

STATES OF JERSEY

Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel Social Inclusion

TUESDAY, 24th JUNE 2008

Panel:

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence (Chairman)
Deputy S. Pitman of St. Helier

Witnesses:

Senator M.E. Vibert (Minister for Education, Sport and Culture)
Mr. M. Lundy (Director of Education, Support and Culture)
Ms. S. Eddie (Head Teacher, Mont à l'Abbé School)
Ms. J. Forrest (Operational Manager, Special Educational Needs)

In Attendance:

Mr. W. Millow (Scrutiny Officer)
Mr. T. Oldham (Scrutiny Officer)

(Please note: All witnesses and Panel Members were given the opportunity to comment upon the accuracy of the transcript. Whilst the transcript remains a verbatim account of proceedings, suggested points of clarification may have been included as footnotes to the main text.)

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence (Chairman):

Okay, we will make a start. Thank you for coming to speak to us this morning. Ms. Eddie and Ms. Forrest, I do not believe that you have been to a Scrutiny Panel hearing before; is that correct? So, I understand that you have had sight of the protocol for these panel hearings and just a bit of housekeeping; the hearing is being recorded and will be transcribed and a copy of the transcription will be sent to all participants so that they can confirm that their words have been accurately represented. When we have all agreed to the transcript, it will be uploaded to the Scrutiny website. This is a public hearing. We do have a member of the public in attendance and it may well be that others will come in and maybe go out again. I would ask that you speak into the microphone, please. It does not make our voices sound any louder, but it is for the transcription. Our apologies are sent today from the Vice Chairman of the Education and Home Affairs Panel, that is Deputy Gallichan and also from our other member, the Connétable of St. John. Formally, we need to introduce ourselves, so I am Deputy Mezbourian of St. Lawrence.

Deputy S. Pitman of St. Helier:

I am Deputy Pitman of St. Helier.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

If you can each introduce yourselves, please, for the record.

Mr. M. Lundy (Director of Education, Sport and Culture):

Mario Lundy, Director of Education, Support and Culture.

Senator M.E. Vibert (Minister for Education, Sport and Culture):

Senator Mike Vibert, Minister for Education, Sport and Culture.

Ms. J. Forrest (Operational Manager, Special Educational Needs):

Jo Forrest, Operational Manager, Special Educational Needs.

Ms. S. Eddie (Head Teacher, Mont à l'Abbé School):

Sharon Eddie, Head Teacher at Mont-a-l'Abbe School.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

We have our officers in attendance with us today as well. Minister, I know that you have been asked to attend another Scrutiny hearing today.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Lucky me; 2 in one day.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Are you not fortunate? I am sure you are very well prepared for them both.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

I hope so.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

We intend to or we hope to finish possibly by about 12.30 p.m. I cannot see that we will need to go on much later than that, if indeed we reach that time. Also Minister, you have had an indication of the questions we will be asking you today.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

I appreciate that.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

We will just launch straight into it, I think, by referring to the funding pressure at Mont à l'Abbé School and earlier this year, Minister, you told us that it was indeed a pressure for you and that you were going to be short of full funding by £370,000 next year. We gathered or we understood from the information that you gave us that there were a number of areas within your department that had been unfunded during 2008 in order to meet the funding for Mont à l'Abbé. So, the question for you now is you have told us that you have resolved the funding issue. How have you done that?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Well, the funding issue for 2008 when we found we needed to provide more funds we reprioritised funding within my own budget and that meant putting off some things that we would have done, et cetera. It was not easy, but we felt we had to do it. Following that for 2009 we identified that we needed an increase of £370,000 and the budget of Mont à l'Abbé School for a whole host of issues which we can go into and I took that to the Council of Ministers. Obviously when we go to the Council of Ministers we are working out the budget. They have a very large overall sum and then there is all the ministerial budgets and the non-ministerial departments and on the first look of it, it was not seen that it could be accommodated for £370,000. But the overall budget has been looked at again and I am pleased to say that when I attend Council of Ministers tomorrow morning the proposals for the budget and the Business Plan 2009 which will come to the States later this year will have the £370,000 extra funding for Mont à l'Abbé inscribed into it. So, as long as the States agree, as long as Council of Ministers agree tomorrow and the States agree when it comes before them that extra funding will be inscribed within E.S.C.'s (Education, Support and Culture) budget for Mont à l'Abbé.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Where has it come from?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Budgeting, when we are budgeting overall, is not as simple as where has it come from. It has not come from any single source as such. There has been a whole look at the overall budget again and within the overall total which as you know is a very considerable amount, £370,000 is very small percentage of that amount, it has been possible to include it in the overall budget.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So, it has not been identified from within your department?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

No, it has not been identified from within E.S.C. Department. It is one of the funding pressures that have been included within the cash limit that the States set for the budget for 2009.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

We know in the recent past that when funding has been difficult to find by a Minister that the Council of Ministers has in fact moved funds from one department to another. Now, those are large sums. We are talking about money for the prison as an example. £370,000 you have said is a small amount in an overall budget, but it must have come from somewhere, so where has it come from?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

It has come from within the cash limit that the States set. Now, when the Council of Ministers receive from the Treasurer the first attempt at working out that whole budget - and it is a considerable budget as you know - the States budget is some £600 million a year - when we looked at it the first time we submitted the £370,000 extra for Mont à l'Abbé as one of the funding pressures we would like included. Another one was funding for Early Years which has not been included as yet in what the Council of Ministers is putting forward. So, when we looked at it first of all it was one of those funds outside. The budget has been looked at again within the cash limits involved and it has been included this time and there are a lot of things and we had a meeting with the Scrutiny Panel Chairmen as you know and they took their advice on board about certain things in the budget. So, within the overall cash limit the £370,000 extra in my budget - in the E.S.C.'s budget - has now been proposed by the Council of Ministers. Sorry, I believe the director can add.

Mr. M. Lundy:

If you take the 2 years separately, as far as 2008 is concerned there was a reprioritisation within the department's budget which took money from the finance section; it made use of additional income from sport; it made use of an arrangement that we have to underwrite Le Rocquier School. The Youth Service contributed £60,000; Lifelong Learning £20,000 and Projects and Planning £35,000. Now, these were sweep-ups of projects and appointments in which there was a slip issue. So, obviously it is not stuff that could be sustained in the long term. But an important point, I think, to recognise is that while the Minister bid for an additional £370,000 as one of the emerging pressures for 2009, he also returned money for 2009 from demographics, and the precise amount I have not got in my head, but it was around £350,000 and £689,000 for higher education. So, in actual fact the Minister was returning what is effectively nearly £1 million and then bidding back for £370,000 to support Mont à l'Abbé School.

Deputy S. Pitman:

May I ask about the £200,000 and the Youth Service; what impact will that have on this service?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Well, it was not £200,000 from the Youth Service.

Mr. M. Lundy:

It was £60,000 from the Youth Service.

Deputy S. Pitman:

It is £200,000 in the Business Plan and that is the total.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

No, the £200,000 is overall the money we found extra for Mont à l'Abbé. We found it from a number of sources within our own budget including the Youth Service.

Mr. M. Lundy:

There had in fact been an under-spend that year to the tune of about £90,000 in the Youth Service and the Youth Service, rather than rushing to spend that money because it was attached to projects - I cannot give you the detail of the projects at this point in time - but there was a requirement for the Youth Service to carry over that under-spend and they were allowed to carry over that under-spend at the end of the year on the understanding that it would contribute to Mont à l'Abbé for 2008.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So, for 2009 the £200,000-odd that was allocated from the other areas within your department will be funded because you now have the £370,000?

