



Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny

Panel

Quarterly Hearing

Witness: The Minister for Infrastructure

Wednesday, 16th November 2022

Panel:

Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin (Chair)

Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier Central (Vice-Chair)

Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier North

Witnesses:

Deputy T. Binet of St. Saviour, The Minister for Infrastructure

Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North, Assistant Minister for Infrastructure

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

Mr. T. Daniels, Director, Jersey Property Holdings

[10:00]

Deputy S.G. Luce of Grouville and St. Martin (Chair):

Welcome, Minister, to our first quarterly hearing with you, an opportunity to talk about all things under your remit. Before we start, I would just like to introduce people on my side of the table and then maybe you take over. Obviously, Deputy Steve Luce, chair of the panel.

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

Deputy Rob Ward, vice-chair of the panel.

Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade:

Connétable Mike Jackson, panel member.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat of St. Helier North:

Deputy Mary Le Hegarat, panel member.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We will do the same, if everybody introduces themselves. I am sure you know everybody.

Assistant Minister for Infrastructure:

Deputy Steve Ahier, Assistant Minister for Infrastructure.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Tim Daniels, director of Property Holdings.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Ellen Littlechild, group director for Operations and Transport.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Thank you very much. Minister, we are going to start off with a topic, which you have already spoken about at length this week; we thought we would carry on. Deputy Le Hegarat will ask the first few questions about Our Hospital.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Minister, now the report for the Our Hospital review has been published, we understand that the Council of Ministers will be bringing a proposition to the States Assembly to amend the proposed Government Plan 2023 - 2026 to reflect any changes to the project, including the funding strategy. Please could you outline in further detail what the next steps are and how the Council of Ministers will ensure that sufficient time is afforded to scrutinise the proposals?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Thank you for that. There has been an eventuality since yesterday evening. As I understand it, Deputy Farnham has put in an amendment. I have not had a chance to study it in detail because it was handed out as we went into the meeting yesterday evening. But from discussing it in a very brief meeting this morning, it looks like it might, to some extent, be derailing what we are looking to do. So I think we will have to handle that amendment and discussions are happening at the moment as to whether we take that amendment head on or amend the amendment to allow for a different outcome. So, without having access to that and having studied it properly, it is difficult to know

whether what we were planning will be able to go ahead. Bear in mind, some of these processes are relatively new to me.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So that is a proposition that is going on. Are you talking about an amendment to the Government Plan? Because that will come at the same time as that proposition.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, I believe it is. As I say, I have not had a chance to even read it properly.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Minister, I can just say, it came to me less than an hour ago, it has gone to States Members and it is headed: "Our Hospital project reporting." There is a list of things there that the Deputy would like to do and review.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

As a relative newcomer, you can understand that requires quite a lot of analysis in terms of knowing what the effects are. If we take that aside and I can explain what we had been planning was to put a proposition forward. That proposition, I have to say, is still under discussion, because it has to be very, very carefully worded in order to get the sort of direction of travel that we wanted. So I cannot provide any full detail about what that proposition would be, other than that essentially it would be with a view to discussing our direction of travel in getting that passed by the Assembly, which is the 2-site option. So that is the way we are heading. That was the proposition that we were in the process of putting together.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

So the review of the Our Hospital project report states that: "All cost savings described in this report are estimates informed by evidence provided by project cost consultants and the experience of the principal expert adviser. Further work will need to be undertaken to fully validate these estimates as part of the business case process." What is the timeline for the further work to validate the cost savings estimated provided in that report?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The intention would be to lodge a proposition before Christmas, debate it in February, and that would give us the permission to forward and produce a business case based on the recommendations of the report.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

So that would not be until February?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

As I understand, the process is we lodge before Christmas and we have to allow 6 weeks for the process to run its course.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Interestingly, Minister, I note that Deputy Farnham's proposition, which we were just talking about there, is asking you to present a report comparing your proposals with the original project and to present that report no later than 20th March. So it may well be that the work you are proposing to do would come before that date in any case.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

If my initial reading, and it has been very, very brief this morning, and we have been trying to discuss this so we would have a full update for you. But my understanding of what is being required here would put us in a position where it would be entirely impossible. I think what is being called for, and you correct me if I am wrong, is a comparison on operating costs and a hell of a lot of detail, which, if you bear in mind what we are looking to do is take the information that we have and divide everything into a 2-site option, which in itself is going to take a number of months. Until you have decided what is going to go where, and what is going to be relocated in what place, you are not in a position to do an analysis of what the operating costs are going to be. Really, I spoke to the team this morning and they said that piece of work would probably take until September.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I cannot understand what is going to come to the States. If there is no business case, there is no notion of what is going to go where, so what will come to the States to be voted on? Surely there must be some detail in terms of budget, in terms of effectively some of the things that are in that proposition that has just been lodged.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

What we were looking for was just permission to take this direction of travel and set a new budget. Because my understanding is that the old hospital project, the budget has been exceeded, the amount of money granted by the States, the project now exceeds that cost, so we would have to go back to the States in any event. So there are concerns with regard to the funding of it and for the direction of travel. So all we would be looking for is permission from the Assembly to go away and come back with a different case and put a decent business case together.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So a purely political steer.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Pretty much, yes. Because we are not in a position, with the amount of detail that we have to do or anything else. What we do not want to do is start wasting time and money putting business cases together before we have had an agreement on a change of direction.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Is the business case for the previous scheme, Minister, broken, given the fact of global inflation and everything else that has gone on since that decision was taken?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

If my understanding is correct, it is a business case that relates to a different project altogether, if you look at what our review has come up with, it changes quite dramatically from a single site solution.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Yes, I mean the single site solution, the States voted a certain amount of money, is it your view now that the business case for that project and the amount of money that was voted is now broken and we cannot do it?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think one has to assume that. If the mood is that we are not prepared to sign up to a billion-pound project, then the answer to that has to be yes.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Can I just feed into that? When we went to the Fiscal Policy Group presentation, there was some question about affordability. Now, it is being discussed that we are now not able to afford this project, but they clearly said that they did not think that was the case.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, that is not quite correct. Because I spoke to them afterwards. Deputy Farnham asked a very carefully crafted question and he asked them if they would recommend delaying the hospital. That is how the question was asked. They said no, they would not. He raised from his seat, because he was sitting next to me, and he tapped me on the shoulder and said: "That is all I need to know," and he disappeared. But, had he stayed behind, he would have got involved in the discussion where I went and asked them what they understood from what he had said. I suggested that I thought that they might have been used for political purposes and they agreed. Because what they were saying

is they said they were fully aware of the intention of a change of direction and that what they understood from his question was should we delay doing anything with the hospital in its entirety on financial grounds. In other words, would you stop doing anything, and their answer was, no, we would not stop doing anything. They knew that we had a 2-site hospital in mind and what they meant was: "In your shoes, we would progress with what you have in mind." They asked us to speak to the Communications Department to let them know what their real view was because they said they do not like being used for political purposes. Have I clarified this? Because I think it is quite a critical point to make.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Absolutely. The other question, and you may not be able to answer this, this is in relation to the financing of it, what is the Treasurer's view or the Treasury's view in relation to the financing of it?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Of what we want to do or the existing project?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Have you had any discussion about what is affordable to us as an Island? What is affordable and what the budget would be.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The Minister for Treasury and Resources made it plain at an early stage that he would be very reluctant to sign up to a billion-pound contract in one go that was unstoppable. He has made that very plain. As a Council of Ministers we discussed it at length and we all said we would all be uncomfortable to signing a contract that, if something went hideously wrong in the middle of it, if you stopped, you have spent £500 million and you have a building site on your hands. So that is some of the thinking that has informed our decision to say no.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

With all due respect to Deputy Farnham, would you agree that this latest proposition is a derailing proposition probably led by sour grapes?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The review would be a derailing proposition? I need to understand. That is quite a loaded question, so I want to understand exactly what it is.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Deputy Farnham's proposition will in fact delay the project. I mean if accepted.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

In my view, hideously. At last night's meeting he was very critical of Scrutiny's effect on delaying what he was doing and I just looked into the audience and thought to myself, well, we have the same thing happening 4 years on when we can least afford it. I do see that as a delaying tactic that would not result in anything positive, other than a further delay, which I do not think we can afford.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

If I may just follow on from that, Minister. The role of developing this proposed new hospital is significant. Do you not think that, while it comes under your remit at the moment and I think you will be very good at it, but will you be able to manage the rest of the department at the same time? Is there not merit in perhaps devolving some of the other I.H.E. (Infrastructure, Housing and Environment) issues to your Assistant? Because you are not going to be able to do it all.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well so far so good is all I can say. I do not get very much time off, but I enjoy it and I say the more you learn about both issues, the more you can carry on. I am personally very comfortable doing it. If anybody sees a flaw in that and they raise it as an issue later on that is fine, but I hope I have not tripped up anywhere to date. I am used to working under pressure and I enjoy it and I am very keen to carry on.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think the public are very keen to see the hospital, in whatever guise it might be, finished and developed and people not to put any obstacles in the way.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

If I might say, something that I have been very impressed about since coming into Government is the quality - the civil service is broadly criticised - but my findings, in the main there are some cracking people doing a damn good job. So as far as the hospital team is concerned, we have got an interim project leader who I am hoping is going to take on as full-time project leader, very competent, surrounded by competent people. So with a decent team in place my role becomes somewhat diminished in many respects, it is more a guidance role in any event. So I am comfortable with the existing ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just one last one with regard to the department's involvement in the hospital, I think it ran aground to a large extent by the Westmount Road proposals. That was not within the department. Do you

think any road or access proposals should be done within the department rather than just contracted out?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, I do. But if you look closely at the review, it really suggests that we are not going to do anything major. There might be some minor works on the road. Part of the savings proposal is to not knock down 14 houses, not relocate the bowls club, and not carry out £20 million worth of works on the road. That is some of the savings that we are hoping to piece into it.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I just, before we go forward, I think there are a huge number of questions about your proposals that are not going to come to the States it seems? Looking at the proposition that has gone in, asking for a like-for-like analysis of the multi-site as opposed to Overdale would be a sensible thing to present to the States.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

A like-for-like cost proposal? Because I think that includes operational costs, does it not?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, because are you going to be asking the States to sign up to a new project without really a final figure on it?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

In effect, yes, absolutely. We are asking for permission.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So it could be a billion pounds as well.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are asking for permission to come back to the States again with a full business case. What I do not want to do is spend time putting a full business case together only to find that the States will not even ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So when do you think that business ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I will just make another point that I think, and I need to study this more carefully, sort of a 10-minute read is not sufficient, but I think that requires us to carry out an operational cost comparison as well. If it does, there were no operational costs put together for the first, so we would then have to provide a cost plan for the Our Hospital project and a cost plan for a project that is so much in its infancy that there is 9 months of work to do before we get into a position to be able to make the comparison. So do you understand where we stand, it is quite an awkward position?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So what would the business case include? I am sort of losing track of where we are now. You would come to the Assembly without a business case to approve something so that you can produce a business case. What is the timescale for that business case and what would that include?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well I do not have full answers to that because those are the discussions that are taking place at the moment, bearing in mind that the review has only been out a couple of weeks and we have had a fair bit to do in the interim. So I cannot answer that in full. I cannot say: "Here is a full timetable" because that has not been devised yet.

