing our legal, financial and commercial position in relation to that administration, so we are hoping to conclude that matter. It is a very live matter for us at the moment; we have been in meetings on that this morning, we have been in meetings in it yesterday and last week, so we are certainly hopefully at a point where we will be able to publicly announce what the project will be doing moving forward. Clearly, as a government client, clearly as the department in charge of the sewage works, we want the project to continue to completion. It is about 65 per cent complete, it is a critical piece of infrastructure for the Island and we really do need it finished. So we are currently assessing what those options are for us with that intent in mind and obviously we will still need to continue the arrangements, the working relationships with our local supply chain and indeed the wider supply chain involved with this. We are looking at all of those options at the moment, so I am hoping that either tomorrow or the day after we will be in a position to be a bit, I guess, more public about what that solution is for the Island.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Can I just ask you to talk us through what the contract is for because from the public's point of view, someone else will know more about it than others? Which elements of the treatment works are being dealt with and what is this particular contract for?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

Yes, I might call on Ellen for a bit more detail, but effectively it is for the replacement of the sewage treatment works that we currently are operating. It is a new design, it is generally in the same location but it is a different location within the Bellozanne Valley, and it is an upgrading of those works and more modern works will be provided. It is effectively to provide the replacement of the entire sewage treatment works up to a better standard. So the contract is for that, and that is what we need to be completed.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Odour controls?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

Yes, so there are odour controls added to the project. That was subject to a States decision, so we have added covers or tops to the primary settlement tanks, for instance. That has been added, so odour has been a part of the project as well.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Finally, in technical terms, we used to have a U.V. (ultraviolet) process through which water would be filtered before it went out into St. Aubin's Bay and hopefully take out some of the offending items that we would not wish to see there. Will there be mitigation of nitrates going out into the Bay as a result of the new works?

**Group Director, Operations and Transport:**

This is a denitrifying plant share so we would still look to reduce the nitrates as and when they are coming through the sewage treatment works and we are working closely with our regulation colleagues to do a review of the impact of what the new sewage treatment works will have on the Bay and we hope there to be some improvements. With regard to a U.V., we are looking at having a U.V. plant installed as part of the works moving forward. As Andy mentioned before, we are probably 60 to 65 per cent complete so a lot of the civil structure and civil work has been completed on the sewage treatment works. I think we still have one more final settlement tank and then we move into all the mechanical and electrical type of installations that are the next big part of that project that we will move forward with.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

We will leave you to discuss the final points with those involved and hope you manage to get it back on an even keel.

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

If I can give some assurance, we certainly do not want to see this project delayed for any longer than it needs to be. It is vital for the Island that we continue because it is a very important piece of infrastructure.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Do you anticipate there will be an additional cost to the public purse?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

I do not know if we know that yet, if I am being honest. We are certainly endeavouring to keep project costs within the budget that is agreed. As has been explained, we are a very big proportion of the way through here with the works that have been undertaken so we are confident of the plan

moving forward. We have to do some legal and financial niceties, so to speak, before we get into that phase but yes, it is our intention to keep any cost increases to a minimum, if at all.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

We are already touching on the budget; the budget that was approved for the project was £75.5 million. I looked at the major project and we have already a request for £86 million approved budget, not £75 million. Would you explain what has happened and why the budget request is £11 million higher than it was previously approved?

**Group Director, Operations and Transport:**

The original budget was £75 million, as you mentioned. There are some additional items that were included in that as part of the overall sewage treatment works, so £1 million was to do with the First Tower rising main rehabilitation. As the chair mentioned, we had additional monies approved by the States for the odour control system, so the P.S.T. (primary sedimentation tank) and covers, which was £3 million. Then we have an additional future provisions and contingency of £1 million. That was originally added and has gone through the capital programme. Since then, and as part of the Government Plan moving forward, we requested an additional £1.85 million for COVID-19 related costs.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

£75.5 million was approved last year, so odour and extras I assume it was approved last year, or it was added through this year as a request. It is not new. It has been discussed previously.

**Group Director, Operations and Transport:**

Yes.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Why is the increase this year £11 million?

**Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:**

I think we are just under £82 million.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

£86 million in the Government Plan major projects, page 131.