Mr. M. Lundy:

No, that is 2008. That is funded for 2008.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I beg your pardon, 2008, yes. In 2009 they will be funded?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

We will not have to take money from the other area sectors in 2009 because we have the funding subject to Council of Ministers and States approval of course.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I am still not happy with this: “£370,000 has been found.”

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Well, with due respect, Chairman, whether you are happy or not, that is the actual fact that has happened and if you wish to work out and find out the details for how the Treasury make up the overall budget I would suggest that the Treasury Minister is the person to ask. I submitted the bid and made a very strong case for this money to be found within the overall budget. I am pleased to say that there has now been a new budget submitted which includes this amount of money. Now, how the Treasury have gone about adjusting other budgets and so on, I certainly do not know at present. I have got the meeting with the Council of Ministers when we discuss the new budget tomorrow, but all I will say is I am very pleased that my pleas have not fell on deaf ears and that the money for Mont à l'Abbé is inscribed within the proposed budget that the Council of Ministers will be considering tomorrow - cash limits - and be taking hopefully to the States later this year.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Well, Minister, I think what you have just said there is very pertinent because obviously you attend the Council of Minister meetings; I do not; other members of Scrutiny do not and you have just said you do not know how the Treasury Minister adjusts the budget in order to, in this case, give you the funding that you have requested for Mont à l'Abbé, but you will know tomorrow. So, tomorrow at the Council of Ministers meeting will an explanation be given of why a few months ago you could not have the funding and why now in June you can have the funding?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Yes, I will be asking, but there are --

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So, the questions that I am asking you are questions in fact that you will be asking the Treasury Minister tomorrow?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

I will be asking some of the questions, but the issue of fixing a budget is not as simplistic as perhaps your question might make it sound. It is very complex. We are talking about very large sums of money and we are talking about cash limits with variable when you are getting down to infinitesimal expenses and costs and it is a very complicated issue. I do not know exactly what the Treasury have done to accommodate mine and other funding issues that were not originally included. What budgets are normally predicated on is a previous year's budget. It is historic

budgeting. We do not budget from zero every year. So, the Treasury when they are preparing the original budget that goes before the Council of Ministers will look at the previous year's budget; will look at things like inflation and so on and produce a budget. Then if you have got growth requests you bring them forward and then the attempt is made to try to include those growth requests that are prioritised.

Mr. M. Lundy:

Deputy, it might be useful for me to explain the way the funding comes through to the department and there is an issue with the way that special needs funding comes through. You will be aware that for primary and secondary schools we are funded on the basis of a formula that is related to pupil numbers. For special needs we are funded as a cash-limit. So, a growth in demand as far as special needs is concerned does not translate into a growth in funding. So, the department has to find within its cash limit the required money to support young people, children with special needs. Now, this is an issue that I think is probably broader than just the education service. In actual fact this is about support for children and young people and eventually adults with special needs as we go through it. In other jurisdictions there would be a funding mechanism that is likely to be attached to a child and would move through the system with the child right through primary school, secondary school, further education and sometimes even beyond that and that is a mechanism that we probably need to discuss with the Treasury to see if we can find a different way, a more effective way of funding special needs.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Is that why there has been a lack of funding in the last few years and why this has accumulated to £370,000?

Mr. M. Lundy:

Well, I think that the issue is that budgets have tightened in the last 3 years therefore there is less capacity in the budget to be able to respond to growth in this area. The point that I was making in terms of the demographics that due to a drop in demographics overall the Minister was in a position to give back money and in bidding for that money was essentially saying: "We would like to retain the money in the service in order to support the growth and special needs."

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

When you say: "Give back" he cannot give back what he does not have, but you would have been applying for would have been reduced down?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Correct.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

But, Mr. Lundy, you just said that growth and demand does not translate to growth in the cash-limit.

Mr. M. Lundy:

Not in terms of special needs. Special needs is not formula funded.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

It is not a direct correlation. When you have funding based on the A.W.P.U (Age-Weighted Pupil Unit) in the mainstream schools, when there are more pupils in the schools that is directly related through the Treasury formula to a larger budget.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Yes, so you are therefore guaranteed that larger budget?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Yes, whereas up till now with special needs the budget has been on a cash limit basis, so we have to make the case, as I have done this time, for an increase in budget.

Mr. M. Lundy:

But the longer term solution might be to review the formula mechanism for special needs.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

As you know I am looking to review the formula mechanism for education as a whole.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

In fact you say you are going to review that funding mechanism. Why is it different at the moment?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Yes. I think it is partly historical again and in the Alvin Jeffs' Report, which you have seen, they talk about the different ways in which funding can be worked out and it is a question of finding the best formula for providing the budget we require for special needs and particularly for Mont à l'Abbé.

Mr. M. Lundy:

There is a complexity with special needs funding in that it is not just about additional numbers; it is about levels of need and it is difficult to predict. You cannot always predict because the children are not always in the system. Sometimes, for example, something could have happened to a child that has rendered them disabled in the middle of their school career and that child might need some very expensive support. You have not been able to plan for it because that is something that has just, in a sense, come out of the blue. So, there are some real challenges with managing special needs and there are also some concerns in other jurisdictions where they have attached special needs funding to the number of children. It has resulted in a significant increase in expenditure. So, it is important to have a formula that properly recognises the level of need and the numbers of children who have needs and tries to accommodate those needs and provide the appropriate support.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Last year then, you have taken money off certain services, why could you not do that last year or the year before or the year before that?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

I do not understand the question.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Sorry, I am not entirely understanding what you are saying. This year you have managed to get £370,000.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

No, that is for next year; that is for 2009.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Sorry, for 2009. The years before that the school was short of money and this is why this has accumulated. So, the £370,000, you have got that through cutting over services. Why could you not do that --

Senator M.E. Vibert:

No, sorry, one has to take into account the budgeting cycle. Now, in 2008 - and the budgeting cycle in 2008 starts early in 2007 - we discovered that we needed to put more support into the school for a number of reasons, one of which the example was given that someone can suddenly become severely disabled which can lead to an enormous pressure on the school and the need for a considerable injection of funds to deal with that one child. That happens after you have fixed

the budget, therefore you have to find within our system, money to meet this from within your own budget. We have got a budget of roughly £100 million, so that is what we do. There is no longer the State system where you have something called a general reserve and you could go and ask for extra money within the budget year for special eventualities. Now, we have to manage within our set budget and go back the next year, which is what we are doing now to recoup and make sure we have got the right funding for the coming year. But of course Sharon could be faced at any time with suddenly extra demand on Mont à l'Abbé School services.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I think I would like to close this section on the funding that has now been found by saying that, Minister, you will be asking questions tomorrow of the Treasury Minister presumably at the Council of Ministers meeting and we will be doing the same because we want to know how this funding has been identified by the Council when a couple of months ago they were not able to fund it.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

I am sure it will be exceptionally educational to discover how the massive budget is worked out in detail.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

For both of us, perhaps?

Mr. M. Lundy:

Could I just set the record straight in terms of the funding that is required for next year? It is not an accumulation. In actual fact if you bear in mind that the majority of the money is used to enhance the staffing in 2005 and 2006 the budget was increased by £147,000, staffing alone; in 2006 and 2007 it was increased by a further £50,000; 2007 to 2008, £100,000. The overall increase in budget over the last 2 years has been £290,000. So, there has been a step change over the last number of years in order to bring the Mont à l'Abbé budget up to a level which the school requires. But I think as you go on to the next question you will see some of the new avenues of work that Mont à l'Abbé is having to explore which will require some of the additional funding that the Minister sought to achieve for 2008.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

To come on to the next question, you have just said, Mr. Lundy, that you have been endeavouring over the last few years to get funding to bring it up to a level. The draft proposals for 2009 Annual Business Plan in those proposals you said that attempts had been made to continue to operate

the school within minimum acceptable standards. So, has the funding that you have just referred to over the last few years kept the school operational at minimum acceptable standards?