[10:15]

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Can I just ask one question then, Minister? It is my understanding, and I am sure you will pull me up if I am wrong, that the Our Hospital project was a "sign on the dotted line" for the whole project to be completed and, whatever the cost would be, would be the cost.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Up to £108 million.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

And the final cost would be whatever and somebody would have to foot the bill. But the essence of my question is this, am I right in thinking that your proposals take that big chunk and put it into smaller chunks, which we pay for as we go and we develop as we go, so we are in a position to ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The whole thing here would be about risk management so that if you have signed up to just say you decided to spend £350 million at Overdale, as an example, and I am not saying that is or is not the case, call it £300 million. You are then planning to do something on Kensington Place because there is a 2-year staging difference. If there is an economic nightmare that hits us, you can say:

“We will put that on hold and finish that.” Because we have quantified what we are going to spend at any given point.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

But the essence of one of your criticisms of the Our Hospital project was a sign on the dotted line for the complete figure once the project is done and once you sign there is no stopping anything until you get to the end.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There is no going back and the Assembly will have a chance to decide whether that is what they want to do or not.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is there a risk then of a project where you do not do that and the next Assembly comes along and stops it in the middle?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think it is highly unlikely. We have a 4-year timespan and by the end of the 4 years stage one would be well under way and I would hope that stage 2 would also be started. There is enabling works that could be done. If you look at the Kensington Place site, we have an energy centre that sits right in the middle, and even to meet the timetable that we have suggested, and it is only a suggested timeframe, some work would have to start on removing that and replacing it as enabling work. So if the money is available and things are going well, I do not think any reasonable Government would seek to interfere with that. Particularly you would be three-quarters of the way through delivering stage one of an essential set of facilities, which would be incomplete. Why on earth would anybody break that model 4 years from now? I mean it is not beyond the realms of possibility but it is very, very unlikely.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

The other thing your proposals would allow for, Minister, would be a future Government, if you have stage one and 2 underway and nearly completed, if stage 3 it is suddenly discovered there was a better way to do it, future Governments could modify your staging plan so that it creates an even better scheme.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Absolutely. The good thing about what we are proposing, what struck me when I started having a closer look at what has been proposed in the past, and I have said this a number of times, is that successive Governments have tried to put a mushroom on a postage stamp. You look at the

massing of it and you look at them trying to put everything in Gloucester Street and it is just too much volume. If you look at the current proposal, there is an enormous amount of volume put on a site that really is too small, hence the highly-expensive infrastructural costs to get there. So what this does, it puts something that is appropriate to both sites on those sites and the plan would be to design it in such a way as you could extend both facilities. So, if there is a change in the way healthcare is done, you design it so you can either put an extra ward on or you put extra operating theatres in, and that would be designed into the core of the design in both cases. That is something that we can do.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Yes, I have to say that I have never been a fan of Overdale and one of the reasons was that it did not matter where you went, once you built there you did not have anywhere to go if you wanted to expand. You have hills on 3 sides and graveyards to the north and really there was no option as to what you could do.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

If you carry on with what you have, what you have is what you end up with and there is no chance to do anything else. Because you have a super-filled site before you start. There are various facilities that were omitted from the Our Hospital plan that I would personally quite like to see. I would like to see rehabilitation and I was very pleased last night when the Health secretary committed, without doubt, to putting first-class rehabilitation facilities in any new hospital facilities that we do. We did not have a hydrotherapy pool. Quite frankly I think we should have one and we have the opportunity to do that if we make better use of the space that we have.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

When you said Health secretary, you meant Minister for Health and Social Services?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Sorry, Minister for Health and Social Services, sincere apologies, yes. But she was unequivocal, she said good rehabilitation facilities. When you see the controversy surrounding the closure of Samarès Ward and the results of that, I think that was a very welcome statement.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Sorry, what keeps occurring to me is we talk about more and more and developing into the future. Could those costs then just mount up to what you are opposing now?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well I would say this, if we are going to survive as a species, we go on for 100 or 200 years, we are going to carry on having to put money into health facilities, into an evolving health system when healthcare will change, and it is an evolutionary process. We will have to continue spending money and this allows us to take the first steps in that direction. There will always have to be improvements, changes, alterations, and it puts us, in the 2-site situation, where those alterations, we have the space to do that. I appreciate there are loads of concerns and I share them all. I am not sitting here saying it is an easy piece of work because it is not.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am just quite black and white in the way I look at things and there is a lot of grey here.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There is and it is my job to make black and white out of grey and I follow everything you are saying and appreciate all of it.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I am absolutely sure of one thing is that this will not be the last section of questioning on the hospital project that we have between us.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am sure it will not.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

But I do not want to be flippant, but I might finish with this, is it possible, Minister, that for the last century or so we have had a hospital in Gloucester Street and rehabilitation at Overdale and maybe was that the right thing and maybe we should not fix something that was not broken.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I would say I have had a lot of correspondence from various members of the public and I think people have appreciated that model. We have to have discussions with clinicians and hospital staff and so on. Where things are going to end up being positioned I am not entirely sure and I am not a dictator in this situation. We have to listen to everybody. But the model that we have had has worked pretty well and, in answer to your question, yes, there is no reason why that potentially could not be the case going forward.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Let us move on. Minister, another controversial decision, if I can call it that, by the previous Government when it came to building was the site for the new Government headquarters. Not

everybody is particularly happy about that. But can you provide us with an update on that project and where it stands at the moment?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

My understanding of it, and as I say I have not had a huge opportunity to concentrate on it, but we have had several meetings on it. It is online for completion at the designated time. I do not know if anybody has passed there recently, but there is already steelwork coming out the ground, so it is progressing well and it is due to finish on time.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

The Government Plan notes that there is £460,000 of funding allocated to that in 2023. What exactly are those funds being spent on?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

You have caught me out I am afraid.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I do not expect you to know every answer. That is why you come with other people.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

It is required for additional funding for all the project work to progress, there has been an increase in costs, I think as you are aware, and it is to cover those increases.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

So it is an inflationary cost, is it?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Yes.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Could you just remind us how that project is being funded? Because I thought we had sold the site to a private developer and we were going to lease the building back.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

So we have not sold the site. The Government and the public own the site. What we are doing is working with a developer who is building on the site. So there is an arrangement between the Government and the developer that will allow the developer to build that requires an agreement to lease and a backup against various eventualities should the developer fail or for whatever reason

should the Government be unable to fund. But the agreement is that the developer will build the building and at a point when it is completed we will either rent it or we have the option to decide to buy it. So the inflationary monies are against the costs of the consultants, not the development itself.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

So we are spending an extra £460,000 on consultants for that project?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Well it is the design team. Our ability to monitor the project to make sure that it is being delivered to our specification. But, yes, it is our governance.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

So I just want to be absolutely clear, we did a deal, there is a company building the structure for us, and I presume that is on a fixed cost, they priced and we agreed, so they are going to build the building. But next year we are going to spend £460,000 on consultants? I would like to know a little bit more about how we need to do that when we have already agreed how the building is going to be built.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Again, I cannot answer that here and now, but I will get the details and send them through to you.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Okay. A political question, Minister, do you feel comfortable with that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not feel comfortable being asked the question that I do not know the answer to, let us put it that way.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I just say, you stopped a project for the hospital for what looks like similar reasons as to why this project is now going over budget. Is there an opportunity to stop this project if it is not the best thing to do? Have you considered looking again at this project? Because it is not a popular one among States Members at any time. It did not come to the States.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

This is the Cyril le Marquand development. This is a very, very different order of magnitude; we are talking a much, much bigger finished number here and it is further advanced. The cost of stopping this would be, in my view, catastrophic. I have not got any evidence to ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

But we are spending £460,000 extra on consultants.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are and I apologise for not knowing enough detail about it. I certainly will find out as a result of your questioning.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

But getting back to the principles, and I do not need to discuss the detail, Minister, and I completely appreciate it was not a decision taken when you were in office, but we have entered into a contract to build a structure, we know what the cost of that structure is, and I presume, if it is being built, building control have been through it, so they know how it is all going to be built out and what is going where. Are you surprised that there is another £460,000 for consultants into something which should be finalised?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, I am surprised. I am sure there is a legitimate reason for it and I am very keen to get to the bottom of what is going on there and why. As I say, bear in mind that is a scheme that was already for demolition, was three-quarters finished before we came into office, and the construction is already well underway. I think at this stage of the game there are certain things that you can look at stopping and certain things you cannot. This I think is a £96 million or £97 million finished build cost.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I am trying to remember when it was, but certainly this panel have already asked that question as to whether that project could be changed and the answer was very clearly no, it is all signed up and we are building it whether we like it or not, it is going ahead.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Massive implications if you start making alterations, significant alterations to the fabric of it. As I say, the steelwork is already on site, so there are difficulties. What I will say, well not in defence of it, because I do not really have to defend it because it was not my decisions. But it is going to free up 6 major sites that will come back into the market.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Absolutely, we are paying rent on Broad Street, the Parade, Bermuda House, Eagle House, Liberty House. There are a number of rented premises that we are currently occupying to enable government to function. Those leases will all be terminated and so we will save money in terms of rental outgoings, the maintenance and management of those buildings, and develop synergies from all working together in the same premises, the same building.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I do not want to be cynical but it may well be that we can continue leasing the Parade for the reason that we rented it in the first place, which is to decamp some hospital staff while we build on Gloucester Street and Kensington Place. But I will not go there. That is for another day. Constable Jackson has some question about sewerage treatment works.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Moving underground. Yes, we noticed in the Ministerial plan that you aim to complete construction of the sewerage treatment works by the end of 2023 and then to continue with the decommissioning of the old plant. What does that mean, “decommissioning of the old plant”?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

If it is okay with you, I am going to hand over to Ellen because she knows it inside out.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

So you are right, Constable, the sewerage treatment work is due to be complete next year. We have currently completed phase one of the works, so we are not commissioning the new plant, so the new inlet works, the new primary tanks are working and the A.S.P. (activated sludge process). What we are trying to do at the moment as part of that commissioning piece is effectively let all the bugs and the commissary side do their things. Once we know that we are happy and we are getting the right effluent out of that sewerage treatment works, then effectively we will switch off the old plant and, as part of that next phase, we will decommission the old plant where originally the inlet works were and the primary settlement tanks and then we will be able to go and build the final part of the new sewerage treatment works, which includes 2 final settlement tanks and sludge storage, et cetera.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What is the timeline for that?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

That all has to be complete before the end of next year. We are on track.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What are the future plans for the site once that section has been decommissioned?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Again, working closely with the regulators, depending on how good the quality of the output is and the work that we are doing on nitrogen, hopefully we are not going to have to spend any additional money on tertiary treatment, but if we do then we have that space in order to be able to fund additional enhancement work if it is required.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What was the inflationary impact on the change of delivery partner? I think we had 2 that failed during the process. Has that had an effect on eventual costs?