**Group Director, Operations and Transport:**

I think we need to come back to you, Deputy, with regards to £86 million. We are looking at it as £82 million, so I am not sure what else has been included within the Government Plan.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Minister, do you know why the bid for £86 million?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

There must be something else added to that. We will get back to you with that.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Moving on to the Sustainable Transport Policy, Minister, there is overlap between the climate emergency and the workstreams within your remit of infrastructure. Could you briefly update us on how adequate functioning across the department remits is ensured to achieve effective and complementary outcomes for the S.T.P. (Sustainable Transport Policy) and the policy requirements for Jersey to be carbon neutral? For instance, do you have regular scheduled meetings with the Minister for the Environment and what sustainable transport options are being considered and how will behaviour changes be encouraged?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We share some offices with Environment so there is quite a bit of crossover. I receive regular briefings on the progress of the active travel, bus and parking plan from senior policy officers for sustainable transport and work continues on the policy development that will be included within the carbon-neutral road map. We were talking about new recruits and I am not sure if you have met one of our latest ones who has only been with us a few months. We have met before. This is Louisa Phillips, who is our strategic policy officer. I hope I got that right, Louisa.

**Senior Policy Officer:**

You are close, Minister. I am senior policy officer for sustainable transport.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

You have all the answers. Welcome.

**Senior Policy Officer:**

Thank you. To follow on from what the Minister said, as part of the work to try to ensure we bridge the gap between S.P.3 (Strategic Policy, Performance and Population), which is where I sit, and the Minister's department in I.H.E., relating to the climate emergency and all the work being done in terms of reducing emissions on the Island, we have the Council of Ministers carbon-neutral steering group, that has been set up to help steer the development of the carbon-neutral road map preferred strategy that will come out very shortly, and the more detailed carbon-neutral road map that is due out towards the end of this year and the beginning of next year. Both the Minister for the

Environment and the Minister for Infrastructure sit on that steering group as well as Assistant Ministers for the Environment, the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture: and the Minister for Treasury and Resources, and there are 2 non-executive Members of the States Assembly on that group as well, so we have a broad range of political steering when it comes to discussing both remits of the Minister for Infrastructure and the Minister for the Environment across the climate emergency. That natural steering group has helped us to develop the strategic principles for the preferred strategy and will continue going forward as we hit the rapid policy development to inform the carbon-neutral road map. As the Minister also said, I regularly brief him in terms of where we are heading within the policy project development side of things based on the carbon-neutral road map and what was committed within the sustainable transport policy back in 2019, that fall within the S.P.3 directorate. Obviously, as recognised by you, co-ordination needs to be across both departments and both Ministers to make sure the strategic aims of the S.T.P. as well as the operational, on the ground delivery align and dovetail to achieve the common goal.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

It has been suggested that in a future Government, an individual Minister ought to be appointed to the climate emergency needs. Do you agree with that?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

There have been quite a few suggestions along those lines with a Minister for Energy and a Minister for this but that has yet to be determined. There are lots of things in the mix at the moment.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Slightly linked to this, the Les Quennevais new school building, the panel is aware that the newly-built Les Quennevais school has experienced issues with its cooling system, resulting in high internal temperatures that were unacceptable or unsafe for pupils at times during the summer. Can you update us regarding whether this issue has now been resolved and what work is or has been carried out to optimise the school's cooling system to prevent a repeat of the potentially unbearable conditions next summer?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I was there at the opening, as you were, Chair, and it is a truly stunning school. There was an issue with heating during the extremely hot months. I can hand you over to Tim Daniels who is on the case.

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

It is worth doing a recap. Les Quennevais school was constructed to a Department for Education standard that is across the U.K. It is Building Bulletin 101 that directs the performance of the building

in terms of size and availability of classrooms, density of occupation and extends to the environmental system and management within the school. The school functions, and has functioned to the specification it was designed for. There are within the school a small number of areas where the temperatures during the hot periods have been hot. Notwithstanding that, the school is still within the specification. We recognise, however, that this can be distracting and unpleasant for teachers and staff and we are looking to what mechanical intervention we can apply to the school to make sure that in those limited areas the conditions remain acceptable throughout the year. We are still designing the system and it has not yet been confirmed. Once it has been designed, we will cost it and carry out the works for next summer.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

It sounds like a mechanical intervention might be the ability to open a window, in simple terms. It may be as simple as that.

[12:45]

**Director, Jersey Property Holdings:**

There are other issues in terms of the air purity that means there are no windows to open and although the ventilation is external and brought into the school, we will need to find a way of cooling the air before it goes to those particular areas.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Minister, moving to Broad Street, which is another sensitive subject, the panel is aware that the closure of Broad Street to traffic has resulted in drivers choosing to flout the restrictions, and patrols were stepped up to address the growing issues. Has the presence of patrols, the increased education to raise awareness and the introduction of fines been successful in resolving the issue or are some motorists still choosing to drive down a pedestrianised road? Do you know if any fines have been issued to motorists flouting the restrictions, for instance?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

As you are aware, this was a proposition brought to the Assembly by the Constable of St. Helier. It was not an Infrastructure proposition. I will hand you over to our head of transport, Tristan Dodd, who is part of the project board working with the parish and chamber of commerce regarding Broad Street.