Mr. M. Lundy:

I would say that there are some areas in which in some ways in which the school is operating which we feel that in the past are not necessarily conducive to best supporting the staff who work there.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So, can you just expand on that, please? We are talking about minimal acceptable standards.

Mr. M. Lundy:

Yes, well, what we want to do is to make sure that the teachers who are working in the school have appropriate breaks; that they are not on supervision of youngsters right through the day; that they are able to manage the work without undue stress and that youngsters within the school are appropriately supported. Now, I think probably Ms. Eddie could throw some more light on this for you, but my understanding of the situation is that the youngsters have been more than appropriately supported, but that that has at times taken a toll on the staff in terms of their breaks and their working experience.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So, are you saying then, Mr. Lundy, that the pupils indeed have minimum acceptable standards?

Mr. M. Lundy:

No, I am not saying that.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Are you saying that staff has minimum acceptable standards?

Mr. M. Lundy:

My understanding is that the standards now for staff are appropriate.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Are they appropriate to the minimum acceptable level?

Mr. M. Lundy:

I think, Sharon, you would need to comment on that.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Ms. Eddie, if you feel you can comment on that?

Ms. S. Eddie:

I think you have to temper that it is a very dedicated staff and at times of their own volition they will do things that perhaps in a mainstream school staff would not. If that means a child needs something you will find that staff will give up their breaks; they will stay after school; they will do things, but we have more options now that that does not have to happen. With teamwork we always manage to get through those situations, but with the extra funding that we have had we have been able to employ extra people at lunchtimes so people can take a break. I think that the school works very well and I think the children's needs are well met.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Staffing needs?

Ms. S. Eddie:

Staffing needs are well met within the parameters of you will find people doing above and beyond what I expect of them and what anybody would expect of them because they see that there are benefits to the children by doing that.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

But how does that, over and above, impact upon the staff themselves because you say there are benefits to the children? They may well be positive benefits to the children because their immediate needs are being addressed, but what of the impact upon the staff? Are they becoming overly tired, overly stressed because if they are then those issues will impact themselves upon the children?

Ms. S. Eddie:

I think that is why the department recognised that we needed that extra funding because there have been times in the past when we have been under pressure, but that has considerably reduced. There can still be times when because of that emergency situation it is hard to predict in a special school like us. A bit like Mr. Lundy was saying that you can have a child unexpectedly come into the school and in order to make plans for that child there will be staff for a period of time that will do whatever is necessary to do to meet that child's needs while you are putting in strategies. We have a great opportunity now to put those strategies in place without taking it away from somewhere else. I think perhaps what we tended to do before was the things that were regarded as luxury opportunities for children they would be the things that we would have to reduce in order to provide the essential, whereas now we do not have to reduce that as much and

we can provide the luxury input, the extra staffing support that some children need without taking it away to provide.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

You have just referred to the essentials for the children. I just want to be absolutely clear here. In your opinion are the children receiving the essentials that are meeting the minimum acceptable level of standards?

Ms. S. Eddie:

With the extra funding, yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

When you say with the extra funding, are you saying because that this extra funding for 2009 has been identified then in 2009 they will reach the minimum acceptable level; is that what you are saying? 2008, have you had enough funding?

Ms. S. Eddie:

Because the budget has gradually increased over the last 2 years and we have been able to implement more things gradually, it is not always possible when you first get the money to implement it anyway because often it is a case of making appointments to get people to do what it is that you want to do. We have been able to increase the opportunities over the last 2 years with that money and obviously there will be further opportunities in terms of inclusion which if it could be argued that that does not detract from the children's quality of education, but in terms of their long term development and inclusive society it is for their benefit.

Mr. M. Lundy:

Deputy, I think the point to make here is that Mont à l'Abbé is a very unique school. If you were to look to the U.K. you would probably find 2 or 3 schools doing the job that Mont à l'Abbé does. So, clearly that is because it is serving the needs of a smaller area.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Can I add, if you look to Guernsey, they export, which we do not.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Yes, we are aware of that.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

We think it is much better to keep the children on the Island and I believe Mont à l'Abbé is an outstanding school offering an outstanding service to our children with special needs.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Well, what I would say, Minister, is that we as a panel have made a visit to the school and were impressed with what we saw there, particularly bearing in mind that we are aware that there are constraints and pressures upon the staffing.

Mr. M. Lundy:

The evaluation reports, Mont à l'Abbé have shown that the children enjoy a first-class experience and that clearly we have a very dedicated and committed staff.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Yes, nevertheless we are aware that the funding needs to be found for the future. I would like to take you back to the Alvin Jeffs' Audit Report of 2005 and we have just been discussing the budgeting that has taken place over the last few years. It is not his recommendation, but I believe that these could be taken as recommendations on page 2 and 3. Recommendation O is that: "The development of an agreed budget should take place over a 3 year period with a joint audit taking place during 2006": so would you like to comment on that?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Well, the comment I will make is it is very difficult to introduce 3-year budgets for everything when the States has a one-year budget, and I do not know what my budget will be from one year to the next. I agree, I would like 3-year budgets full stop so that we could use rolling budgets and we could plan overall, and it is something that I have suggested to the Council of Ministers and the Treasury Ministers, but of course it would require States Members accepting a 3-year budget and not wishing to change the budget every year.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

The reference, Minister, to a joint audit taking place.

Mr. M. Lundy:

The joint audit was not a formal audit of the school. Our understanding of the recommendations at the time - and of course we discussed the recommendations - was that when they meant a joint audit, it was about the school working with our finance department to audit the needs of the school for the coming years, so that we would be in a position to identify the funding that would be

necessary. That has taken place, because quite clearly, last year we were in the position to start looking at the needs of the school for 2009, based on an audit of predicted needs.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

We are talking here about the needs of the school for 2009, and the fact that you, Minister, have had to go almost cap in hand to the Council.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

No, I am sorry, I do not accept that I went cap in hand.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

You do not agree?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

I believe I went and made a very strong case that this was a priority and explained the reasons why it was a priority and the Council of Ministers listened. I do not regard that as going cap in hand.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Well, maybe that was then an inappropriate choice of words. Nevertheless, you have had to go and ask again for additional funding. Now, initially you were told quite clearly that that funding was not forthcoming.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So something has changed and the funding is forthcoming. Now, next year, looking again to the future, will the Education Minister have to do the same thing, or has this funding been guaranteed?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

As far as I am aware, as long as the Council of Ministers and the States agree, this will be inscribed as ongoing within the budget, with the regular inflationary aspects. It will not be one-year; it is not a one-off, because obviously it is an ongoing requirement. We, as with all our schools and all our premises, will be looking at the budget requirements, and Mont à l'Abbé we accept needs this boost, and it may need a boost in the future. We will have to wait and see what happens. It depends on the number of the children, their need and also developments in the

education of special needs children, which as Sharon will know, has changed considerably over the years for the better.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So what you are saying, Minister, is that the funding, because it has been found - or it has been identified as being found by the Council - it is ongoing, it will not be necessary for the Education Minister to go and ask for additional funding in future years?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

No, the proposal is that it is inscribed in the base budget, and the base budget, as I explained before, is the budget that is taken from year to year as the base for working out the following year's budget.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So how will the additional funding that has now been identified be used?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Well, in a whole host of ways, which I will ask Sharon to run through. One of the things I am particularly pleased about, strangely enough, is the transport arrangements, because I am very pleased that will mean less time on buses for some of the children, but perhaps as Sharon will be implementing the budget, I could ask her to outline some ways in which it will be used.