[10:30]

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

There are inflation costs, which I think are more down to hyperinflation and those things. So we have an inflation bid of £2.4 million. We were still able to keep to the same timescales as the previous contractor. NMCN, before they went into administration, were planning for the end of the year and we have managed to keep to that same timescale. What I think we are very fortunate to do, and maybe from the experience of what happened the first time, was we were able to keep hold of some of the key personnel from the original contract, so again it helped for a smooth handover, and managed to keep a lot of the existing supply chain. That has been instrumental in us being able to keep to these timescales.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So the technology of the proposed processes remain the same and they will still provide you with value for the public.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Now, the Ministerial plan says you will be delivering effective solutions for it throughout for the inert waste at La Collette site and plan for hazardous waste site replacement. We discussed that the other day on our visit to La Collette. Do you have thoughts as to which way we may be going next,

once the site is full - it is pretty full already - what effort are you putting into developing those sorts of plans?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

So there is operational, we run the operations of the site and we work closely with our colleagues within the planning policy team. So, as part of the work I would hope on the Island Plan, the bridging Island Plan talks for inert waste going out to the private sector and looks at granite products as a possible place for inert waste to be received. There is also opportunity as well for Simon Sand. I think, for Government, if we were going to run that site in the future, it would be whether there is a decision for reclamation at some point in the future. At the moment that is not the appetite. The appetite is for the private sector to take on inert waste. Again we will be working closely with our policy colleagues to decide on where we should be recommending to States Members that goes in the future. The hazardous waste, from what we know, we still think we have another 8 years of storage of hazardous waste at La Collette. But again I think for the next Island Plan we need to be flag-posting a long-term solution for how the Island is going to deal with its hazardous waste moving forward once La Collette is full.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

We understand also that you will be assessing delivery of the bridging Island Plan liquid waste strategy 2023 to 2026 to support the delivery of the new housing projects across the Island to ensure longer-term environmental resilience. Can you elaborate further what that will involve?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

So you may recall perhaps when you were the Minister we did a liquid waste strategy that went to the States in 2013 and 2014, which looked at what our long-term requirements were for liquid waste. The main focus obviously has been on replacing the sewerage treatment works. As part of that we did modelling on the drainage network, so trying to understand all the flows into the network to look at what future investment is required. It is fair to say that a lot of our drainage network is at capacity. So, as operators, we are trying to do as much as we can of getting surface water out of the network to try to increase capacity. But there is still a major number of pinch-points and I think for future investment to be able to create capacity on the network we have to invest in future enhancement on that network. That is effectively maybe creating more storage areas so we can manage the flows through to the sewerage treatment works better perhaps in the future.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Is that communicated to planning so that decisions are based on that knowledge, if you like? There is no point in building a load of houses if you cannot get the drainage through.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Yes, so again when planning and pulling together the work for the bridging Island Plan, we do comment on all those sites, appreciating that not all those sites get approved within the States, so we certainly explain to the planning officers the impact on the network and the investment that is required for those developments effectively to go ahead if they are going to connect to the main drainage network moving forward.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So going back to the overarching waste strategy for the Island, is there an expected timescale for delivery of this new strategy?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Not at this stage. I know within the Government Plan it is indicated that we are going to be looking at perhaps solid waste charging at the latter part of the Government Plan. Again, we still have not yet agreed a date and that is a discussion that we are going to have with the Minister to look at how we could develop the solid waste strategy because it is overdue and it is something that we need to be taking forward and progressing. But there is no date at the moment.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So, if solid waste is being put out to private enterprise, you are thinking it might have to be self-financing I take it?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

There are lots of questions. I think if it goes out to private sector there are always questions whether the Government, and I know it has been talked about before, whether there should be a land tax or something like that for dealing with that inert type material. For us on solid waste charging the amount of waste that we receive at the inert waste, we know that waste charging is a barrier for getting people to recycle and do more as well as commercial organisations. We spoke before about it does not cost anybody to do a strip out of a hotel or do anything and we have to receive all of that waste for free. I certainly believe that charging will help on the recycling side and reducing the amount of waste that we receive at the R.F. (recycling facility) that may give us options for how we deal with that better in the future.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Certainly an area for further discussion. Thank you very much.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Just a couple of questions, Minister, if I may. Your chief officer has highlighted there that we are looking to the private sector to deal with our inert waste. Are you comfortable with the private sector doing that inasmuch as we have seen in the last 24 hours in an education sphere, private companies can stop operating overnight and there is huge consequences from that. Do you think that allowing the private sector to deal with inert waste is something that you are comfortable with?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am not entirely comfortable with it. The chances of the private sector suddenly stopping once they have started are unlikely because it is quite a big revenue earner for the people involved. It does not require an awful lot of cost and it will certainly be a profitable exercise I would think. One of my concerns is the loss of revenue for us because we do get a reasonable amount of revenue from that. That is a revenue stream that stops. So we did, for the first time we managed to get a tour of the whole site last week, which was quite interesting. That was my first opportunity to look at it all. I had had various conversations with Alan Langlois about it. But it strikes me, if we could get the industry to have a better uptake of the recycling that goes on, and it is quite a fascinating process, they can basically take inert waste and recycle it into pretty much all usable products. Then that extends the life of what we are doing. So there are some barriers to that and, as I understand it, it requires further accreditation for the products that are being made, but, if we can, we would look to encourage any Government projects to maximise the use of the recycled products. So that does to an extent extend it. If we do go out to the private sector then I think there would have to be a joint operation between Government and the private sector to ensure that whatever is done is done in the correct way. Otherwise, particularly if you are looking at the Simon option in St. Ouen, that is a delicate piece of work. It is not to say that we will not go there, but if we do we have to be very cautious about how we set about it.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Yes, and can I thank you on behalf of the panel for allowing us to come with you last week for that tour? It was very enlightening and I thought we all found it very interesting. Certainly one of the things that comes back from it is that it would appear to me, and I am sure to others, maybe to yourself, that, whether you are talking about liquids, solid, inert, polluted and contaminated waste, you seem to be ... “stretched” probably does not get anywhere near it, you are under a lot of pressure in all those departments. We have heard from Ellen, she used the word: “We are at capacity in places with liquid waste”, and talked about pinch-points. Can I ask, where are those pinch-points at the moment? Are there areas of the Island where we should be saying we cannot build anything more here until we do more with the sewerage network?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

So there are a number of challenges. I think we have got everything done on the sewerage treatment work. It is now upgrading the drainage network, so Les Quennevais and St. Brelade, we have pinch-points, Beaumont, La Hoque, Five Oaks into the St. Saviour area. So there are all those areas where the network pretty much is at capacity. There are options and we can get around that, but it is almost like building big attenuation tanks, like small scale almost of what we have at the Cavern where we can hold that water and then feed it through to the sewerage treatment works at the right time.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

In very, very general terms, do you have time to do that before the system becomes completely overloaded?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

We do if we can get the money and the resources to be able to support us in making that happen.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

So, Minister, question: money and resources to make that happen, can you achieve that in short order?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is my opinion that going forward the budget for I.H.E. in lots of areas is going to have to be increased. We have the drainage network and we have the property issue, so both of those areas are going to need more money from the States. From my point of view it was difficult to argue for much bigger sums of money being so new to the job. So what we did is we said, "Look, that is where we are at the moment, but do not be surprised if successively we do have to come back at various points in time when it becomes apparent that we do need more funding."

Deputy S.G. Luce:

But, Minister, we cannot have drains failing, so you must come and convince the Council of Ministers that you need money in time to do a project so that the drains do not fill up.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

As soon as we have had a little bit more time to work out exactly where we need to be and exactly how much more we need, then we will be doing that at the earliest possible opportunity. But I have flagged it up to Treasury as something that is very likely to take place sooner rather than later. So what we are not going to do is allow everything to fall apart. We can only move so far at any given time.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

We spoke just now, and you mentioned your concern about the loss of income with private sector taking over jobs that you do currently. We just move on to a section now about Government Plan if we might. Deputy Ward has some questions on income to start off with.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes. Your department income has increased to £55,505,000 from £48,658,000 in 2022. We also note your income, your approved budget that was previously, sorry, and your income is projected to increase to £31,177,000 from £28,734,000. I think you may have just answered this question but how satisfied are you with the proposed I.H.E. budget, the Infrastructure, Housing, and Environment Department for those people listening, as well as any infrastructure-related S.P.P.P. (Strategic Policy, Performance and Population) Cabinet Office budget proposed in the Government Plan?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

How comfortable am I?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

How satisfied, I suppose the word is.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Satisfied. Well, as I alluded to before, satisfied insofar as it goes at this point in time. At 18 weeks in, I have lots of specific work to do in specific areas with the team, but I did flag up at a fairly early stage that in order to get on with the job we would sign off where we were but there had to be an expectation that once we know exactly what is required in each department we may have to go back at given points.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

The £31 million, I was quite surprised by the income that you have, can you give an overview of where the main income is that you receive there?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am going to hand over to Tim because I do not have a ...

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I think I might be able to help here. So when we are looking at the £31 million that is not just the income for the Minister for Infrastructure but that includes the Minister for the Environment's income, as we are looking at it here. £5 million of that income relates to sports income, so that is to do with the active membership, and also probably rental of some of the sports facilities that we are receiving

there. Within ops and transport, our most significant income probably is within solid waste, so it is the income that we receive on our waste sites, so inert waste income, hazardous waste income, and such like, as well as for the charges that we do for green waste. So there are a number of significant waste charges that sit within there.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Do you have a figure for that?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Off the top of my head, I think it is around £5 million, but I can come back to you and just confirm if that is okay.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

That is an area for further examination and analysis I would imagine based on what you were saying there.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, I mean that leads me to a question in terms of, if you have a decent income from those areas, why privatise them, because they are good earners for Government?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

If I can handle the inert waste, it is simply because we do not have the facility. Unless we can encourage people to take more of the recycled product, we are just going to run clean out of space, so that would be the answer to that one.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

If a private company can create a facility and still make money, surely we could as well, it would be easier.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is infill, quarry infill, and the big pond, infill for the sandpit. So Government does not have those sort of properties available to it. We could look at compulsory purchase but that is not normally the route that Government tends to go down. So that is the reason for that essentially.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Could I just ask a question, sorry to butt in, Deputy, so Infrastructure, Housing, and Environment, £31 million, where is that figure broken down into the various departments then?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I am just looking at the page within the annexe where there is a service level analysis and it is page 16 of the annexe.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I do not have the annexe with me.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Then again it is split down between the different areas. I know that the Treasury and Exchequer Team are looking at working at pulling that together, so there is a separate budget almost for the Minister for Infrastructure and for the Minister for the Environment. But that has not been done for this Government Plan.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

So we have a Government Plan where £31 million is given to 3 different departments but it is not yet broken down into who gets what.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

It is broken down but there are some corporate costs that are shared between the 2, but that has not been split between the Infrastructure Department and the Environment. What we are looking at here, the £31 million, is the breakdown of income. What it does provide you through the annexe is a breakdown between sport, environment, regulation, property, and ops and transport and the office of the D.G. (director general). Effectively the office of the D.G. is almost a shared cost between Environment and Infrastructure.

[10:45]

Deputy S.G. Luce:

But I am sure we are right in thinking that monies that come in from green, inert, contaminated, are hypothecated into your infrastructure?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Yes, they will be under operations and transport.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

So that falls straight back into your own budget.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I will move on this idea of funding pressures on the services under your remit. Are they being addressed in the proposed Government Plan where your main areas of pressure are in terms of what you deliver? Is the Government Plan budget sufficient for you to say: "Next year we can deliver these?" Or are there areas where you have serious concerns that you might need more money?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not want to speak for the team, but I think we are able to get through next year. It all depends the extent to which we identify crisis points that needs to be addressed more readily. So I go back to the comment that I made, at a very early stage it became apparent to me that it has been running on a survival budget, I.H.E., and that may have to change. What the timescale is I am not entirely sure. This is the work that is going on at the moment to identify what we might need and when. So, in essence, yes, we can get through the next 12 months. But if we really want to be ahead of the game there is a chance that we may come back, depending on what we identify and when. I know that sounds a little bit makeshift but, change of Government, that is where we are. You can only get your head around so much in any given time, but we are working on it and each time we meet we will have more information.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

But you have published your Ministerial priorities, so will you say that the funding is adequate for you to address those Ministerial priorities?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

From the discussions I have had with the entire team, yes, we can get through the planned standard works that are on schedule for that period of time. I will make the point again that if we identify pinch-points that can be addressed sooner and that facilitate housing developments and so on, and some of that has to be brought forward, then there is a chance that we might have to readdress it.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

It appears, Minister, that your Government is going to run surpluses for the 3 or 4 years that it is here. Does that give you some comfort then that you would be able to dip into those surpluses should you need that cash to do something really fundamental and vital for the Island?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Hopefully, and the fact that we flagged it up early, yes, hopefully we would be at the front of the queue to ...

