

STATES OF JERSEY

Education and Home Affairs Panel Police Headquarters Review

THURSDAY, 29th NOVEMBER 2012

Panel:

Deputy J.M. Maçon of St. Saviour (Chairman)
Connétable M.P.S. Le Troquer of St. Martin
Connétable S.W. Pallett of St. Brelade
Mr. M. Haden (Scrutiny Officer)

Witnesses:

Senator B.I. Le Marquand (The Minister for Home Affairs)
Mr. B. Taylor (Deputy Chief Officer)
Deputy E.J. Noel of St. Lawrence

[15:17]

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Good afternoon and welcome, gentlemen. Yes, you will be all be aware of the circumstances regarding the States sitting last week, and in turn, its referral back to this panel, despite our work, with particular regard to the Police Association and their concerns and the representations and the issues surrounding that. Perhaps first of all to thank you for the copying in and sending us all the statements and the letters and the responses. That has been very helpful and useful to the panel. I wonder if I just can begin, Minister for Home Affairs, to ask - following the States sitting - can you explain to us what processes you have undergone in order to tackle the issues arising from the referral back to the Scrutiny Panel?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I do not know what those issues are, I am afraid. I am aware that there were some issues raised with the Association, but I do not know. This is where I think it is likely that Mr. Taylor will know those in more detail.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

I will refer that question to you, Mr. Taylor.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I will comment on them later, once I know what they are.

Deputy Chief Officer:

Thank you, Chair. Thank you for the opportunity to attend the panel meeting this afternoon. I think the issues arose really following a briefing session that was arranged for States Members which was held in St. Paul's Centre on Monday, 19th November, immediately prior to the States debate. Members of the Police Association were in attendance at that presentation, which was given by people from Property Holdings and myself and the Ministers were present also. I think as a consequence of some of the questions that emerged during the course of that debate, some issues were raised by the Police Association, as a consequence of which matters were then referred back to the Police Association to make a response to the Scrutiny and clarify some of the points that were raised. As a result of that, Project and Facilities Manager and myself met with the Police Association after that debate. They provided us with copies of a number of questions that had come from their membership that we wanted to address and we met again a couple of days later or so with them one evening and we went through every question line by line and produced a response. I think as a consequence of that meeting, we have been able to address all their points. They then responded to your panel, which they have presented to you this afternoon. We did meet with the Association immediately after their annual general meeting, which I think was held on 25th October. There was a slight change in some of the membership of the committee, and it was entirely appropriate that we brief the new committee on this project, and those steps have been taken throughout the project and hitherto. We had 2 sessions with 3 members of the committee on 2 separate days, and prior to the final session we had with them just a week or so ago, we went through each of the stages of the project and again satisfied the questions that had come forward from the Association. Prior to the A.G.M. (Annual General Meeting), there was a slightly different composition of the Police Association Committee, and the previous President of the Committee [] had been involved hitherto in some of the consultations that had taken place. There have been extensive consultations across the force with staff, Staff Association and members of staff at the police headquarters as we moved into what is now the current phase post the Lime Grove issue, where we had to go back to the drawing board and look at refining the development and the opportunities for looking for a new site. Together with Taylor Young architects, we ran a series of workshops and drop-in days. I think we have already provided the Scrutiny Panel with a timetable of those and some of the attendees, and those were very successful, very, very helpful

indeed to the process we needed to go through to get to the stage we are now, where we are making an application for planning. Perhaps just by way of clarification, it might be helpful to put that into context, where we are in the process. The Royal Institute of British Architects, RIBA, do have guidance on their website in relation to the planning process, and there in fact are 11 stages they go through from inception to finalisation of any project. We are at stage D now, which is where we have had to develop plans, proof of concept, whatever, to go forward to seek planning approval. In fact, the level of detail we have gone into thus far is perhaps beyond what would normally happen at stage D. Once the decision is taken by the planning authorities and, for instance, if approval were given, we then move into stage E, and that is normally the very detailed planning about layouts and the internal provision of services within a building, and that is where that would normally take place. The reason we have gone to the level of detail we have thus far is largely because we have a fixed budget; our budget has not been increased by inflation for a number of years. We have gone into that level of detail really simply to satisfy that the building can meet our user requirement and it can be built within budget, and that is why we have gone into the level of detail we are in now. But we have consulted on those more detailed plans at stage D, and in fact that has been very helpful to receive feedback from members of staff who have come forward with some very good ideas and certainly the most recent consultations we have had with the Police Association over recent days again have been very constructive, and you have heard some of the comments this afternoon that they have put forward, and those comments are particularly useful now going forward into stage E. That is exactly where we should be addressing that level of detail and making changes to the plans, but also finalising any significant developments within the building. For instance, I think one of the suggestions that was made is having direct access from the front inquiry desk area to the custody suites through appropriate secure locks and things. That is absolutely right. We welcome that, and that is a very good observation that has come forward. That is the sort of thing we would want to address in stage E and that is where we are going. So the feedback we have thus far has been very, very positive, and we can address all the points that have been made when we go to that stage.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can I just go back to the briefing? When were you aware that this extra consultation was going on with the Police Association, because obviously I was there and other Members were there, and we were quite surprised by this sort of new evidence or

this consultation coming to light. Were you aware at the time and have you got any comment to make on the timing of it, because it was only a few days before the potential debate and it certainly threw the debate off-kilter.