Ms. S. Eddie:

About the previous point as well, can I just add obviously the development of the new secondary school, obviously that did have implications to the budget in terms of staff deployment, because it is a little bit more difficult to be as creative as we were when we were all on one site. So that sort of added to the pressures a little bit as we adjusted to the new site. As we expected, we were not fully aware what the challenges would be until we were there; we could predict some, but not all of them. So that did have an impact. In terms of the transport, we have always had a waiting list for our transport. Children have not had transport as a right and we have tried to develop strategies in school to manage that. We tried to discourage children under 7 from having a bus place, which did have benefits to the children and to the school in that we had a good relationship with the parents and it established that. But some parents really struggled with that, so we could not always stick to that policy. Some of the bus routes were very long, and some children were being picked up at 7.30 a.m. in the morning to get to school for 9.15 a.m. and they would be very tired, and it was not the best way to start the school day, and the bus routes were very complex. Some of the buses were quite old as well, so they were starting to cost the school more to maintain them. So the additional funding has meant that we now have an extra bus, which obviously an

extra bus means 2 extra staff to drive and to escort on the bus, and that has created some more places, but it means that the journeys are shorter. We do not have to fill up every space; it is safer, because children are not on the bus for so long, so they are not getting irate and frustrated. So it has had a big impact, both on the fact the parents now are more likely to get a bus place and the quality of education has improved, because the children are coming to school fresher in the morning.

Deputy S. Pitman:

When we came up to visit, I might be wrong in saying this, but you said that the transport arrangements were funded by charities. Is that right?

Ms. S. Eddie:

We have had buses bought for us in the past by charities. The Variety Club bought us a bus and we have always been very grateful for the bus. We fundraised for it, but they are not always of the specification that are ideal for us. When people are working on the bus, when it is their place of work, they need to be of the standard and they need to be able to get around the bus, and the buses were of quite a low spec.

Deputy S. Pitman:

So are you still in receipt of charitable funds for transport?

Ms. S. Eddie:

No, we do not need to. There is now a new cycle of bus replacements, so that none of the buses from now on will be more than 8 years old, which is the U.K. (United Kingdom) recommendation.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Are they adequate now for the children's needs and the school needs?

Ms. S. Eddie:

Yes. That will take a while to come into that, but that has been established now, so the older buses that we do not have now. We have had a new bus and we have had a new second-hand bus, which was more or less new, so they will replace.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Can I just clarify, the funding that has been identified has enabled you to purchase a new bus?

Ms. S. Eddie:

Yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

You also mentioned 2 additional staff, so you said 2 additional staff are needed for that. Are you now employing 2 additional staff as well?

Ms. S. Eddie:

Yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

As for the bus, but are they employed within the school in any way? I am not sure how you work.

Ms. S. Eddie:

Well, the bus staff just do the before and after school transportation. They are not employed in school during the day.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So your 2 staff are staff merely to aid the children on the bus journey?

Ms. S. Eddie:

Yes. They work approximately 20 hours a week.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So the additional funding, has it gone completely on that, or will it mean that the staffing levels for the teaching staff at the school will be increased?

Ms. S. Eddie:

The things that we have already managed to do this academic year, we have bought the bus; we have employed the bus staff to man the bus; we have employed extra lunchtime staff so that there is more flexibility with staff having breaks in the middle of the day. That does not account sometimes that you have a shortage of staff anyway, and I think that is when the pressure is coming. You just do not know whether you are going to be short staffed because somebody is absent. So we have put those things in place. With the new school, obviously we had one administrator for the school and obviously she cannot be in 2 places at the same time, so we have employed a part-time receptionist/secretary for the other site.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Talking about charitable funding, how much do you receive each year in charitable funds and how much do you receive from the States?

Ms. S. Eddie:

The charitable funding varies hugely. We do spend quite a lot of time either writing or trying to -- you know, especially with this situation with the buses before. A new bus can cost in the region - an ideal bus - of £50,000. So that is a lot of fundraising, and we rarely get that much. We have done our own fundraising and tried to match funds so that maybe a charity would provide and we would meet the rest. It takes a huge pressure off the school not to have to do that, and we certainly could not guarantee it. A lot of charitable organisations are getting a little bit more discerning now about whether they should be providing those things. It is a good thing and it is a bad thing.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Your charitable funds, if you did not have that, would that affect core services?

Ms. S. Eddie:

Charities do not pay for any staffing at all. We have always tried to use the charitable funding for extra resources, things that we would regard as a luxury, maybe something for a disadvantaged child or an extra.

Mr. M. Lundy:

Deputy, can I just say that some of the funding, it is not just for catch-up, it is used to enhance the service and to contribute to the broader inclusion agenda, so some of that funding will be used to support youngsters with transition into work or further education, some will be used to provide outreach service to mainstream schools, to support some of the children who will be able to spend some time in the mainstream schools. So it is about enhancing the service as well as trying to support the needs of the children in the school.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

A number of charities feel very strongly that they would like to help Mont à l'Abbé, and I think it would be extremely churlish to turn them away. So the school welcomes this charitable support because it is good all round. The charities wish to donate and Sharon can identify areas where you can have those little luxuries, for want of a better word, that can be provided.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I would like to go back to the presentation to States Members, Minister, that was given in the original Annual Business Plan. We all had a copy of the Annual Business Plan from you, and where the funding pressure was identified, it does have manpower implications noted down in what was stated from your department, and it was indicated that if the funding was to be provided,

there could be an increase in 2 times half a teacher, or 5 teaching assistants. Now, I do not believe that Ms. Eddie has referred to that at all in what you just mentioned regarding the additional funding, the usage to be made of the additional funding.

Ms. S. Eddie:

Is that referring to inclusion?

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

The department had to show the revenue implications, and that they were £370,000 ongoing short, but the manpower implications - the way we read it - was that this could either provide, if the funding was found, 2 times 0.5 teachers, or 5 teaching assistants. Now, have we read that correctly?

Mr. M. Lundy:

If you were to look at how the additional funding would be used in terms of supporting youngsters with our transition activities as they prepare to move on to a skilled adult, supporting youngsters who have the potential to undertake specific examinations, subject to D.C.S.A.(?) supporting early intervention and providing outreach service to mainstream schools, then that would be the type of staffing make-up that you would need in order to be able to deliver those services.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So is our interpretation right that reading this, it seemed to us that if you acquired that additional funding, this is what you would be spending the money on, either 2 times half a teacher or 5 teaching assistants?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

We identified the funding pressure through working with Sharon, and we have devolved financial management in our schools. We are convinced that this extra funding is needed and Sharon, as the head teacher, is the best person to know how this extra funding will achieve the best result. For example, there was mention of extra assistants or supervision at lunchtime, for example, so that the staff have more time to prepare and have a break; the assistants that we have to drive and be on the bus, for example, and also supporting youngsters within transition activities. What I do not do, and what I think would be totally wrong, is to dictate to a school exactly how they use the extra funding; I mean, they cannot use common sense and their own understanding of the school to use it in the best way possible, as and when circumstances demand?

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I am sure, Minister, that you do not dictate to schools, and quite rightly so. Nevertheless, the point we are making is that on the document that was made public, the Annual Business Plan, it shows that the manpower implications are 2 times half a teacher or 5 teaching assistants. The point that I may not be making clear is are we right to read into this, because it is under the revenue implications, that that is what was considered would be provided if the additional funding was received?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

At the time, that was what was considered would provide it. It is either or, but that circumstance has changed, and we allow head teachers certain responsibilities to apply sensibly.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

That is fine.