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Do you think it is right to run surpluses when there is so much essential infrastructure work that needs doing?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

This is all new territory for me. I think I would rather run a surplus than a deficit. But there may be instances where that surplus gets utilised.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We are aware that you have significant staffing challenges in a number of key areas of the department. How do you see that impacting on the delivery of the various programmes in your Ministerial priorities?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is a fair question and I am better placed to ask the people who are dealing with it at the coalface to comment on that.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

So for the property world, we are working hard to recruit the required number of personnel. It is difficult and one of the things that we need to do better is retention. The other thing that we need to be aware of is that we are an ageing workforce and some of the challenges we face are people getting to the end of their careers and leaving and then it is difficult to backfill the knowledge and the expertise as much as it is the bodies. We have somewhere in the region of a 17 per cent shortfall in personnel at the moment. What it means is that we focus very much on reactive and that we are able to keep the premises, the properties, safe and available for use and operation. What it means we are not doing at the moment is the long-term strategic view, getting an understanding of works that we could do now that would prevent reactive maintenance in a few years. So at the moment our horizon is very close to our face, but we are continuing to try to recruit to push our opportunities further forward so that we can have a more strategic response.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So I think we understand the problems with recruitment and retention, but the question really is about are there any particular programmes that you see that might be at risk because of that lack of recruitment? Are there any areas from ...

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Certainly in property there is nothing specific other than, as I say, it means that our horizons are brought forward, which is inefficient. Properties have lives of 40 to 50 years and we are operating in maybe a one-year or 2-year timeframe.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Minister, for yourself, once we have moved on from you being new to it, are you going to come back and say: "It did not get done because we did not have the staff", is that a risk?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is a risk, I would be lying if I said otherwise, and there are shortfalls in the staffing at all levels. With recruitment you can just use your best endeavours. As I say, you make comments about the budget, it may well be that budget is completely sufficient for the next 12 months because we simply do not have the human resources to do the forward-looking stuff that we would like to do to be ahead of the game. So there are a number of issues and we cannot shy away from them. I think that is probably the same in a number of areas of Government and in the private sector.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

One of the things in the Government Plan is it states that: "The Council of Ministers take sustainable well-being into account through the development of a Common Strategic Policy." First of all, can I ask you what sustainable well-being means in terms of your department and how are you taking that into account?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Is that in relation to staff presumably?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Well that is a good question. That is why I am asking you.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I would assume that it is in relation to staff and that really means that we are not putting the personnel under too much pressure, so making sure that you focus on recruitment because there a lot of people, I have to say, under a lot of pressure and that has been very evident to me since I arrived. So recruitment, you flag it up as a serious problem and it is a serious problem.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

So that is part of the retention project, is it, this sustainable well-being, but we have a sort of catch-22 situation because you cannot have sustainable well-being when they are under pressure but they are under pressure because you cannot retain and attract staff. So is that not an empty statement

to some extent? I am just trying to get something tangible as to what that looks like. It is a really difficult phrase, to be honest.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Sustainable well-being, I think the best that one can do is try to make everybody in the team feel comfortable. It is amazing how much people can do comfortably under pressure if they are comfortable about the working environment. So there is a lot that reads into what you are saying and I accept it is a problem.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

How is it measured?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Minister, can I just add something there? So, within the department, we are developing a strategic workforce plan. As part of that, some of the workstreams are looking at well-being and we have just recruited a well-being officer. So we see that as really important within the organisation. We are doing a lot of S.t.R.a.W. (Sustaining Resilience at Work) practitioner training for mental health and we are also trying to do a lot of things to try to support our staff. There are a lot of sporting events, but it is not just that, it is about trying to get together and understand those issues better. Because I think people are under a lot of pressure. The workload is significant and we have to try to do more to be able to support our colleagues. Because we do not want people falling over. It is not just about attracting new people into the organisation, it is retaining those staff that we have, and that is a real big challenge for us and something that we are looking at as part of the work ...

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

If I may, as well, we are working hard to make sure that we can be as flexible as possible, so the days of 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. clock on/clock off are very much a thing of the past where possible. If people have got appointments, site visits, we are very happy in the property world that they can go from home to site, they can work from home, they have flexibility. We are working hard on flexible working practices and it boils down to trust in the workforce, and I think that we are trying hard to show that trust. I think it is a changing culture that is taking ground and it is having effect.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can I just chip in on that one? I know there was always an issue, and I suspect there still is, whereby when manual workers get to a certain age, without being specific, their ability to do the job diminishes. Are you in a position to relocate them within the organisation so that you can still retain them?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I think we have done that for a long period of time. In some ways that has become more challenging since we did that big piece of work in 2016 and contracted a lot of those services out. But where we can and where we have individuals we will make every effort to be able to redeploy them into work that is maybe more suitable for them. That obviously still goes on. I also think sometimes, and I do not want to get into too many of issues with the manual workers black book, it is very rigid and very fixed about the hours that individuals start and work. That often as well puts a lot of people off working for the organisation, especially people who are looking after children, ladies, all those other kind of things. We have a very male-dominated workforce and it is about again we need to do a lot of work within that space and look at how we can make that more flexible, more accommodating, for manual workers.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Could I just ask how you monitor output once you move to a more flexible system? I appreciate that is where we need to go. But it does seem to me that it is increasingly difficult to measure the K.P.I.s (key performance indicators) or where you expect it to be if your staff are not working from the office or from where they would normally be expected to work from.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I think you have got to do a lot more of that kind of one-to-one engagement. So you are working with the colleagues to show: "This is the expectation", looking at what and how you manage that piece of work. If you are seeing some staff are going to be knocking that ball out of the park and that is great. It is where those staff are struggling, and I think if you have the management right then you will pick up on that and you will make changes to that and deal with it.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I have finished that area. I think, Deputy Le Hegarat, you are going to carry on?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Correct, change of subject now. Moving to the Jersey Car Parking Trading Fund, we recall from last year's Government Plan that there was a reduction in income following the pandemic and lockdown measures in the early part of 2020. What impact has this reduction had on the fund and its ability to fund any required maintenance and refurbishment of parking facilities and is the fund back on track to deliver it?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Once again, I have to hold my hands up and I am better to hand over to Ellen.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

So what we are now seeing with car parks is that people's practices are almost going back to where they were pre-COVID. So our car parks are becoming full again and we are generating the income from that. So although we had a reduction while we were having COVID over the last couple of years, we are now finding that we are almost back up to full capacity within our car parks and we are generating that income. At the moment, we are doing a piece of work where we are reviewing monies that we have currently sitting within the trading fund and then looking at what our long-term capital programme is and what we have to invest from that trading fund on the existing carparking estate. In the past, some of that money, also as well from the trading fund, it funds some of the sustainable transport work that the department does within ops and transport, and has funded or contributed towards some of the light public realm projects. So if we were ever going to do enhancement work around Sand Street, we did have money allocated in that. So at the moment we think we have enough money within the trading fund to be able to manage the existing estate but we just want to again review that. The work that the policy team are doing with those rapid studies in the car parks again is going to feed into what that plan should be for the future.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Has the work programme for modernisation started back up in 2022?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

It has not. At the moment we have been mainly doing the mandatory maintenance that we have to do on those car parks, not the modernisation on those at this stage.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Can I ask what the plan was for modernisation? If I recall correctly, many years ago we were talking about replacing Linden Place. Is that still an option?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

That could be an option. Again that will form part of the bigger piece of work of looking at what is going to be happening within the St. Helier strategy moving forward. At the moment we do not have plans to replace Linden from the carpark side.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Do you have any plans to build new multistorey carparks?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I would just make the point here that we established a group called Future Places and as recently as the end of last week carparking came up and we are going to set about devising a carparking

strategy, so that is a piece of work that is in its very initial stages, which is going to involve looking at the state of the ones that we have and possibly looking at alternative arrangements for parking in all sorts of areas.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

That feeds into the work again that the policy team are doing when they are working on the Jersey transport preferred strategy, they are doing a big piece of work as well on the parking, which will help feed that and inform the Future Places group.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

We will come to that in a minute.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Estimates provided for trading income for the Jersey Car Parking Trading Fund show a steady increase between 2023 and 2026. What is driving this projected increase?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I think it is just going up by the R.P.I.Y. (retail price index excluding mortgage interest and indirect taxes), which is like an inflationary increase. There is nothing there at the moment looking at increasing the price for carparking. Again, I would see that coming as part of the strategy piece of work and there will be a debate on that.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Currently as an incentive, newly registered electric vehicles get free parking in all States of Jersey car parks for 12 months from the vehicle's initial registration and half price thereafter. This policy incentive is set to end 31st December 2022.

[11:00]

Are there plans to extend the policy into 2023?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I believe that they are, yes.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

We are now 16th November, so when will that sort of come to fruition?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I would see that would come in as part of the pricing and charging of the work we are doing on the car park strategy. Again, that will be published, I think, January time next year and then will be up for discussion. Until any changes that will continue.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can I just come in on that one? In terms of incentivising either electric or low-emission vehicle usage, is there still an incentive for low-hydrocarbon emission vehicles or is that gone now?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

That is not within my remit but I do not think that is available on that side. But it may be something that will be coming in in the future to try and get people to obviously make that switch.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, those possibilities are under discussion as to how and what we would propose in order to try and get people to convert from one to the other.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Then just one last one, probably it might be as a Future Places discussion but it always strikes me that we have ignored the north of town in terms of car parking provision. If you ever try to park there you do not ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, that is one of the things that has been highlighted and it is one of the things that gave rise to us bringing that forward to have a focused piece of work done on car parking because as much as people might convert from petrol and diesel to electric, you are still going to have to accommodate the car. The work we are doing on public realm is also seeking to take the kerbside parking away and try and find places for that to make life more agreeable for people who live in town. It is all part and parcel of that piece of work; it is just in its infancy.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

The final question from me, Minister: can you update us with what plans are in place to electrify the Government of Jersey's vehicle fleet and whether the increased cost of this is currently factored into the costs in expenditure of the Jersey Fleet Management Fund?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

To the best of my knowledge there is an ongoing piece of work to convert but if you can once again provide the detail, I am not too ...