**Director of Transport:**

My understanding is driver discipline has been improved by the police presence and by the signage being reinforced, but at the moment it is a temporary arrangement and any permanent scheme

would have to take that into account in its design. So far, we have formed a project board that contains representatives of the Minister's team, the Parish of St. Helier and the Chamber of Commerce, and we are starting the survey. We have been identifying objectives the project should achieve and started survey work to get the base data we need in terms of usage and how people, not only in Broad Street but in that area to see how any changes to Broad Street could support the St. Helier movement and public realm strategy in terms of creating healthier streets, supporting active travel, creating attractive places, build upon the identity of the area and make it pleasant to dwell and basically activities to stimulate increased usage. That all adds up to a common outcome, which is a vibrant central St. Helier.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

There is one particular outlet who is very concerned about his inability to operate his business sensibly down there because it requires regular deliveries and vehicle access. How has the department overcome his needs?

**Director of Transport:**

I can only guess the person you are talking about. We have suggested we can make sure that unloading bays are made available nearby and we are able to cone those off as it is very close to our parking control officers, to make sure we can co-ordinate those deliveries. We do that for a lot of companies where they have special deliveries being made and also provided access via adjacent side streets to get the owner of the business nearby as close as he can.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

In conjunction, I understand the Le Masurier site is due to be redeveloped. Are you aware of a timeline for that and the implication that might have on Broad Street?

**Director of Transport:**

Yes, so within the project programme we have meetings set up to speak to people who are assembling sites nearby to Broad Street and that will have an impact on Broad Street. That is one we are aware of and we have a meeting with Le Masurier within the next month.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Will that stimulate the need for a continuation of the closure of Broad Street?

**Director of Transport:**

The thing about public realm projects is a political timescale was set without reference to the department in terms of the States' ambition. Public realm projects can help deliver far-reaching social, economic and environmental benefits. However, they come with quite a high degree of

complexity and require involved community engagement, and that means these projects take some time to deliver. At the moment we are collecting the base information and that will go on to spring next year. Then we can start bringing forward concepts with the knowledge of what developers intend to do, that we can then discuss with people how they would like to see Broad Street be used in the future and how the public realm in that area might be enhanced.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Certainly, it needs enhancing at the moment with a lot of closed businesses. It is not terribly inviting. Part of the proposition adopted by the States Assembly, P.28, this year called for the creation of additional on-street parking for disabled drivers in central town areas, particularly in close proximity to Broad Street. The parking spaces we understood should have been introduced by 31st July. Can you confirm whether spaces have been created and if so, where they have been introduced?

**Director of Transport:**

Part of the study we are doing at the moment is how disabled parking is used and where there is adequate display for disabled parking. We struggled with this before, with a significant number of vacancies within the highways, transport and infrastructure section, and these proposals were brought forward without any reference to what the department's resources are. Within the report we bring to the States, there was a requirement to report by the end of the year, we will bring forward a report setting out where we are, where the opportunities are and any works that fall out of that will come forward later on. But at the moment we have replaced all the spaces that are lost. We believe, but we are not able to demonstrate until we complete the survey works, that there are adequate spaces in the area because we have the shop mobility and disabled parking within Sand Street and in New Cut there are disabled spaces, and the replace spaces in Dumaresq Street. That is where we are at the moment, so it there has not been a gain in the number of spaces but we are not any worse off.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

I noted there is a significant number of mother and toddler spaces in Sand Street. Does that seem to be working, satisfying the need?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It is very popular. I have also been told off several times that it must not be called mother and child. It is parent and child now because lots of dads take their children shopping. It is now parents and child and that whole floor, which is number 4, has now been increased for parents and child. Also, there are lots of increased spaces, I believe 15 more disabled spaces there, which is directly next to the lift to allow easy access. The numbers are there, which is just 50 yards away from Broad Street. People liked to park in Broad Street who did have a blue badge but because of this

proposition that was brought, we did not have any choice but to remove them. At the end of the day, we work as directed by the States Assembly.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Does that fourth floor include grandparents and children, Minister?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Yes, that would also be included.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Thank you, Tristan, for your response. I appreciate there are difficulties with the workforce but, Minister, a question to yourself because you mentioned you work as directed by the States Assembly. Rightly or wrongly, States Assembly decided to introduce extra disabled spaces in the proximity by 31st July. Rightly or wrongly, this was the decision. Would you consider any communication back to the States Member when the deadline is past that we are not chasing the department now we are in October, what is happening and we find out that nothing really happened, so was that simply a decision?