Ms. S. Eddie:

Each year, each cohort that comes through, they vary enormously. Sometimes we have a very able group of youngsters coming through, and the opportunity for them to do work experience or to go on to college are greater. You may be able to pair those up. You might be able to take 3 youngsters to a venue with one member of staff. Another year, they might be less able and it might be one member of staff with one pupil, or at times, 2 members of staff with one pupil. So I think the difference there in whether it was teaching staff or whether it was teaching systems would vary depending on how we needed to meet those needs.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So will the additional funding mean that you are able to provide appropriate staffing levels within the school?

Ms. S. Eddie:

It will mean that we can provide the opportunity to those youngsters to do work experience and go to college and be included with their mainstream peers, either at Haute Vallee or at another school, and those things we have not always been able to do.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So will the additional funding mean that staffing levels at the school will be at the appropriate level?

Ms. S. Eddie:

Yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Thank you. Are you intending to recruit additional staff?

Ms. S. Eddie:

Well, we have recruited some already.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

You have recruited the 2 for the bus. Are you recruiting any staff into your mainstream teaching, as it were?

Ms. S. Eddie:

Whether it will be teachers or whether it will be teaching assistants will be decided, depending on what the cohort will need for that period of time.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

As and when. That is fine. What I am leading to is that in the 2005 audit report, it spoke about potential issues affecting the recruitment and retention of staff. Do you in your area face more issues in recruitment and the retention perhaps than mainstream schools?

Ms. S. Eddie:

Than mainstream schools? Yes, yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

How do you deal with that?

Ms. S. Eddie:

It is quite difficult in terms of recruiting staff from within the Island, experienced teachers, because of course we are the only school. A lot of my teachers are employed from special schools in the U.K. who have that experience, and there can sometimes be a delay in getting an appropriate teacher.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

But the funding that was identified as being needed was appropriate to follow through on that recruitment process and recruit the staff with the necessary qualifications?

Ms. S. Eddie:

Yes, but they tend to be more expensive.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Yes, I am sure they do.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

It is specialised staff and it is very vocational, and we do very well to recruit staff.

Ms. S. Eddie:

Because the school is quite unique and because we have a very broad range of needs within the school, the expertise that is needed changes as well.

Mr. M. Lundy:

I think it is important to think of Mont à l'Abbé as slightly different to a primary school where there is a fixed staffing model; if you have 7 primary school classes, you have 7 primary school teachers. In Mont à l'Abbé, they may make temporary appointments; they may appoint for a year and then recognise that they may have to change their staffing structure the following year in order to meet the needs of some new children who are coming through, or because some children have left who were high need. So the school has to be able to manage a fluent staffing arrangement in order to be able to meet the needs of the children.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So that means presumably recruiting perhaps on a contract basis, rather than that?

Mr. M. Lundy:

Yes.

Ms. S. Eddie:

Sometimes, yes. Or sometimes skilling people up if you need a specific area of skill in the school, you are training people up that you think have the aptitude to do it, but there might be a time lag between that and then, so you might need 2 people to do a job that might eventually only require one person to do the job.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Do you feel that there is sufficient funds to train staff?

Ms. S. Eddie:

Training is quite a big issue in the school and I think the additional money will be used to enhance the professional development of staff. Because we are the only school, we have to get most of our trainers from the U.K., so that obviously is much more expensive than it would be for a primary school, and although the quality of training that is put on for mainstream schools is excellent in Jersey - and we do take advantage of that - we need very specialist training. In the U.K., I would have joined forces with other special schools and combined budgets to provide that training, but we cannot do that.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So with this extra funding, do you feel the additional training that it will provide will be sufficient for the needs of the staff and children?

Ms. S. Eddie:

I do hope so. I do hope so, but again, it is hard to predict what training you need each year.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I think we are drawing to the end of the questions we have on the funding pressure. However, I would just like to go back to the charitable funding, because in the Annual Business Plan, it states that the school has had to rely on the goodwill and co-operation of staff, as Ms. Eddie has confirmed, and local charitable organisations, which can no longer be sustained. Deputy Pitman has touched on the issue of funding through charitable contributions. My question to you is would the school operate at the minimum standards without charitable contributions?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Yes.

Mr. M. Lundy:

I think it is important to clarify that we do not believe the school is operating at minimum standards. The school is doing an excellent job, and it maintains a very, very high standard of education and support for the children and young people there. That is an important point to set out.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I hope that you do not think from our questioning that we have reason to believe that it is operating at those minimum levels. We are trying to establish at what levels it is operating or being operated at.

Ms. S. Eddie:

I think what is important is that if you think of mainstream education in existence since 1870, and all of the things that have gone on since then, and special education really has only been since 1970. The advancement, the developments are going on all the time are hugely impressive, and as a dedicated staff, we want to be providing the best for the children, and the technology that is needed, the strategies that we learn about, we want to implement. So what might be a minimum standard 10 years ago, or a good standard, would be unacceptable now. So we are constantly driving that forward.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Have you explained fully what the charitable funding does provide within the school, because let us be quite clear, when we came to undertake the visit, you told us then that you spend a lot of your time requesting funding from charities and indeed, you have repeated that here today. So can you just tell us briefly what that funding goes towards?

Ms. S. Eddie:

If I can give you 2 examples from this year, when we opened our new school in September - the facilities are fantastic, and I am sure you saw them when you came - a real enhancement to the school was a sensory room, which cost £12,000. Now, I would not necessarily expect the Education Department to have provided that for us, and we would have added to it bit by bit, but a local organisation wanted to fundraise for us and wanted it to be a significant item, so that £12,000 went to providing that sensory room. It is an extra that we benefit from a great deal. Another thing that the same organisation did was to enhance the playground. The playground was adequate, but it is much nicer; the fact that they wanted to spend that money.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

You said that you would not have expected the Education Department to fund that. What do you expect them to fund?

Ms. S. Eddie:

We would expect them to fund all of the essentials.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Which are?

Ms. S. Eddie:

Spacious classrooms, the children have adequate resources for their learning, that they have adequate staff to meet their needs and that we can fulfil the curriculum.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So it is a case that you do receive the funding for the essentials, but those extras that may make life easier for the staff and the pupils have to be obtained through charity?

Ms. S. Eddie:

They have been. They have been. That could stop at any time.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Does that mean that you do not need any more extras?

Ms. S. Eddie:

No, no.

Mr. M. Lundy:

I have to say, I have not yet met a head teacher who will say that they do not need any more extras.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

It was a leading question.

Ms. S. Eddie:

I want the best for the children and if there is something that I see that I think that someone might like for us, then I will say: "Yes, please."

Mr. M. Lundy:

The important differentiation here is that the school should be in a position to benefit from additional resources provided by charitable organisations, but the school should not have to depend on charitable organisations for the essential provisions for staff and children.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Indeed, we have heard that it does not. Just very briefly, the imminent building works on the school, I believe Deputy Pitman has a question on that.

Deputy S. Pitman:

The panel is aware of the construction work that is due to be undertaken at Mont à l'Abbé School. Documentation that we have received has referred to this work and stated that enabling work will be needed to create sufficient learning space to maintain the number of children on roll. What

work has been done or will be undertaken to mitigate the effects of the imminent building work on the performance of the school?

Ms. S. Eddie:

Okay. Well, to just put that into a context, we will be losing about half of the building. Quite a number of those students have now gone to the new secondary school, so that is not an issue. We have 3 classes that are still using the older part of the building. The portacabins that were used previously by some of the youngsters who have now gone to Haute Vallee have now been recommissioned so that they have all been recarpeted and refurbished, so that they are of a good standard. So that has been done. We have converted what was a kitchen area into a classroom for 2 boys who need a specific area, because they will be losing their classrooms. We will be losing the hydrotherapy pool, which is a bit of a blow, but we have put strategies in place for alternative venues, and we accept that we will have to be without that facility to get something better in 2 years' time. We will also be losing our kitchen, because we have school meals - excellent school meals - and a dining area, so there is a new temporary kitchen being built during the summer holidays adjoining the gym, and the gym will have to double up, be very multi-purpose and become a dining room as well as an assembly hall and everything, really.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So you are satisfied that you have put all the contingencies measures in place?