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Yes. This year we set up a project team to look at how we decarbonise G.o.J. (Government of Jersey) fleet, which has been really successful. Most diesel vehicles are now using S.G.R.D. (second generation renewable diesel), so we have made that initial switch. We are starting to do the review analysis of all the other Government's fleet because I think we need to do a policy. Certainly within I.H.E. we have moved from all diesel and petrol-leased vehicles to electric. But what we need to do is be able to set those policies across the organisation looking at how we can reduce vehicle use and then looking at using the best measure or decarbonising measure and moving forward. As I said, I think we saved something like 300 tonnes of carbon savings this year just with the switch over with S.G.R.D. Now we are going to be starting to look at doing a review of the grey fleet, lease fleet and everything else across Government to start getting those policies and collecting better data as well.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Do you have a target date?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I think this is going to be ongoing over the next couple of years. Again, we are requesting monies from the Climate Emergency Fund and they have agreed to fund the ... will be putting in a request to fund S.G.R.D. next year and the rest of the piece of work. It is a big policy piece, it is getting into those departments that use a lot of vehicles that are held from site, understanding what and how they use those vehicles and then coming up with a better decarb option, I think, moving forward. I certainly know and I will be critical of my own team, to make savings on electric vehicle you should be using it for something like over 30,000 miles. How do we optimise those vehicles? I think if you look on an average for a Government of Jersey vehicle, they use something like 2,500 miles and a lot of the time you do not need those vehicles. There are also other options of using buses and cycling and all those other things and I think we have got to be able to bring together a whole package of measures to get people to do that switch.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Finally, what impact, if any, would electrifying the fleet have on the Jersey Fleet Management Fund?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

It would be significant but the Jersey Fleet Management Fund recharges its cost to the government department. It is a government department, so there you have got to understand that cost and whether they can absorb that or need to request additional money moving forward. What the Fleet Management Fund may help as well because, as much as you may wish people to do the switch to electric vehicles, you have also got to be able to provide the infrastructure for them. The work that

Tim and the team are doing, we are looking at one modernisation project. We have got to be looking by reducing the number of buildings down to one. What in the future for people who are going to be working from the Cyril Le Marquand site? Where are they going to be having their vehicles? Where are they going to be charging up? What is the infrastructure that they are going to need? For us within Ops and Transport, we are probably the biggest user of medium/heavy goods and a lot of plant equipment. Again, there is not always an electric option but when that comes on the market we jump at it but, again, probably things like S.G.R.D.s is probably the best that we can do and, again, look at limiting what we are currently using.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

May I just ask what S.G.R.D. is?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

It is like renewable diesel.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What does the "S" bit stand for?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Second generation.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Second generation renewable diesel, sorry.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you, that is helpful.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Effectively, by moving all to one location, do you perceive that as a potential to reduce the quantity of vehicles, bearing in mind that there would be a better system and one vehicle would be used more in a more proficient way.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Yes, I would hope so. I think there also opportunities, E.V. (electric vehicle) and other companies have done some fantastic work, so looking at a lot of States officers need the work vehicles during the day. How, again, can we maximise those vehicles in the evening, at the weekends maybe? I think there are opportunities there as well which ...

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Am I right in thinking there is no parking provision in the new Cyril Le Marquand House?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

There is very limited parking provision, which will be for disabled personnel and disabled access but there is no staff parking on site. But there are, I think - and I may get this number wrong - somewhere in the region of 250 bike racks, provision for showers and changing facilities on site. There is a lot of thought gone into sustainability and sustainable transport.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

What about the civil servants who need to go out from the building to meet the public or to take their job?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

I think that is what Ellen was referring to, that we will need to find a way of having pockets, if you like, of pooled cars around town. If they are electric they need to be charged. Maybe we would have Maritime House or La Collette as sort of locations where if you needed to go you would go there, pick up your car, go and do business, come back but ...

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Are you happy that that is a good ... this is a question for the Minister. Are you happy, Minister, you have got staff walking from Cyril Le Marquand House to La Collette to pick up a car to go and do a job?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am not happy about that at all, as you can imagine, but it is too late to turn the clock back. Essentially, if we can provide other parking provision there is a chance that we could take some of the cars off the ordinary parking places. In the park opposite there is a whole line of parking there and that could be given over to government vehicles so that you would not have this business of people having to walk to get vehicles. Because it makes sense if you are going to have ... how many people working out of that building?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

It has capacity for 2,000.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Consolidated in one place, if you have got a small fleet of shared vehicles that can come and go, then it makes sense to have some parking immediately outside. I am just thinking off the top of my head as to how one might facilitate that.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Before we get on to sustainable transport I am going to ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just a quick question, you mentioned the second generation renewable diesel; is there a bit of a conflict with the Environment Department who seem to have a view that there is a problem with the biodiesel in terms of its fluctuation in price, which is why it is not worth subsidising it? But you seem to be going down the line of using it in all States vehicles, which I would agree with, but is there a bit of conflict there in terms of that not being supported in a wider remit within the Island itself? Because if we import more surely the price would come down and that is also a way for current vehicles, which are polluting, to be much less polluting, both in terms of their emissions and the particulates that are happening in the centre of town. Would you support, Minister, that subsidy of second generation biofuels, as opposed to ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, the fuel market and the taxation of fuel, it is a complicated one and we are having various discussions at the moment to see how that might be brought forward. Yes, there are discussions happening about that now, so we have not got a sort of fixed position on that but I would be inclined to run with what your line is on.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Before we move to sustainable road, can I just talk very briefly to the Climate Emergency Fund? You said it was funding the second generation road diesel for your fleet.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Yes.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Is that what it is intended for?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Any of those kind of improvements, I think a lot of the government funding was meant to be funded internally within the departments but there is an opportunity because of the cost of the diesel and the support that that can be funded from about next year, which again receives massive benefits. I

think it reduces G.o.J.'s carbon output by 3 per cent, which is fantastic. Just picking up on Deputy Ward's question, we have done a lot of work on the procurement of that diesel and, again, with all the different providers looking at how we can get some kind of framework in so we do maximise and get the best price. I work really closely with our commercial and Exchequer colleagues, as well as the team that manage the Climate Emergency Fund.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is that spend on the difference between fossil fuel diesel and the biodiesel? It is not paying for the whole lot, it is just that differential, yes.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

No, it is just the difference, yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is what I thought it was, yes.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Okay, well I will come back to that. My understanding of the Climate Emergency Fund was not that it was going to be used by government departments but looking at the wording here on the government website maybe it could be. Right, okay, we will move on.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

The sustainable transport road map, Minister, in your letter to the panel on 1st September you mentioned that your intention was to prioritise the sustainable transport road map by mid-2023. Can you clarify whether this means prioritising the workstream by mid-2023 or delivering the road map to the States Assembly by mid-2023?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I would say it is probably the latter.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, that is great. You mentioned that an assessment of electrical vehicle infrastructure would be carried out in 2023, can ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Sorry, just ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Sorry, I am going too fast to try and get through the questions.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

You are reading a little bit quickly, yes, sorry.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

You mentioned that in your Ministerial plan that an assessment on electrical vehicle infrastructure, as we have mentioned before, will be carried out in 2023. Can you elaborate on what that will entail and if you have a specific target date that you are working towards in terms of that infrastructure?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have not got a specific target date because, if I am honest, I think we are quite under-resourced in terms of this whole area of work. I think we have got one person sort of trying to do policy and implementation say. It is my intention - once I get my head around it a little bit more than I am at the moment - to try and step that up because I just think resourced as we are we are not going to make the sort of progress we need in the timeframes that people are expecting. I just think what we have got is unrealistic.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, it is interesting because Jersey Electric in their submission commented that Jersey is already lagging behind the U.K. (United Kingdom) and other jurisdictions developing electrical vehicle transport market. What are your views on that and ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is probably quite correct. Yes, I would not have any reason to question that. I do not think that is really acceptable. But once again recruitment comes into this to find people that have got the specialist knowledge that is required. But it is something that we are aware of and something that we are looking to put straight. Because I would be lying if I said that we had all the resources, we have not, but we are not moving quickly enough and we need further resources, yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can I just come in on that one?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, of course.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Clearly, between your departments and the J.E.C. (Jersey Electricity Company) is a bit of a chicken and egg situation because the J.E.C. have to put in the infrastructure, obviously in your rotary often, as well as Parish roads. There does not seem to be a lot of forward thinking in terms coming from the J.E.C., apart from commercial requests and if commercial operation requests increased supply resilience, shall we say, then they will respond but there does not seem to be much pressure, apart from that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Probably correct at this stage. What we are doing as a Government is liaising far more closely with the J.E.C. We have 2 meetings with them already and the intention is to draw them in a lot closer to what our intentions are, so we can marry up what they are doing. I think they would probably find that quite unusual but when they are setting up ... we have got regular engagement with them through the team but politically we are meeting up with them far more frequently and where we have told them that that is our intention, so that we can look at what we are doing and look at what we are expecting and then we can get those 2 things married up. It is in principle at the moment but we have had 2 very constructive meetings so far.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

It is encouraging to hear you say we can look at what we are expecting, Minister. Do you very much see this relationship between Government and Jersey Electricity as a relationship where you would indicate to the company what you would expect them to do and if they do not you would pull them up?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, from what I can glean that the relationship has probably been a little bit too distant. While I understand they are an arm's length organisation for a reason, I just think it is important that they are very, very tied into what Government is wanting to do and that they respond accordingly. I think there is an appetite for them to do that. From their part, I think there is a reasonable appetite for understanding the change in the relationship and responding accordingly. I am fairly comfortable with it.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Indeed an opportunity.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is, yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

The other thing is about our new forms of fuels and fuel sources, such as biodiesel or things like hydrogen, for example. Are there any plans to examine what infrastructure is in place across the Island to support those new types of fuels, which I think inevitably we need it as some sort of transition stage towards whatever we end up with?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes. Once again very early stages but we had a very interesting meeting with A.T.F. (automatic transmission fluid) Fuels who spoke about hydrogen.

[11:15]

It did strike me as in reality that is still quite some way off. It is also relatively confusing for me but they are thinking ahead of the game. All of those things are on their agenda and there are some considerations about the operation, it is very much in its infancy about the operation of a fuel farm, so that we can make the whole situation more competitive and have provision for more environmentally-friendly fuels.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think that is the point, it may be some way off but it would be quicker if the infrastructure is in place and is going to take some sort of foresight from Government, say, and we will not go down that line now. Do you think a review of where we are and where we could be is something that could be very useful into the future?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I agree entirely, yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Because inevitably we are going to be using fossil fuels in the next 20 years, I mean that is simply ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes. As I say, these are early days and we are having our initial meetings with people but the meeting with A.T.F. was extremely positive and there are a few ideas that are being considered as a result of that meeting, which was only end of last week.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We have had a submission from them and you have already mentioned it, so that we have to ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, interesting stuff. Some of it is a little bit distant but I think we have got to be thinking sort of medium and long term.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Talking of transport, Minister, what is your view on autonomous vehicles? I know we are going off track here but we are talking about different ways of transporting people and how we can save carbon and all this sort of stuff. My understanding always was that we have fantastic technology and connectivity in Jersey that would allow us to trial autonomous vehicles but it does not seem to have happened. Is that something that you would encourage?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

On a personal level, yes, I would be very keen if that is doable. On an island where the average speed is 16 miles or 17 miles an hour it makes perfect sense to me. I think the intention over the next 4 years is to be as far ahead of the game as we possibly can. We have got ...