Deputy Chief Officer:

It was rather late in the day, but I think what the new Police Association membership have done, the committee have done, is very helpful. They have had a change of personnel, they have had a different approach to doing things. They have sought to consult their colleagues in a different way perhaps than it had hitherto, and the feedback we have had has been very positive in being able to address it and it has helped us move the project along. So I welcome that. It was perhaps rather late in the day. In fact, we met I think on 2 occasions with yourselves, the Scrutiny Panel, with the previous President of the Police Association, who expounded his views and opinions about the scheme, and then inbetween things happening, the finalisation of the report, the committee membership changed and they adopted a different approach. I think it is probably just a matter of timing to some extent, but the product of the work has been very useful and it has certainly been of great benefit to us moving this whole thing forward.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Obviously the 21 representations covered a vast range of different things.

Deputy Chief Officer:

Yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Were you surprised by the level of concerns or were there things that you were expecting in many ways?

Deputy Chief Officer:

In some ways, yes. You cannot consult every member of staff, although we are a fairly small organisation, there is about 300 of us, but you cannot get directly to every member of staff necessarily. But we have endeavoured to do that through the level of consultation we have had and the frequency and number of consultations we have had with members of staff, departmental heads, teams, individuals as well to consult them all along the way about what we are proposing to do on this site and how the building would work for them. They have the answers, frankly. I am leading this

project from a police perspective, but I do not have the answers. I need to consult with my staff to find out and take their views on this, because we want the best thing for Jersey or the best thing for our police force, and we want really to make this a very effective civic building and make it work properly.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

That came out at the previous hearing obviously with the Police Association. I think there was just one particular area of the custody suite, for example, where the best people to ask about the custody suite are the guys that have got to go in there and do it each day, and do you feel that there has been the right level of consultation with the staff in regards to specific issues such as custody?

Deputy Chief Officer:

I do. I think the consultation has taken many forms. When we got it to stage B, we had sort of just concept designs, block designs, general spaces. We knew from the work we had done when we set the user requirement of what the needs of individual departments or units would be, and we have gone back, revisited that several, several times, particularly with the Lime Grove issue as well. A lot of that was rehearsed there, and then we refined that as we moved into this later stage. So the level of detail in terms of what the precise user requirement for every function has been, and also the relationship between one unit against another, so we get the relationships right in the building, that has been very useful.

[15:30]

We have met with senior managers, we have met with middle managers, we have met with individual members of staff who perform the function. We have met with them in a team capacity as well as individually. We have done that formally with architects, who can take them through how the building works. There are some different ways of working, invariably because the buildings we have now are no longer fit for purpose, they are inflexible, but what we have tried to do in the design for this particular building is introduce 21st century concepts, 21st century standards and office designs, and that is why it is a different way of working, no doubt about that. There are some significant changes there and enhancements which will make for a far better working environment.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

My major concern - I think our major concern - is obviously you want the best possible building for the staff you can get, but what we had not had, I think, with our report up to that stage is feedback from the ground level, feedback from the guys. I think that is what my big concern was that came out that briefing, this is the first time really we have had the officers on the ground floor level, the guys at the coalface giving us some views. I think that is why it was a bit concerning that it had come at such a late stage.

Deputy Chief Officer:

I can understand that. I mean, in fairness, they had fed back to us, both the J.P.H. (Jersey Property Holdings) project team, the architects and the police managers, police team working alongside the other individuals and we have had individual feedback and team feedback and there have been a number of iterations of these plans - probably 10, 20 maybe - as we have worked things through, taking account of the feedback and trying to get things right. In some cases, you had a total redesign of some of the floors to make sure that works, and that has been really positive. I think what you have not seen necessarily as part of the process is physical written feedback from individuals. It has largely been done on a verbal basis. There have been some written comments, of course there have, but it has not largely been written down, it is direct feedback to the architects and the planners in that arena.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Mr Minister, I wonder if I can ask you, we saw from the consultation responses from the officers regarding the issue or potential issue of safety at the end of tour of duty returning perhaps to the vehicles for the officers, or indeed the vehicles themselves, and we noted we have previously mentioned this to you, and we understood that ... or what I recollect was it was an issue which had not really raised its head. I wonder, have you had an opportunity to reconsider this particular matter?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

It is not quite right to say it has not raised its head, because I think Mr. Taylor on previous occasions had mentioned that a later stage there would need to be ... was it travel plan?