Ms. S. Eddie:

We put strategies in the school as well for rearranging classes so that we have slightly bigger -- it will be a challenge, but it will be worth it.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

It sounds as if your whole career is a challenge at Mont à l'Abbé.

Ms. S. Eddie:

Well, who would want it boring?

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I think we would like to move on now. As I say, we have finished the funding, and we would just like to look, Minister, at your overall policies for social inclusion, and just ask very briefly what your policies are on social inclusion within education?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Yes, well, it is a duty on myself in relation to children's special needs which is set out in the Education (Jersey) Law 1999 and the policy for inclusion, if I can quote: "It is the policy of the States of Jersey Department of Education supporting culture that for everyone in a school community, barriers to learning and participation are reduced to allow inclusion; pupils are placed in the education environment which best meets their needs, taking into account the views of all concerned and the effective and efficient use of resources, and where possible, pupils with special education needs are educated within mainstream schools." From that policy, really everything else flows as to how --

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Do you have a special educational needs policy?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Yes, an inclusion policy, yes.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Which is?

Mr. M. Lundy:

I think we can probably provide you with copies of our special needs. It is not a policy. There are many policies.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

There is more than one.

Mr. M. Lundy:

There are many policies in respect of special needs, and I think the folder is probably about this big, so we can certainly provide you with a copy of that, which outlines all the various policies in respect of it.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

For example, Highlands have their own special needs policy, inclusion policy.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

The brief information that we have is that all pupils aged 2 to 19 with special educational needs will receive appropriate support, and Minister, I would just like to ask you briefly on the difference in age. It seems to me that my understanding is that the statutory requirements are for you, as

Minister, to provide education for children up to 16. Why is there the difference between for special needs to 19?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Because they have special needs. I mean, it really is as straightforward as that.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Is this peculiar to Jersey?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

No, the U.K. also provide for special needs children up to the age of 19; and it is recognised that they need this extra care and attention and schooling and education so as we can prepare them as well as we can for life outside and after school.

Mr. M. Lundy:

If a child, for example, with a special need that did not prevent them from going into the workplace, post-16, then clearly that may or may not be something that would require some support. One of the differences between Jersey and the U.K. is that the Minister provides support for children and young people in education up to the end of their 19th year. In the U.K. in the Learning and Skills Development Council further funding can be accessed for young people up to, I think, about 24 years of age so there is a different provision there. But that funding is to enable those young people to gain access to tertiary education and furthering tertiary education. Because Highlands College falls on to the department we can ensure that Highlands College is able to provide for youngsters coming through with special needs.

Deputy S. Pitman:

In that you provide grants to give the children -- sorry, to the young people?

Mr. M. Lundy:

The provision of special needs is not around grant aid, it is about providing direct support. The support would be determined according to the needs of the child. For example, for one child to access further education, for example, if that child had a visionary problem it might be something around a concept keyboard or something like that. For another child it might be around one to one support - key worker support. So the needs of the child dictate the type of support and the level of the support.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

You mentioned, Mr. Lundy, Highlands College. Can you just tell us what role Highlands does play in providing education for special needs?

Mr. M. Lundy:

Highlands College is, under the law, a provided school. So the inclusion policy that applies to all our schools also applies to Highlands College. The difference, of course, is that youngsters post-16 are not in statutory education, but if young people come through to Highlands College, apply for Highlands College and gain admission to Highlands College because there is perceived benefit of them being there, then they would be supported in whatever way was appropriate. This year there are probably more applications to Highlands College from children with special needs than there have been in the past, and we are looking at the arrangements that will need to go in place at the college in order to support those children. It will be a plethora of arrangement. It will not just be about staffing.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

What about funding arrangements for special needs at Highlands College? We were told that there is no funding given specifically for special needs.

Mr. M. Lundy:

There is some funding given to Highlands College specifically for special needs but you may be aware through the work that we are doing with the Skills Executive that there is a new funding model under debate for Highlands College at this moment with a view to its implementation in 2009, and that funding model will formalise the arrangements for special needs funding at the college.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Why is it not formalised now?

Mr. M. Lundy:

The funding arrangement that the college has had has been historical, as in the past with many of our schools, and this is about changing the funding arrangement to ensure that it recognises the needs and the task that the college has been set to do.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

How have you been able to identify what funding should be given to Highlands College?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Are we talking about generally or in special needs?

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

No, for special needs. Because you say there was no formal funding process.

Mr. M. Lundy:

It is about determining the need. One cannot assume that the need of a youngster at 5 years of age in terms of support is going to be the same when they get to 16, so there is a constant review of the need. What will happen is our principal educational psychologist, through her team, will assess the needs of individual youngsters going through to the college and agreeing with the college the level of support that needs to be provided. Some of that support may be provided within the college's existing budget, its own budget. There may be a requirement for some additional funding to go in, but is, in a sense, associated with the child rather than Highlands College. So if we decided to put in, for example, half time teaching assistant to support the child then the half time teaching assistant working with that child would only remain part of the college's funding as long as the child was in the college.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Does that mean, in fact, that the funding for special needs that is given to Highlands varies year on year?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Yes, it can do. It can vary over a period, yes. As the director was saying, we can provide you with Highlands College's policies on special education and learning support where every child with special needs is regarded individually and is worked out with Jo, as well, and Sharon from their knowledge of the child, what support that child will need throughout the college and then the college has got its budget. If it needs extra funding to support a special needs child or children it will approach its funder - us - and make the case.

Mr. M. Lundy:

What the Minister has essentially asked officers to do is to look at how we can predict the needs of children and young people going through the system and provide some sort of contiguous funding right from the early years through to Highlands College, should they so wish to go. If we were able to do that and attach that to some sort of formula then I think we would take a fair amount of the -- and there is some guesswork involved. It would take a fair amount of the guesswork out of it and we would have a very clear plan for the future for individuals.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Is that, Mr. Lundy, what you said will be happening going forward with the Skills ...?

Mr. M. Lundy:

That is what we are talking about when we are looking at reviewing the funding mechanism for special needs. The college does get a small fixed amount, I think, around about £170,000-odd for special needs but that is for the broad range of special needs. Perhaps it would be useful if a principal educational psychologist could explain to you the general tiers of need and what we call school action plus, because that clarifies how we fund the arrangement.

Ms. J. Forrest:

The terminology is school but the principal holds for colleges as well. The idea is that the general arrangements in the school or college should be as inclusive as possible so that the teachers and lecturers should be differentiating in the way they are delivering to accommodate as broad a range of need within what is 'not special' as possible, and you would have seen that around the schools. All schools and the college have an educational needs co-ordinator who is charged with overseeing when they have to do anything additional or different around either an individual or a group of children or young people; so that they may be putting on extra groups, for literacy say or something that will be managed on the college level or a school level rather than a class level. You would call that 'School Action'. 'School Action Plus' refers to when the needs of the child or young people is so severe or complex that they need to seek advice from a specialist outside the school, which might be one of us, it might be a speech therapist. But the programme then will still consist of how the child or young person is supported to participate in general lessons and lectures, what group support they might access and that is for fewer children obviously. Then for fewer children and young people, still, what individual arrangements might be made round them. So that is a holding principle known as the 'graduated response' to special needs throughout the system.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Minister, talking about individual needs, we can only imagine what parents with children with special needs have to face and deal with in their day to day lives. Some of our background research has shown that very often it is the case that he who shouts loudest gets what they want. I am sure you know what I mean when someone -- a parent comes to you and says: "My child needs this, this and this" and some parents are more vocal than others. How do you, as a department, ensure that all cases are dealt with on an equitable basis?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Professionally. By the professional advice and assessments we have and ... I thought for a moment, when you said he who shouts loudest you were referring to the States. Parents obviously want the very best they can get for their children and we want the very best we can give to all children, particularly the children with special needs. So I do mean that, we use our professional expertise we have in the department to judge, as Jo was just explaining, what those needs are and how they should be met. Whether the parent speaks very quietly or whether they shout very loudly.