Deputy S.G. Luce:

But you would accept moving to things like hydrogen, for example, it would be very difficult to be anything other than fast follower. We could not lead surely on hydrogen.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, you cannot. No, with 100,000 you cannot lead anything but what you can do is follow best practice and when something comes on to the market that seems to be ahead of the game you can look at it and try and introduce it as quickly as you can.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Is that not a notion of a sandbox? Jersey is a really good-sized population for those trials; do not give up on it yet.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is, yes, absolutely and if we can attract people to come over here and excite them because these people have not got enough to do, you understand.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Okay, let us move on. Buses.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I was going to ask this quickly. But before the buses, as you went off-piste a little now I will do as well.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Yes, I did, sorry about that.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I want to touch on E.V. in a moment but ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Have you had any input into the e-bike scheme that is being developed?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Sorry?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Any input into the e-bike scheme that is being developed?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

But you talk about E.V. as in ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

No, the electric bike subsidy scheme that is being developed almost ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Subsidy scheme, I had my first meeting on that because I was not even aware of it until 2 days ago. So I had my first meeting on that yesterday and I put a few ideas into the pot to try and make that a little bit more coherent. For example, some of the subsidy stuff I think for anybody that needs an adapted machine for disability perhaps, because I do not think that should be either a lottery or limited, I think that should be open all the time to a subsidy and possibly high levels ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

There is no information on that e-bike scheme in the public domain yet.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, it is very early days. As I said, I had my first briefing on it yesterday. We have come up with some ideas to try and make it a little bit more user-friendly and roll it out rather more quickly. I think the idea was to roll it out over 2 years and have a limited amount and I said: "Why do we want to get

involved for 2 years and all the administration that takes? We can press it into one year and it gets more electric bikes out on the street more quickly, hopefully.” Yes, we are doing everything we can to shape this to maximise the amount of people that will convert from cars to bikes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just to say that no information has come to us or States Members either. I was just ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, I will also say, and perhaps I am not close enough to things, but I only found out about it looking through some emails the evening before.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Surprise me.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I got hauled into the meeting the next day. It is at a very early stage.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Yes, I might go off-piste again but on the tune of electric bikes, Minister, we have a lot of people cycling to St. Helier every morning along the seafront and St. Aubin’s Bay and they get to the bottom of Gloucester Street and are faced with 6 or 7 lanes of cars to get across. Previous Ministers have always indicated there was a scheme in place to make that very much more user-friendly for pedestrians and cyclists. Can I ask you ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

If there is I have not seen it. It has been identified as a ...

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Okay, maybe I could ask one of your officers.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Are we still in a position to do that because that is really important? We have this fantastic network of cycle paths that comes all the way from Corbière to Gloucester Street and then it comes up against a big wall of vehicles crossing in front.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is a real problem.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Yes.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

What we have got is in the public realm, so within the infrastructure rolling boat there is £2 million that is set aside for public realm. One of the projects that we are really keen to bring forward is the western bus gate, which, again, will improve the buses and the time for the buses to get out and to go west. But also looking at how a safer access across there for those people that are cycling and pedestrians to get across, as opposed to doing the race.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Can I encourage you, Minister, that scheme has always sounded like a win/win to me? If you can get buses to move faster you will get more people on buses. If you can get cyclists and pedestrians to move into town quicker they are more likely to do it.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Yes.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No mean feat but, as you say, it is an urgent one because since I have taken this role I have got my bike out a lot more because I thought it might be all right and it is lethal.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

An eastern bus route would be good.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

You are right. The nightmare for me is the Five Oaks area where all the schools are and you take your life into your own hands if you want to come from Maufant or anywhere like that. There is another piece of work that we are ...

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

East does not have a bus route.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, it is not good, so ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

There was some really good work done with a Dutch Cycling Embassy or academy or whatever it is called a few months ago and we looked at some of the maps into town and there are alternatives, so we would be very pleased to talk to you about that at some point.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Great and I would be more than happy because it is something that really needs to be worked on very quickly. Because the people in the west have got a brilliant run in all the way through until you get to that pinch-point but from the east you are really scuppered. If you could get the same number of people from the east cycling as you have got from the west you are going to take a lot of cars out.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think there are some ways but anyway ...

Deputy S.G. Luce:

One way to get people out of cars, Minister, is to provide a good, cheap and very regular bus service, so that is where Deputy Ward is going to question you about.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Before we go off on the other side of things, it is just to say, because I think it is nice to keep you informed of the intentions, and we are doing quite a lot of work with E.V. They want to bring in 100 of these Citroen Amis, these tiny, little electric cars, so that you can do A to B. You can take a car and drop it off, and you need 100 to start that process. We are working with them with either joint funding or possibly even the possibility of buying into it and making it once again a small arm's length organisation, so that we could fit E.V. cars and E.V. bikes into every development that we do and work with the Parishes so that we have got a network of cars of this sort. I think people's cars get used 2 per cent or 3 per cent of the time. We have got 100,000 cars here and if we can get people to alter their habits so that they use a car, they drop it off and someone else picks it up. Those cars are in use not quite 24/7 but even if you get 7 or 8 hours use out of a vehicle in a day. We are looking at a possible investment into that so that we can fit it into the whole infrastructure. Really it is a completely new way of travelling.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I could not agree more, certainly those new Citroens are considerably cheaper.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are not holding anything back from you. You know where we are. Those discussions have not been completed by any stretch but they are underway and there seems to be a good deal of enthusiasm for supporting ...

Deputy S.G. Luce:

It is a question of making best use of your resources and you are right, it is a bit like a carparking space. Is it not ridiculous that a carparking space may be occupied during the day in St. Helier but stays empty at night when we have got other places and of course that goes for vehicles as well as the spaces?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is a major change to the way we all move around but ...

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Okay, let us get on to buses because that is quite important. New owner of our bus operator and Deputy Ward has got some questions.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, again in the letter on 1st September you stated a new bus operator's contract will, I quote: "Reflect the findings and recommendations of the emerging bus service development plan and this plan will be published before the end of this year." Can you update on how work is progressing and are you still on target to publish that before the end of the year? Sorry, I looked immediately across at you and I should not have done that.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, fine, in terms of the detail of that, what I will say about the bus contract, because we had a very comprehensive presentation from the new owners. What is apparent from that is that they were a long way ahead of the game in terms of electrification and delivering good public services. I am very ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

See, what you have done there is move from the bus service development plan to the contract and I was going to see how those 2 link.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Right.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

In terms of the bus service development plan, is that going to come to us by the end of the year? As you are probably guessing, I am going towards a chicken and egg situation here with the bus company and the contracts. Which come first, bus service development plan or the contract?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am quite happy to hand over from where we are at the moment.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, so let us talk about this bus service development plan first, yes.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am happy to talk about where we are going but where we are at the moment Ellen will ...

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

The policy team has done all the work on the bus development plan, which will feed into the Jersey transport strategy, which is meant to be released in January. As I understand, they are on track to be able to deliver that. Their findings in that will go into what will be and what we will require from the future bus contract. The existing bus contract, as you are aware, Deputy Ward, ends at the end of March. What we are trying to do now with Kelsian is look at a short extension to that contract before we go out and then do the procurement for the longer-term contract. We know at the moment our fleet is ageing within those buses and we are extending that. Then what we do hope to look at and where we are signposting is to look at the options for electrification as we are replacing this fleet in the future. As you know where the bus depot is, there is probably nowhere else in the world if we are looking at Jersey being a sandbox where you have the J.E.C. company probably 30 metres away from your bus depot, where you could do some really interesting things with charging. Even having early discussions with Kelsian now is for them to start really looking at if the Government want to go down that route, what would be the cost and the options to looking at how we could go about electrifying our buses? I think that is something we are really keen to explore and to bring forward.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can I just chip in? You mentioned March ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I just say one thing though? I did not know when the bus contract was ending. It has always been a bit of a mystery to me, so thanks for saying that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

That is why you mentioned March; is it March 2023 or 2024?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

March 2023, so we are looking at trying to get a short ... we will have to get a short-term extension.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We were discussing that earlier and I was going to ask you, so that is very good to know. In terms of that electrification, and there are opportunities down there, so in terms of J.E.C. and solar-charging and perhaps a wind turbine and so on and so forth, so they become very renewable. Is that something that will be pursued because that could be a massive opportunity for us there to really make a difference?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am very keen. I have to say, and it is all relatively new to me, I was extremely impressed with their presentation and the way they operate. They are not a big corporate, each of their individual operations is very focused on the jurisdiction in which they are working. Yes, I think the possibilities for them are really good.

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Can I just ask a question? Just quickly, who owns the buses, us or them?

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is not us.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

They own them through like a finance leasing but we obviously pay that through our contract with them, so they have the ...

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

The only reason I asked the question was because you said about when they needed to be renewed.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Yes. They have a finance lease and those buses will come to the end of their lives, so they are probably 10-plus years old already now. The real opportunity with a new contract is looking at what kind of vehicle and fleet we would want for the future and ...

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

We do not buy them but we influence what they buy.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Yes, we could do. We could do that as part of the contract.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

My understanding, is it not the case that we have that arrangement in case somebody went bust the buses do not all up sticks and leave, the buses stay in situ?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

Okay, yes.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

As part of the existing contract we have got like a step and ride if we need it.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That was a sort of a fall-back position that I think that was arranged, yes, so you can never be left without a fleet.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Just touching on something the Minister said with Kelsian, and they have done a lot of electrification elsewhere, so it is all that learning about the cost. As much as we know, yes, the upfront cost is more expensive. They have got a lot of history over the length of that, bus vehicle and how you can bring those costs down and such like that. We are having lots of discussions on that so we really understand the whole life cost of the bus. It is not just ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes, particularly with the massive increase in fuel recently it is the time to do it really, is it not?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, and the good news for us is that J.E.C. have hedged our position very well in terms of electric prices, so the sooner we get into it the sooner we start reaping some real advantages because our electric costs are a lot lower than they are in most other places.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just a final thing on this: will you come in to share in the findings of the report and the recommendations with the panel before it is published? It is always useful for Scrutiny and I am pretty sure the chair would be happy with that as well. That is me done on those areas.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I will just pick one last one on the buses. In terms of the changeover will there be any effect on the staff or does that remain the status quo?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

None to my knowledge but you can confirm that.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

From the changeover from HCT to Kelsian I think it went really smoothly. I have not heard of any kind of negative impact. I think they have done a fantastic job, they are working and the team now at Kelsian are working very closely with Kevin Hart and the team there at LibertyBus. They are already looking at the kind of improvements that they are currently making. At the moment it is all going really well.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Can I just ask about them: do they have a presence in the U.K. at the moment, Kelsian?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

They have a presence with Tower, London. They have sold some of those contracts. They have not at the moment but they are trying to get new contracts. They have got contracts in Singapore. They have got obviously lots of big contracts within Australia and other places.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Do they have any networks so that they particularly showcase, which have gone really well, that they use as the examples?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Yes, they have got lots of different types on lots of their contracts, so ...

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Anywhere in particular that the members of the public could just Google where it is within bus transport. I do not know where they operate, do you know?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Yes, mainly from Australia. A lot of it is from Australia, as well as I said the contracts within Singapore. Originally they had something like 1,200 within London but they have just given up that contract after the issues, I think, that were happening with COVID and looking at new streams. I

think they really see Jersey as a great opportunity to showcase what they are going to do. You have got a contractor that is coming in to say: "Look at what these opportunities could be."

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, they are very keen to use Jersey if they can and it is something that they can display to other people as a sort of a showpiece. I think that works well for us.