**Director of Transport:**

I would not say nothing has happened, Deputy.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Tristan, it is not a question to you. It is to the Minister about political culpability, as we had on other States Assembly decisions that were not performed. Would you consider any communication to the States Member an update is required after States decision is passed? This is purely a political question because this is the communication that we are, at least me as a Back-Bencher, missing when we have a decision made and we need to chase.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

It is all in the public domain what exactly we have done. We work as directed by the States Assembly. It was not my idea to close Broad Street but we were told to close Broad Street. We had to, but we have replaced those in the vicinity but the closest we could get was Dumaresq Street and we have increased the spaces in Sand Street and that has been communicated to the Island.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

The places were replaced a long time ago. When the amendment was adopted, and it was adopted by the States, to create extra disabled spaces in the proximity, it was the States Assembly decision. It is extra, not instead. It is not about the public domain. It is about the processes we have between

the States Assembly and the Government, yourself as a Minister, in the States Assembly when the Assembly makes the decision. If it has not happened, would you think it is correct to come back to the Assembly and say: "Assembly, you decided. I instructed my department doing X, Y, Z and you will have extra disabled places not by 31st July but 31st December." I am just thinking it out. I am looking at the communication between the Minister and the Assembly following an Assembly decision.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

You have it now. We have provided more disabled spaces than were required. The whole basement of Sand Street Car Park is disabled parking and the fourth floor is now disabled parking and there are spaces in Dumaresq Street have been mentioned for people who would rather not use a multi-storey car park. We have gone way beyond what was required and we are more than happy, if the demand is there, to expand that further. We seem to be coping very well with demand at the moment, but people will want to park in Broad Street, which is the very thing I cannot provide.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

I am not looking for Broad Street. There are small streets around, but I understand. We will leave it there.

**Director of Transport:**

Can I just intervene? Can I remind you of the conversation we had the other week about the appointments we are setting up? We have been working on this over the summer and the States has come back and been extremely busy, but there are invitations which, if they have not been issued will be issued very shortly to yourself and the Constable to give you an update on the work. They are in the process of being set up.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

That is helpful, Tristan, thank you. The Deputy is suggesting that we have been lacking in communication on the matter.

**Director of Transport:**

They were in train ahead of the Scrutiny meeting being called but have not gone out yet. I am sorry about that.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

We have done lots of press releases regarding the disabled parking and where they are located, but we are more than happy to explain to States Members or even give a guided tour of all the spaces that are available.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Moving on to vehicle registration plates, the panel is aware that G.B.J. (Great Britain Jersey) plates will remain for Jersey registered vehicles when travelling abroad, irrespective of changes coming into force in the U.K. to change the G.B. to U.K. For the benefit of the public, can you please clarify Jersey's position on this and rationale for not adopting the U.K.'s approach? Will this lead to confusion?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

I was quite surprised when I heard originally that the U.K. Government was losing the G.B. plates, which I thought was a little unnecessary. It goes without saying we are not part of the United Kingdom but we are part of the British Isles even though we are a Crown Dependency. So, we keep the G.B.J. status that has been accepted by the U.K. and Europe, I believe. We will keep our G.B.J. and the British Isles will now be U.K. plates on the back. I think it is their loss but I do not have any influence over the U.K.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

I am pleased to hear that, as I am sure will most of the public. You do not envisage any confusion in the E.U. (European Union) in any shape or form?

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Not at all. Everyone locally seems to be delighted we are keeping the G.B.J. and Europe and the U.K. have authorised it so we are set to go.

**Head of Driver and Vehicle Standards:**

Minister, if you like I can add a little bit more detail to that.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Certainly, Gordon.

**Head of Driver and Vehicle Standards:**

We are led to believe the reason for the U.K. doing this was to symbolise the U.K.'s unity as a nation and it is part of a wider move towards using the U.K. signifier across the U.K. Government. Clearly, we were not party to any of those discussions.

[13:00]

I can say, to give you some comfort, Chair, that further to that the U.K. informed the United Nations in respect of both the Geneva and Vienna Conventions that this change will apply only to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and will not extend to any territories, the international relations of which the U.K. is responsible. It is very clear as far as both the Geneva and Vienna Conventions are concerned. At departmental level we have been liaising with the Department for Transport over this through the small islands meetings that we hold once a quarter, and D.f.T. has given us a guarantee that they will circulate written information to the various European jurisdictions to emphasise that the Crown dependencies, Jersey, Guernsey, Isle of Man, will not be changing.

**The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

That is helpful, thank you. I am sure members of the public would not wish to be stopped mid-route for fear of having the wrong plate. Minister, I think in the absence of any further questions from the panel in front of me at the moment, I thank you and your team for your presentation this morning and answering our questions. It has been extremely useful and I look forward to speaking again shortly. I close this meeting and thank you all.

**The Minister for Infrastructure:**

Many thanks, Chair, and thanks to all the team.

[13:01]