Deputy Chief Officer:

Travel plan, yes.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

There would need to be work done on a travel plan in relation to individual officers having come to and from. I think that in a sense I have to say that no system is perfect, and indeed, the current situation where officers are leaving work late at night, they are obviously going to be leaving the station and going into public areas to wherever their transport is now. In terms of arrangements in the future, obviously a great deal is going to depend upon where officers are going to have parked their vehicles and as to where they are going, but I do not personally see that there is any great difference in principle to parking your vehicle, shall we say, down in ... sorry, my brain is not working very well today.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

That is all right, take your time.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

The large shared car park by the hospital, hypothetically, and walking down that way, having finished a tour of duty, or walking into the Green Street car park or the Snow Hill car park or the third car park in the area, which is at La Route du Fort, or indeed of course there may be some officers who will have motorbikes parked up. I am not sure I understand why it would be perceived that there was any real change of risk associated with this particular area as opposed to the existing area, bearing in mind that we are talking about officers leaving at night time, and the existing station is on one of the main pedestrian routes out from the centre of town, a case with this station as well.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

The area there though, we mentioned it earlier this afternoon, it is while we are doing this for the Island, we want everything to be better, not: "It will be similar to what we have got now" because they have to walk to Patriotic Street now, so they will have to ... I think that is one of the areas of concern, is if we are going to make a new police station, it is going to be better - that is obvious, because it cannot be worse - but then we do not want to have the same things with parking, and there is a few spaces where ... if you get in at 9.00 a.m. in the morning at the moment in the covered police car park, you are lucky if you can get out until 6.00 p.m. or 7.00 p.m. in the evening, until somebody else has gone or you are moving every other officer's vehicle and they are getting bumped and damaged. So it would have been the opportunity to look for spaces. Not free parking, I do not think any member in the Association has

said free parking, quite happy to pay for parking, but it is to have parking available, because it is unsociable.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

It is kind of ironical that with this particular build that is sited right in the middle of 3 public car parks, Green Street, which even after change will have 500 spaces; Snow Hill, which is 90 and La Route du Fort, which has - I am estimating it - I would say about 70 spaces. So it is better served in terms of access and availability of parking nearby for officers, I would argue, than the existing one.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

But to be fair, officers in their representations here, quite a few have said parking is a major issue for them coming on duty, call-ins and it is a vein that runs through all of this, and they said exactly what has just been said, they do not mind paying. Is it just not a solution to say: "Let us have a dedicated area of Green Street for police parking" and then all these issues go away? They have parking that they can use, they will pay for it. Is that not an issue that you can take up with T.T.S. (Transport and Technical Services) and say: "Let us have 30, 40, 50 spaces dedicated for this"?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Anything is possible, but of course that runs contrary to those who might wish to oppose this particular plan upon the basis of reduction of space in Queen Street.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

If I can just pick up on that point, at least the proposed location gives that option and it is not ruled in, it is not ruled out. That is the type of discussions we would be having as Property Holdings with T.T.S. should we get planning permission. Along similar lines, we will be having discussions with the offer that has been made by nearby residents to acquire 40 spaces for staff parking.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

We have seen the letter for that.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

Yes. In my mind, those are the type of detailed questions that we get into after we either got planning permission or we have not.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Would it be fair to say just generally that this proposition has come at a bit of an unfortunate stage in terms of the design and the way the design is going? Had it been a little bit further on, a lot of these issues may have been resolved.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I think that is absolutely right. Another area where, frankly, we are caught in a situation of our preliminary thinking, and that is in relation to access for the public, which is clearly an issue in some people's minds. Now, I have at least 3, if not 4, different ideas as to how that could be improved on what we have been talking about before, but we are not at that level. In a sense, we have been forced to start thinking along those sort of levels because of the challenge to the whole project. If you want to know what my fortunes are, I will tell you, but ... do you want to know?

