

Minister for Home Affairs Justice and Home Affairs



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Deputy Rob Ward
Chair of the Children Education and Home Affairs Panel
BY EMAIL

4 May 2021

Dear Deputy Ward

Quarterly Hearing with the Minister for Home Affairs – Response to Written Questions

Further to the Quarterly Hearing I attended with your Panel on 26th April, I am pleased to provide responses, as follows, the written questions provided.

Covid-19 Test and Trace Programme

- 1. It is our understanding from the previous hearing that it was anticipated that a review of the funding would be completed in February. If that is correct, could you briefly update us on the outcomes of that review and whether the allocated funding has sufficiently sustained the programme?**

The model of delivery was considered in light of the experience of the previous lockdown and the pending changes to the Testing Strategy against the funds allocated in the government plan and for future modelling. There was £30 million allocated to the programme in the Government Plan 2021. The review and refresh of the cost model and forecast, based on more up to date assumptions was performed during Quarter one and determined the funding would last into July. Therefore, funding has and will sufficiently sustain the programme as envisaged, notwithstanding a further business case for June to Dec 2021 is being prepared for funding from the COVID reserve.

- 2. Has a more recent review been undertaken to determine any further requirement for funding going forward as the profile changes, considering that travel through Jersey's borders is likely to resume and pick up pace over the coming months?**

As part of the modelling in Q1 and reviewing the operational delivery in support of the new Testing Strategy, including assumptions around changes to the safer travel policy, business cases are being prepared for funding to continue to the end of Dec 2021. This covers all elements of the test and trace programme, including track, trace, monitoring and enforcement, programme management and IT, all under the banner of the COVID SAFE operational response. The funding required will be in the region of £15-£20m.

- 3. How has the testing programme (increased testing) within schools impacted the funding and resourcing levels?**

A small number of staff are utilised in schools to supervise the students' self-testing. This varies between schools, as we encouraged the schools to identify the solution that worked best for them. Our clinical lead for the airport supported each school to understand and implement the regular lateral flow device testing; this was an effective use of her skills and abilities and also a good use of her time, in a period where the airport was relatively quiet due to the winter period and the travel restrictions which resulted in a reduction in arriving aircraft. The additional cost is in the region of £40,000 and is funded from the COVID budget.

4. Has a recent review of the staff resourcing for the programme been undertaken and, if so, will any changes to staffing levels be necessary as the profile changes?

A full review of staffing has taken place as part of the modelling review and learning lessons from the last 14 months. The model of operational delivery has changed, introducing a multi-functional team that can move across the disciplines of contact tracing, monitoring and enforcement and carrying out COVID safe checks based on demand. In a period of low infection and those in isolation there will be more emphasis on COVID safe visits to premises e.g. hospitality, whereas if the number of infections were higher and more people were in isolation contact tracing and monitoring and enforcement would be the priority.

Capital Project – Priorities

New headquarters for the fire service and the ambulance station at the combined centre.

5. Minister, could you briefly update us regarding the progress of the work regarding this project?

The Justice and Home Affairs Department, in collaboration with Jersey Property Holdings (JPH), have completed the feasibility study for this project. The feasibility study explored 14 sites – most within St Helier but some in other parishes. Detailed and thorough analysis has been undertaken, with response times being used as a key measure of the appropriateness of any potential site. This showed that the current site of the Fire and Rescue Service, in combination with the former Police HQ building, at Rouge Bouillon was the best site. It was shown that the other sites explored would deliver longer response times, which would not meet the expectations I have set for a new station.

The Assistant Minister and I were briefed on the outcome of the feasibility study late last year and we endorsed the recommendation that the current Rouge Bouillon site was the best option. Importantly, this option delivers the benefits of a shared facility on a single site, it will provide modern and fit for purpose facilities and it will preserve the existing Arsenal building which is of significant value as a Heritage building.

However, it is recognised that there are competing demands for this site. Perhaps most significantly, there is a need to find appropriate space to reconfigure the St Helier school estate, which we fully appreciate. We have therefore paused work on the project, whilst a review is carried out by the Children, Young People, Education and Skills and Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Departments to review strategic options for future of the St Helier school estate.

Whilst this will delay our work slightly, it is clearly vitally important work and it is important to me that both needs are met. We therefore await the outcome of that review before proceeding further and decisions made as to the use and purpose of the site.

Rouge Bouillon Site – Sea Cadets

- 6. Minister, you officially opened the Sea Cadets' new headquarters at Rouge Bouillon earlier this month and it was noted that it would serve as such for the next 2 years. What work is underway to deliver a permanent base for the Sea Cadets and are any potential sites being considered or shortlisted?**

Officers in JHA are working very closely with colleagues in Jersey Property Holdings to try and identify the best possible option for the Sea Cadets in the long term. This is still in relatively early stages, and no sites have been formally shortlisted.

- 7. It was mentioned that work was underway to recruit adult volunteers to assist with the influx of new cadets. Minister, could you briefly outline how that work is progressing?**

I am pleased to say that having moved into their temporary headquarters at Rouge Bouillon the Sea Cadets have initiated an impressive recruitment drive. They are now the largest unit in the Southern Area in both staff, volunteers, and Cadets.

- 8. Minister, noting that Rouge Bouillon will be accommodated for the next two years, in your view, how will this impact any work being undertaken regarding the permanent allocation for the site?**

The decision to temporarily relocate the Sea Cadets to Rouge Bouillon was taken with the future development of the site in mind. Due to the extremely poor condition of the Cadets' premises at Fort Regent there was a need to find them alternative premises at short notice. However, it was never intended that such premises would be a permanent solution.

Depending on decisions taken about the future use of the site, development may commence earlier or later than the two years given as an estimate. In all cases the Sea Cadets will be consulted at an early stage and appropriately accommodated.

- 9. Was any consideration given to how the resourcing of other areas (for example the expansion of the Rouge Bouillon School) would be dealt with as a result of the site being allocated to the Sea Cadets for the next two years?**

As mentioned in the answer to question 5, the competing needs for the Rouge Bouillon site are well established. Officers in JHA, JPH and CYPES are working closely together to ensure that the needs of the St Helier education estate are balanced against the current use of the site and the future needs of the emergency services.

Yours sincerely



**Connétable Len Norman
Minister for Home Affairs**