Mr. M. Lundy:

The determination of the parents are engaged in the process but the process is not just the department responds to what the parent has identified as the needs of the child. There would be a proper assessment and in more complex cases there would be a multi-agency assessment that would involve professionals from health as well. There is a very clear process that has gone through there. One of the difficult areas is where you have a special resource, for example, like Mont à l'Abbé School and you feel that Mont à l'Abbé is resourced and geared up to meet the needs of the child adequately, more than adequately, and the parent wants the child to be in a mainstream school with additional support. One of the challenges there is working out what is in the best interests of the child. If it is the best interest of the child to be in the mainstream school then, of course, while you may be resourcing Mont à l'Abbé to deal with those needs you may also have to resource that child separately to support them in mainstream education. So that is one of the real challenges but it has got to be driven by the needs of the child and what is in the best interest of the child as opposed to maybe what other people perceive to be in the best interest of the child.

Deputy S. Pitman:

How does that apply to young people who want to go off to university?

Mr. M. Lundy:

Well, it would apply in the sense that they would have to meet the standard for university. We have, in the past, supported young people who have gone off to university, not with physical resources because that would clearly be not an efficient use of resources, but we have in the past, for example, provided some technology that would assist a young person in accessing a university course.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I think we are almost at the end of our questions. Do you just want to come down to these?

Deputy S. Pitman:

You just mentioned about this multi-agency approach. What particular liaison occurs between you and your department and the Department of Health and Social Services investing in the needs of these young people?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Perhaps Jo could talk about the liaison we have.

Ms. J. Forrest:

We have liaison around individual children and we have liaison about service delivery. So that for every child or young person who has a significant special need, either because of either severity or complexity, we will do a multi-agency assessment which will involve whichever personnel from Health and Social Services is appropriate. It might be a social worker, it might be a speech therapist, it might be a doctor, a paediatrician. We will do a combined assessment which will result in a 'Record of Need' drawn up with the recommendations of all those people. We will then review that at least annually with all the people that are contributing. That happens around individual children. Now, we also have arrangements, such as with Mont à l'Abbé, where Family Nursing and Home Care provide nursing support for the school. For some of the speech and language groups that we have, for very young children a speech therapist is provided to work. One of the people in my team, the Education Support Team, is a specialist speech and language key worker funded by the Speech and Language Therapy Service. Health and Social Services are part funding an educational welfare officer, for instance. There are a number of structural connections on the one side, and on the other side there is this assessment system, a Record of Need system, which is specifically focusing around an individual child.

Mr. M. Lundy:

Strategically there is the joint secretariat which is the vehicle that co-ordinates the business of the States and other agencies, charities particularly, in respect of special needs. So Health and Social Services, Education, Sport and Culture, Mencap, Autism Jersey, carers associations, et cetera. Then quite clearly around special need or the broader inclusion agenda for, for example, children and young people with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties; there is the Corporate Parents.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Which are the Ministers of Education, Sport and Culture, Health and Social Services, Home Affairs. We also have a social policy strategy group at ministerial level looking at social policy in general with those Ministers plus the Minister for Housing. Of course, now we have the Skills

Executive which are the Ministers for Education, Sport and Culture, Economic Development and Social Security where we are looking at employment and skills training.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

This inter-departmental working sounds as if it is working well because you are identifying the needs of the child, but how is it decided upon which department will finance these services?

Mr. M. Lundy:

The board premise really is that the Education, Sport and Culture Department will fund the educational needs of the child and Health and Social Services would fund the medical or care needs of the child. That is broadly --

Senator M.E. Vibert:

Social Security will look at the family's needs in terms of supporting the family outside of the education and health areas.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Are you happy, Minister, with this funding arrangement? Do you think there are any ways it could be improved?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

There are always ways in which things can be improved and, as with if you ask anybody working in the area, of course, more funds will always help with everything. But within the funds we have got we try to ensure that the agencies work together as closely as possible so that we always have the best interests of the child at the centre and everybody is working towards that interest.

Ms. J. Forrest:

Is it worth mentioning the children and young people plan idea?

Mr. M. Lundy:

I think the important thing around that is to -- I mean there is some inter-agency work which you picked up in the Early Years' document around looking at children's plan for the future. I think the important thing to realise is that there will inevitably be discussions around what the need is and who should fund it. I mean that is a normal part of it and it is appropriate because it is appropriate governance and accountability of those funds. So quite clearly there would be times when Health might expect Education to fund something that Education might expect Health to fund. But the arrangements for working through that, the discussions I think are usually very constructive, very helpful and end up with the appropriate arrangements in place for the children who need it.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Talking again about multi-agency approach; how much is the youth service included in this and how much provision is there within the youth service to work with these young people?

Mr. M. Lundy:

The youth service is not supported in the same way because quite clearly the young people themselves are the ones who decide whether to connect with the youth service.

Deputy S. Pitman:

That is what I mean, providing the facilities like wider doorways and things like that.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

That will be built in with any refurbishment or redevelopment of the youth club. We have inclusion in some ... young people will go to youth clubs and be included in that, some have special nights, I have attended a number of them, and we try to have inclusion where possible but we also offer special facilities for groups where that is more appropriate.

Mr. M. Lundy:

On the broader sort of really, not specifically just youth work, but in a sense working with youth, the whole project that is being driven forward by David Kennedy on behalf of Sport, is in fact an inclusion project. You would have seen the recent press on that; by engaging young people in meaningful activities, sports activities, et cetera, and that has had -- it has been a tremendous success and has had immediate impact.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Mr. Kennedy has training in this area, I assume?

Mr. M. Lundy:

Mr. Kennedy's training is in football and engagement with young people in activities such as that. So it is a useful adjunct to probably the more formal aspect of youth work.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

With special needs, for example, one of the outstanding successes from Mont à l'Abbé has been the gym club under someone who has great expertise in special needs, and that has been fantastic and I think, Sharon would say, very rewarding for the young people who take part. That is an example of how a special activity can be run. There are also football teams now, and so on.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Do you have specific youth workers who are trained in this field?

Mr. M. Lundy:

The Detached Youth Worker Project is specifically about engaging some of the more harder to reach youngsters. I mean there is a whole plethora of activities around engaging the hard to reach with a view to including them.

Deputy S. Pitman:

This is special needs I am talking about.

Ms. J. Forrest:

Hannah Clark is the special needs youth officer.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

We have a special needs youth officer.

Deputy S. Pitman:

Do you monitor how many young people and children use these, who do have special needs?

Mr. M. Lundy:

Not at department level. The youth service themselves may monitor it but we do not have access to the statistics at the moment, but we could get them.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Talking about social inclusion, which is a broad term, we asked you earlier what your policies are for social inclusion within education and one of you, I think maybe, Mr. Lundy, offered to send us some information on that. Would you just tell us briefly how your policies in Jersey or the policies in Jersey compare to those within the U.K.?

Mr. M. Lundy:

In many ways they are similar. Certainly in terms of the identification of need and levels of support. They are probably less -- I would say the implementation in Jersey is less bureaucratic than in the U.K.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

In what way?