[11:30]

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Sounds good.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Going on to vehicle testing, it has been suggested there could be a U-turn on the vehicle testing scenario in compliance with the U.N. (United Nations) Vienna Convention. Where are we with that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I am not quite sure. I think the U-turn was *Bailiwick Express*. I do not think we are looking at a U-turn. What I am concerned about on a personal basis is putting cost on to local people at a time when we have got a cost-of-living crisis. I am reliably informed that the Vienna Convention requires us to do everything with all the bells and whistles. I know that the requirements have been negotiated down. I think in the U.K. it is when your car is 3 years old you have to start doing M.O.T. (Ministry of Transport) and thereafter it is annually. I think, correct me if I am wrong, it is for here that what has been arranged is a 5-year delay than a 3-yearly test. My personal view is that it is probably slightly unnecessary, given that we have probably got the most modern fleet of cars anywhere in Europe for any 45 square miles. What I am very conscious of, and I think we need to accelerate, is making sure that cars that go on the Continent or the U.K. have had an M.O.T. test because there is a very big difference between going 17 miles an hour around Jersey averaging going 80 miles an hour on a motorway. I think that the scheme that we are looking to do, which is a government scheme, the £5 million spend needs to find a site. I think we are going to be too far behind the curve in terms of delivering that. What I think I would like - this is just a personal view and we are in discussions about this - is I would like to fast track making arrangements for M.O.T.s for cars that leave the Island. Because I think as far as the Vienna Convention is concerned that is an area that we need to be compliant with sooner rather than later, and I can see the reason for that.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

But, Minister, sorry to interrupt, surely just putting in a scheme that allows certain vehicles that leave the Island to test does not comply with the Vienna Convention, which says that we have to have a regime in place for the testing of all vehicles.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The point I am making here is if we wait until we have found a site and we have done the development, got it all in place, that is years away. I am saying that by far from a practical common-sense point of view what is much more important is making sure that vehicles that are going to be travelling down a motorway at 80 miles an hour are suitably tested. Then I would like to look at the possibility of the private sector carrying out that work so that we can make some progress towards meeting the requirements of the Vienna Convention earlier than we would otherwise if we are pursuing the Government option. What we can do, if we can get that underway quite quickly we can see whether there is an appetite, we can see what the practical implications of that are. It may well be that the private sector can look after all M.O.T.s going forward.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Have you engaged with them yet, the garage businesses?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, we are having these discussions about the principle as to what to take to them now because I appreciate that compliance is quite an important thing. It is a U.N. exercise and is it 96 countries involved? I know that some will be a lot further behind than we will. I am just saying that if we can comfortably deliver something that says we are en route to doing it, we might be able to maybe delay the whole process and work out more cost effectively how we are going to do this and maybe go back for further concessions. Because I think we were talking about it and I think between £60 and £100 per inspection the last time we discussed it.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes, I think we have discussed that at length in a ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, and it is 30,000 cars because we have got an extraordinary number of cars. We have got some very real problems here and I just wonder if we are ... for me the first thing to do is make sure that the cars that leave the Island that are going to be travelling faster are fast-tracked. Let us look at that. The way I would look at that is let us look at that, see how that goes, see how it goes with the private sector carrying out that piece of work and then devise our strategy going forward.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Do we know how many vehicles roughly leave the Island to go travelling or driving on the Continent?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We came up with that number, did we not? Was it 7,000? We were not sure whether that was 7,000 movements or 7,000 separate vehicles.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

But at least you have ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I will hand over to the expert.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

But you have some data to start with because ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Have I got it completely wrong? I have got that number wrong?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

It is not my area of expertise unfortunately, it would be Kelly's.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We will bring somebody next time that ...

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

We can get back to you on that.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

But still somebody did have a stab because we joke about it but it is important to know roughly a ball park what sort of number of vehicles would need to be tested on a 3 ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is a greatly reduced number, when you compare it to the number that we have to test for locally. I am sure you will agree there is a rationale. If we wait and do nothing until we have found a site and we have worked out the plan, I think we will be too far behind the curve and we will be putting people, not just the people leaving here but the people that share the roads in Europe and the U.K. at risk. As I say, these are very initial discussions but I would like to work with the private sector to get vehicles that leave the Island in fairly short order and then work from there.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I think it is an imminently sensible solution but how will you ensure that Jersey can meet its obligations for testing requirements under the convention? What will be the consequences of not complying with the commissioner when it was extended in March 2019?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, we do not want to make any statement to the effect that we are not going to be compliant but what we might do is have some discussions about the process of compliance and the peculiarities that we have got here. As I say, if as a gesture of goodwill we can fast track the vehicles that are going to be on other people's roads, then I think that gives us a much better platform for discussion going forward.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

How and with whom do we discuss this? Which department of U.K. Government would we discuss that with?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Who have we been having the discussions with? But I say I have not been involved with any of the discussions.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It may be an External Affairs issue but I am just ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, it probably will be. That is something that we would be looking at, once we have decided what our first port of call is in terms of making some progress, then we can look at taking that back to them for further discussions.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I cannot disagree with anything you said, Minister; there are 2 extremely valid points. The first one is we do not want any Jersey vehicles that are unsafe travelling on continental roads, not only for our own but for the benefit of those people who live there. But the other thing of course is we do need to be completely on top of the subject because it would be impossible to get to a situation where people could not take their cars from Jersey and go to the Continent and be refused entry because we do not comply. We must avoid that scenario at all costs.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is why I am very keen to fast track that piece of work and there is a test bed for us to see how the private sector cope with a limited number of vehicles. If you look at the profitability of them because why would we want to go and do a government operation when there is a lot of small garages that might appreciate this extra work and that can be spread out throughout the Island, rather than taking up a major site that could be used for something else and investing a hell of a lot of money that has got to be recouped. Like I say, I am taking a cautious approach to it; stage one is doing what we have talked about, get the private sector involved and see how that works.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I just ask, is there is a risk that anyone travelling abroad could be stopped and be breaking the law in terms of emissions and so on?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

To be honest with you I would be ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Because there are a lot stricter rules with regards emissions in some areas as well.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I would be lying if I tried to answer that question because I do not know where we are. I would not think so and I am told that Guernsey is quite a long way behind us and there are other countries that probably they are going to have trouble complying with. It is an area of work that we need to look more closely at but we are on the case and we are trying to make progress.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Certain towns have emission regimes, the larger towns, Rome, Paris, Brussels and so on, so that is where they are at the moment. But I think that is a good way forward.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I will just add, certainly for Jersey if you are thinking of driving across farms, it is worth going on to the internet and looking for a route because there are apps now which will programme your route and they will ask you for your car, what age it is and what engine you have got and it will calculate the route for you to avoid, if necessary, those areas where you would be considered quite naughty driving a vehicle with those emissions. There are ways around it and I take the Constable's point. Minister, a complete change of direction here, I just want to talk very briefly - getting towards the end and we have got a few more questions, not many - a little bit about sea lettuce in St. Aubin's Bay. In your letter of 1st September you indicated that you were trialling some new processes, trialling a hydraulic prototype that is going to squeeze the sea water out of the algae because, as

we know, that is the bit you do not want to be putting back on the land. Can I just ask for a further update on that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is pretty much in its infancy but I will hand over to the expert.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

It is in its infancy. We were looking at trying to get a bigger machine to take out the water from the sea lettuce. But the amount of sea lettuce that we get on our beaches, I think that it is practical that we can go through and squeeze the water out and then get it out on to land within the small window that we have got available to do that I think will be challenging. I have certainly put that challenge back to the team. I think far from ideal but we have tried to do our most effective management of that sea lettuce. I know that we have taken an awful lot of land during the course of the summer season as we are moving it forward. As you saw as we were going round La Collette that there is some of the frack and the browner type seaweed is what we take down to La Collette. I think our operation, that we have had more sea lettuce, I think, than ever this year just because of the warm weather ...

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Rising sea temperatures as well.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

... and the rising sea temperatures. I appreciate this is not a problem that is going to go away but I think I have been in the organisation a long time, I think I have looked at every single option that has been available of what we can realistically do. There is no easy solution and I wish there was. I wish there was something that we could say that is going to solve this problem. As we know, it is not just the great work the environment team are doing on the denitrifying of the bay as we ...

Deputy S.G. Luce:

I was going to come back to that because when we were talking about the new sewerage treatment works you did mention the word nitrogen and reducing nitrogen because that is one way we can slow down the algae in the bay is to have less nitrogen in the water. How much nitrogen do you expect to reduce from the new sewerage treatment works?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I think that is too early to say. What we are trying to do is work within our parameters that get set by the regulation team. But the question on the nitrogen when we had done a lot of the modelling and that the environment team had modelled out in the bay, in the Bay of St. Malo, nitrogen is as

high there as it is here. As much as we can denitrify there is still going to be a problem with the water and the water from France and everything else.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Given the fact that we will have an ongoing issue with nitrogen, even if we did not put any into the water ourselves, given that we are going to have increased temperatures in the sea, we are going to continue to have algae and sea lettuce in St. Aubin's Bay. It is a management thing, is it not, really? Are you going to continue to try to come up with solutions or are we just going to try to just do the best we can and hope?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I think we have tried and we have looked far afield, so as you may know, we all held our world-famous sea lettuce management kind of conference to try and understand what is happening elsewhere in the world. I think what I have discovered, and we struggle with Jersey, if we are going to do something or recycle that sea lettuce we will do something different, then you have got to ship it somewhere. What we cannot do from Jersey is ship it within the timescales before it starts going off and they can do anything with it and that is a real big issue and a challenge for us at the moment. I think we will still look to see if there are better options but at the moment I think it is just the practical management of that sea lettuce is what we are doing at the moment, is trying to get as much as we can out on to land and to clear it, clear the top 50 metres, 60 metres of the bay, which is what we are trying to do when we can get on to the beach.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Okay, I will leave that there.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I just ask, is there any measure because the other thing is phosphates? If you take one of the nutrients away you might be able to control it more. Is there any level of phosphate which is being pumped into the bay as well because it comes from detergents and so on?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

I am an accountant, so to ask our environmental colleagues who might have a better idea on that I think as well ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, that is okay. I just think is whether it can be used as a biofuel in terms of its fermentation or I do not think it is fermentation.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

Just imagine the cost of getting that and doing that for our scale would be so significant, it would always be a barrier to that but it is certainly worth looking at.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Sea defences, Minister, with the inevitable rising sea levels, can you just talk us through how the shoreline management plan is being implemented to ensure our current sea defences are up to scratch and will prevent the Island from being flooded?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I cannot talk extensively about how they are being managed at the moment. But what I am aware of is there are a lot of plans in place to raise seawall areas quite creatively, particularly around the St. Helier coastline and Havre des Pas. The stuff at the moment I am not too sure about but there is a lot of work going on and not ready for release I do not think yet. But there is a significant amount of work that will be ready in the not-too-distant future to be made public.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The big ticket items generally, do you have funding for those items that you may be proposing?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

The work from the shoreline management plan and epoch 1, we do know that the water levels are going to rise and the main areas of work that we know and the Minister has mentioned is on the south coast. It is either first out to West Park, St. Aubin's and Havre des Pas. What our team is currently doing are looking at those options and will be coming forward. No, we have not got the money yet to be able to take those plans forward but there is a big consultation piece to look at the options of dealing with those rising tide levels and some of them are very creative, I think, that we are looking at there. But, again, we have got to consult the States Members and the public and everything else to see and to try and get the support, to try and get that infrastructure in place to be able to deal with that rising tide.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

You did some successful work at Beaumont by topping up the sea wall with a curved wall. What is the status of the proposals at La Haule? I know Steve and I had a discussion and which we have not completed yet but what is the final view on that, on the La Haule area?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Is that in terms of sea defences or are we talking about the ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

It is a bit of both.

Assistant Minister for Infrastructure:

On both, yes. It is not necessarily a place where there is much over-topping for building sea defences.