Mr. M. Lundy:

It is more streamlined, there are a whole raft of processes that one needs to go through in terms of assessment in trying to secure the resources that you need. There is a whole accountability framework around special needs money in the U.K., which is very necessary because if you think that the schools are all -- each school is its own employer, in a sense, the governing body of their own employment, so the government or local authority has to put in place measures to ensure that the money that is used, that is granted to the schools is used appropriately. That is less of an issue in Jersey because we ring-fence it. So we take a view about the basic level of need in each of our schools and we expect the resources to be spent in those areas and we have very simple processes for monitoring whether or not that is the case. So I think it is a more streamlined set up and I think that that means that there is less discussion about the resources and more discussion about the needs of the child.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

How is it assessed or how do you, as a department, assess that your policies are working in Jersey?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

We review them regularly. In fact, we are carrying out a review of our inclusion policy from the Business Plan for 2009, so we will be looking at our inclusion policy, looking how well is it working, how can it be improved, taking on suggestions, talking to the schools, so we get evidence and take evidence from where it is happening. One must always regularly review, update and improve policies and we will be doing inclusion described in the 2009 Business Plan.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Minister, you have of course anticipated my follow up question to what I just asked Mr. Lundy. We know that you intend to undertake this review because you wrote to us recently to advise us of it; how often do you undertake reviews of social inclusion and why have you decided to do it in 2009?

Mr. M. Lundy:

We have undertaken specific reviews in the past, so for example we have had, I think, in the last 5 to 6 years 2 reviews of Mont à l'Abbé School. One was around the funding arrangements, another was around the arrangements. The Kathy Bull report was, in effect, a review of social inclusion for 11-16 schools and the engagement of other departments in other areas of the States of Jersey and working with young people with severe emotional and behavioural difficulty. This is probably the first time that we have undertaken an Island-wide review. When we evaluate a school we look at the arrangements that that school puts in place for inclusion. What we are

looking at here is how this system works across the schools, the impact of the inclusion policy on the schools - I mean a good example of something we might look at there is you want to include all the young people that you possibly can in a mainstream secondary school. If that young person's needs are emotional and behavioural what is the impact of that on other children in the school? What policies, what strategies does the school put in place to manage any tensions that might be there? So this is a look at how had the policies for inclusion worked right across the system. What schools do it very well? What schools may need additional support?

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

You have just mentioned some of the areas you hope to look at. Is it early stages for this yet or have you -- I would think that probably you have not finalised exactly what you will be undertaking or terms of reference.

Mr. M. Lundy:

Jo Forrest is the lead on this and is developing those.

Ms. J. Forrest:

What we have done...it is in the Business Plan: we have set aside some financial resource. At the end of this month we are meeting to review the first year of delegating inclusion funding to schools, and that is a body that has got...Sharon's there, Mario's there, finance people are there, representatives of the schools with special provisions, all the secondary schools, a number of the primary schools; all represented. When we have done our business in that meeting I am going to use the fact that those people are all together to have what will be our first discussion about how we will shape this review because we want some external view. I am quite hard pressed to think of...it is going to have to be quite a special person because it is not just somebody who runs inclusion in a school. It is going to have to be somebody who has got experience of working at authority level.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Sorry, are you talking about bringing someone in to advise?

Ms. J. Forrest:

Yes. What we are proposing to do is have an on-Island group of practitioners and people who are delivering inclusion and I want to work with them to jointly scope what we are going to do and how we want to use an external person because a review needs to have an external view, needs to have that degree of external challenge. But because my motivation for...why I am pleased to have been asked to do this is because what I am really interested in is the day to day experience, the lesson by lesson experience, of the more vulnerable children and challenged children or even

challenging children: what is their lesson by lesson experience? I want this review to generate the agenda for the way we develop social inclusion in the Island from 2009 in. So we are looking for a steer that will direct a lot of the business that I am involved with.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

You want to scope from on-Island consultation where the review will go but for the review to be undertaken by an external consultant?

Ms. J. Forrest:

In part. Some of the activities that I think we will need to do are fairly fine grained. Some of it will have to be within schools and an external reviewer can look at the structure as a whole and the larger things but, frankly, unless you employed them to be here for a year, they would never get to the stuff to the people who are delivering them.¹ So we are trying to cover both ends at once.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

What is the timeframe for this review?

Ms. J. Forrest:

We will be looking to identify our external person and have things scoped during the autumn term.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Of 2008?

Ms. J. Forrest:

Yes we are in the Business Plan for 2009 - so that we ought to be able to start some of the activity that has been done by on-Island personnel prior to 2009. But the external person will come in then and will be working throughout 2009.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

So a long review then?

Ms. J. Forrest:

Yes. I want to get right in there, so it is not a hit and run review.

¹ The witness subsequently clarified that she had referred to the fact that an external reviewer might in the circumstances described not reach those involved in the 'day to day delivery' of the service.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Obviously the fact that, Minister, you have advised us that you will be undertaking a review next year of social inclusion has meant that we are going to give further consideration as to whether or not we undertake a review of social inclusion at Mont à l'Abbé School, which is what we had intended to do initially. That is a discussion for us to have. In the meantime, you told us in your correspondence that you would hope that Scrutiny could be involved with the review in some way and can you tell us how you would envisage that happening?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

I would envisage that happening by having a dialogue with you. Not in telling you what I would like you to do but to work with you to see how Scrutiny can add value to any review we do. It is a subject very close to my heart, as another States Member might say, because in a previous life I used to be a special needs teacher a long time ago. So it is a review I want undertaken, and Jo is right, we are not going to do this a skim of it, we are going to get right into it and do a thorough, professional review which hopefully will take us forward. I welcome Scrutiny discussing this with us so that we can see if Scrutiny want to and can add value to this review.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

I think what I need to say, of course, is that we do not know who will sit on the Scrutiny Panel next year.

Senator M.E. Vibert:

And I have no idea who will be Minister for Education, Sport and Culture.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

But certainly, what we will do is, if we decide to not go ahead with the Mont à l'Abbé review, we will certainly leave indications for the next panel that they should be aware that this review is being undertaken and whether or not they can add anything to it. I think, finally, Minister, I would just like to touch on P.102 which was lodged recently by Deputy Gorst of St. Clement, which is the strategy for inclusive vocational day services and employment. You may not have had much time to read it because it was only lodged on 17th June. But it does refer in there to request the Ministers for Social Security, Education, Sport and Culture and Health and Social Services to review and consider the strategy that is proposed. Do you have any comments on this to date as Minister for Education?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

I am very supportive of the principles it tries to achieve. I think it is very important that we have, I think - and to save Sharon's blushes - but a superb provision for young people with special needs

up to the age of 19 and I do not think the Island, in my view, does enough for 19 onwards. More and more young people are going to be, to put it bluntly, surviving into adulthood and we need to do more to make sure that they can live an active life and take a fuller part in the whole of life, including employment, as possible.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

If the strategy was adopted, what impact do you think it would have on your department?

Senator M.E. Vibert:

I think the impact it may have is that if there was a more prolific agency dealing with and making provision for young people when they leave Mont à l'Abbé, for example, that Sharon obviously, and the school, would have a very close relationship with that provision so that we would have a seamless transition. That would be the idea. Also it would have implications, of course, for Highlands College through the Skills Executive because we would be looking to provide the skills that would be required for young people to go on and take a much fuller part in Island life.

Deputy D.W. Mezbourian:

Thank you for that. Just to sum up then, Mr. Lundy, I believe you have offered to send us some information on the policies of the department on special needs and social inclusion. Minister, just to remind you that you will be asking the Treasury Minister tomorrow how he has identified the funding for Mont à l'Abbé and we, too, will be approaching him on that. So, I would like to thank you all for coming to speak to us today and for taking part in the hearing. You will hopefully receive the transcription maybe by the end of the week. Thank you very much.