[11:45]

But on the railings front we made an application for railings 2 years ago and it was rejected for various reasons, that it interrupted views over St. Aubin's Bay and would fail to enhance the static setting of the anti-tank wall, which apparently is a listed building, so that is very strange. Obviously we decided to put an upstand which we applied for and it was passed but there was a great deal of public opinion that was voiced against that proposal. We decided that we are going to reapply to put railings in and, hopefully, this time the Planning Department will be more inclined to accept it. We hope that the Constable of the Parish will also be ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I have to say my view is that we should utilise the successful technology at Beaumont because it does over-top there and in fact you will find that the bunk adjacent gets washed away on big spring tides in a southerly breeze. It would seem daft not to do that at that point in that particular area. It is only a small area, it does not have to be all the way along but I do not know ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Are you saying the extended sea with a wave curve on it or ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Yes.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

All right because ...

Assistant Minister for Infrastructure:

Certainly the Heritage may be totally opposed to that for interrupting the sea views.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

At some point surely sea defence has to take priority over heritage if we are to preserve our internal area because ...

Assistant Minister for Infrastructure:

We would like to think so.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

You tell them that.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I am happy to do so because it just does seem ludicrous quite frankly.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, in the short term there is a safety issue and I have to say I have not really given it a great deal of thought but the proposal was a 300 mm granite wall and I think the cost was going to be something in the order of £100,000. Suddenly my inbox was filling up with people saying: "What on earth are we wasting ...?" I had to look at it and think why are we wasting £100,000?

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What were the statistics and terms? I do not want to take too much time on this but I was aware that one person who was particularly inebriated fell off the ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is what I heard the damage ... what worried me about putting a 300 mm extension to the wall is if kiddies walking on the wall or somebody is drunk and they trip over the wall they have got another 300 mm to fall, will they break something extra? I just thought it is a lot of money.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Makes all the difference though.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It solves some safety issues and not others and in the most practical way of providing some short-term safety was a railing, which would probably cost about a tenth of the price and can be easily installed and easily taken away if we needed to look at sea defences. I would suggest for the interim period that we go back for a railing and say: "For goodness sake, the Island is not made of money." We put a small railing up to provide the safety that is required and we monitor what is required from a sea defence point of view in the longer term. Because if my understanding is correct - and I am no expert on sea defences - but there are other areas that require our attention before that would in terms of sea defence, albeit that once in a while you might get some washback. I do not think it has

reached a critical point at this stage. It is really about spending the right money in the right place at the right time, if that makes sense.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Can I just reiterate, before the Constable goes on, something he said just now, which we heard about interrupted views being the reason why things were not permitted. Would you agree, Minister, that at some point in the near future we are going to have to realise that views are going to be interrupted because we need to protect our Island from rising sea levels, which is far more important than the public's view over a very nice bay? Something which we have all got used to, I know we will miss and I know in planning terms the protection of a public view is something we take very seriously.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I agree entirely, yes.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

But the Constable is quite right, climate change is going to put us in a difficult spot and probably going to have to get used to not seeing things because they are protected by a wall.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Afraid so and, as I say, some of the plans that are going to come out in terms of the sea defences going forward might give people a bit of a shock but when you look at the statistics and what is required, sometimes you have got to take a deep breath and say, well, it might not be where you would want to be in an ideal world but that is the world we live in. Yes, there is, I think, some surprises coming up about what is required.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The sort of one in 50 events or one in 100 events, flood mitigation and protection, we have experienced heavy rainfall which led in some areas of the Island to significant flooding. How equipped is our drainage network to handle further cases of extreme weather such as this and what plan mitigation have we got for when it might happen?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I will come back to what we said initially about maybe having to up our budget at a given point because with climate change, it appears to be climate change, where a number of things are changing that are going to put a lot of pressure on drains and rainwater management and so on and sea defences. All of things would come under the infrastructure bracket; over the course of time we are going to require more funding.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Ellen mentioned mitigation and other parts of the Island. We are at early stages of those discussions or thoughts, are we, in terms of planning where they might go surely we will need to talk soon?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

What the department has done is develop a bridging light liquid waste strategy and I know that we have got a Scrutiny meeting to discuss liquid waste, and there might be an opportunity to do that in December, which is looking at what we see as all the issues and then options of what and how we can deal with those. When we do get flooding on Island we, as a team, try and do our best to react to that problem and then it kind of goes into our list of what are the issues, what has caused that problem and how can we go and fix it? Again, we are still probably limited on some of our infrastructure monies that we have got. Even with the infrastructure that we have got we have got to keep relining it, we have got to make sure that the surface water is not getting into it. We have got to do a lot of inspections of everything to try and understand, why do we get flooding and rainfall events? That is because surface water in most cases is going into that network and it is us then to do the investigations to understand it and what has happened to those pipes. A lot of work goes on in that particular space again.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

What is the percentage of surface water separation throughout the Island, separation from foul sewerage?

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

We have still got places, as you may know, Constable, but like in St. Helier we have still got a dual system just because we have got both foul and surface water into the same, effectively, network and we have never been able to say: "Great, separate that out and split that out." I think for us as an organisation it has been a priority. As and when we have got the resources to try and separate out the network from foul to surface, so ideally you would want your surface water going straight to sea and for it not to be staying in the network and for us treating it and to try and create the capacity. But, again, there is money and investment that is required there to do those separation schemes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Thank you.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, I have got a few questions Government-owned land and its release. Minister, what Government-owned land will be released in 2023, if any, specifically for the purpose of delivering affordable housing?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Nothing extra, other than that which is programmed for the moment and I would have to rely on Tim to be specific about what that is ...

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

At the moment the St. Saviour's Hospital site for the road site is under consideration. There are a large number of sites around town that the Future Places group is in the process of untangling and identifying priorities. But the principle is that if it is not needed for government operation, then it will be available for all social housing.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, in 2023 specifically because we had a list of Andium projects, for example. In fact the Minister for Housing and Communities said we might as well tear that up, I believe the words were because it was not timed because there were so many changes. This is why I asked the question in terms of 2023, so there will be nothing released in 2023 as yet and the Future Places group, which is ... we have mentioned that a number of times and, again, can I just ask who is on that group?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is the Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture, the Chief Minister, the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Housing and Communities. Is that correct?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

The Constable of St. Helier.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The Constable of St. Helier as well, yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Okay, no other representation from St. Helier, apart from the Minister for Housing and Communities, who is ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Just the Constable, yes, the Minister for Housing and Communities and the Constable, yes.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I must ask, sorry, have you considered having some representatives from St. Helier there? Because we are the ones picking up the pieces sometimes.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It has not been discussed, I can take that point back. I am happy to take that back as a suggestion.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I would appreciate it if you would because we ...

Deputy S.G. Luce:

But to fight my own corner, Future Places is not just St. Helier or is it just St. Helier?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, Future Places is all key and we are working through a programme now trying to identify property that sits within I.H.E. that is appropriate to take forward to that forum. Obviously Future Places cannot deal with the 900-odd properties that sit within ... but it is the strategically important ones. I can report that the focus of Future Places is to start ... there are an awful lot of sites that rely on the site before it to be released. I think what we have identified is the one that we would really like to put focus on is the primary school that is proposed at the moment, possibly for Gas Place. I know it is controversial but that is a discussion that has to be had. If that can start then that starts a whole domino effect; there were 2 major schools that were required. We have had meetings with the ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

You see that is why I asked about St. Helier because the 2 people on that board still are platforming the election of not building it there. There could be some conflict of interest.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, there is conflict, we have recognised that and we are trying to do our best before it goes public to reconcile those things in terms of if there is not going to be an extended park, then what areas can be taken out in other properties to free it up to create park space so that we can distribute slightly smaller parks to start giving breathing space to people that are living in intensely ...

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Can I come straight back at you with this question, Minister?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Because one of your officers just said we have got 900-odd properties, fine. Things that are not needed are going to be released for social housing, fine; I am all in favour of that. But where we need property, do you think it is right that you should go into the marketplace and purchase property for them? Because if we do not need it, we get rid of it here but we might need something to really make something work, like a new school, for example.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think we need to take a more active approach to property generally and treat it as a ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It leads on to the next question really nicely.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Yes, I am sorry I am butting in but carry on.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Yes. But, no, it sets it up beautifully, which is from the Ministerial plan you are looking at a strategic condition survey of the public estates in 2023. What would that entail and when do you anticipate the survey will be completed by? Because that seems to be, from what we are talking about, increasingly urgent, is it not, Minister?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, I will let Tim talk about this but, yes, you have got the detail and ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am conscious of time because we have only got a few minutes left.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

I think we have identified that it is urgent. I think we talked earlier on and said that at the moment we are having problems looking strategically and beyond the immediate few months. We worked very hard to get the money into the Government Plan to enable us to outsource this, again, given the shortage of resources and personnel that we have got. The anticipation is that by the end of the summer next year we will be in a position to understand the state of the estate. We have got to add that to the fact that with the office project that will also free up a number of buildings that we can then look to reduce our maintenance costs and outgoings. A combination of the resolution of what may happen with the hospital, the resolution of the office project and our future condition survey

work will be in a position where we can have a much better understanding of the sites that are available for housing, among other requirements.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Perhaps even a youth facility north of the town, which we have been waiting for 4 years now; that is sad.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

That is still a requirement that still we are trying to find a location for.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

There was one in the bridging Island Plan that was agreed by the Assembly, I will just remind you of that but I will let you carry on, Chair.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Minister, we have got a couple of minutes to 12.00 and I think we will probably hold it there. I have got some questions about additional growth revenue, which I think we will send to you if we might for some answers.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, right, that is fine.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

But I will just finish with this. In previous revenue expenditure growth charts we have got in front of us here, a lot of these subjects have got continued, just the same levels all the way through. A general question to finish with, how worried are you about inflation on your budgets and the reduction in real terms by ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Can I just say one word? Very. Yes, we live in a world where we are back to where we were almost 40 years ago in terms of inflation; that is going to have a profound effect on everything. It is difficult to say at this stage of the game how we are going to manage that but we have just got to be mindful of what is going on around us and do our best. It is a concern.

Group Director, Operations and Transport:

We have put funding bids and growth bids, which have been accepted in our own Government Plan to help us with inflation and the increased costs of fuel and electricity and hydrocarbons moving

forward. We have got some additional money and support but, again, it is still a bit of a watching brief, is it not?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, because that is quite hard.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Perhaps that surplus will not happen after all. Perhaps that surplus will not happen after all.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It is already spent I think.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Minister, thank you. We have taken up 2 hours of your time. We are grateful for your answers. As I say, I will send you a few more short questions at the end there, which I am sure officers will be able to fill in. Anything else from the panel?

Deputy M.R. Le Hegarat:

No, thank you.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Thank you.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Not from me, thank you.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Thank you, Minister, very much. We will see you again soon.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Thank you. If I can say thank you for being ... I was not quite sure what to expect. I found this has been extremely constructive genuinely and I am pleasantly surprised by that, which is great. No, it is a very healthy for Scrutiny to work like this. I am delighted with it. I am also happy that we send you any information as quickly as we get it, so that you are running in advance, so there will be no attempt to hide anything. When you discuss stuff you know what we are up to before we get here. I think everybody is comfortable about that. Also, I would like to apologise for my lack of detailed knowledge in some areas. I am hoping that sort of lack of knowledge is going to diminish as we go forward. You can see I have made a note of areas that I am ... you will probably have a series of

completely different questions next time we meet but I know the areas of focus that I have got to tidy up on and particularly budgetary stuff has become apparent, and I am not on top of that to the extent that I should. I would just like to thank the team here for their very comprehensive support that they provide, as you can see they know their job inside out, which is great. Thank you again.

Deputy S.G. Luce:

Thank you. Thanks very much.

[12:00]