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Let have it on the public record, Minister, why not?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I think there are 4 possibilities. You have already suggested that there ought to be parking spaces for visitors in the Green Street car park, and I assume by that you probably meant people having access along the footpath alongside the cemetery. Now, I have asked officers to explore a much more ambitious approach to that, which we are still very much at the possibility, thinking it would require a redesign, but my idea is basically to have dedicated spaces for visitors in what I will call the south-west corner on the first floor - south-west means towards the tunnel, towards the police station - with a door with a buzzer there, where people would ring, as you do at prison if you go there, and say: "I am coming into the police station. Could you let me through?" There would need to be a short bridge, because there is a gap between the buildings, and then you would be walking down the roadway, which is pretty well exactly the same height as the first floor, which leads to the front of the building. Now, that creates security issues which we would have to iron out, it creates safety issues in terms of pedestrians and so on, but that is certainly a plan which would radically improve access for members of the public, which we would need to investigate. My next plan is dead simple: instead of having 3 spaces in front, as we do at the moment, we have more. In other words, we have the full length of the building. I have not worked out how many spaces that would be. Again, I have not done this in any detail. So that is 3. My next plan is to utilise space on the other

space of the road, where parking on the green verge, there is an area which goes back further, it is kind of set back because of the nature of the buildings that were knocked down, and you could create some parking right opposite, in my opinion. People would then have to walk along to the police station, just going along there. These are all ideas.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

No, Minister, I just need to let you know, that area across the road is being used to accommodate 50 cycles and 50 motorcycles.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Is it? I understand there is still the possibility of putting some extra space there.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

There may be, but that is what is initially ...

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, I understand. Thank you for that. Anyway, those are just 4 ideas in addition to that, but we have not gone into that sort of level of detail at this stage, because frankly, you do not go into that level of detail until you know that you have got a good chance of having the building.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Wearing one of my planning hats, Minister, sitting on various number of planning applications, I am conscious that a significant number of these types of issues are dealt with when an application has been submitted. I would have thought that these types of issues would have been ironed out at that stage.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I think that when the application was put in we perhaps naïvely thought that what we were proposing with the 3 spaces in front plus the 3 dedicated in Snow Hill ... which is to deal with the situation, as you know, when Snow Hill car park would be full, because there are long periods during the day and night when it is not full at all. Maybe we were naïve to think that these were satisfactory solutions, but that said, the present proposition is seeking to kill absolutely stone dead the whole project, no further chance to look at details for improvements or variations, and there is lots of different ways of doing this.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

The Deputy who is supporting the constituents of the area, I know there has been a lot of talk for a long time that the Constable of St. Helier wanted to put residents' parking in, and as soon as you create residents' parking, that was going to be in one of the future zones. The people that do not want to have a residents' parking permit will use Green Street far more. You will have a lot more people using Green Street.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

With all due respect, Constable, the Deputy may be representing constituents within her area, but we have carried out 2 public consultations in that area. We wrote to 1,500 homes in that area and they did not raise those issues, so there is another side to the story. Deputy Martin is hearing different things to what we heard on our consultation.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

I am not getting emails and phone calls and letters every day from people saying how wonderful the police station is going to be in that location. The only ones we are getting in the calls and emails are saying: "This is not suitable." I have yet to find somebody, apart from - with all due respect - the Minister and the senior officers of the States of Jersey, yourself, thinking it is such an ideal site.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

Maybe if you attended the consultations, you would have heard those people, because those people did turn up and there were residents in the area that had come and did welcome it.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

I have had private consultations, and I thank you for that, but I have been to every other consultation in the roads committee and the only one I have missed was the one in St. Helier, but I thank you for that and I have listened to all of your comments.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just picking up on a point that the Chairman made, would you agree though that a lot of these big public schemes are always very fluid?

[15:45]

They start off in one form and they do quite often change as the process goes forward; would you agree that is what is happening here in this particular ...

Deputy E.J. Noel:

I think this is a very good example of that working in practice and how it should do. We held a public consultation in February. We hosted that consultation, those meetings in the area, at the Willows, which is part of the Limes, and because of the feedback we got from that, we changed the design quite radically. We changed the design with the feedback at the consultation with the occupants and the owners of the flats next door, so yes, it is a fluid thing, but it is designed to be. We are now, as Mr. Taylor has mentioned, only probably 40 per cent through the process.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

You mentioned 11 stages. Presumably this is adding into stage 5 of 6 to the process?

Deputy Chief Officer:

We are in stage 4 presently, yes. I think that will be stage 5.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So about to go into stage 5?

Deputy Chief Officer:

Yes.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

So we have submitted a planning application. A lot of the detailed work, the actual detailed drawings of the layouts et cetera of the building and how it is going to function on a day-to-day basis come out at later stages. They come out in stages where we apply for building control, which is a distinct phase for planning.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Can I just ask, as you can appreciate, for our terms of reference, we tried to stay out of the planning matters, but just for a point of information, the application that you submit, is that just an outline or to what extent ... what type of planning permission are you seeking?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

It is a full application.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

It is a full application, thank you. Sorry.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Again, I do not want to go too much into the planning side, because our remit is not there, but would it be fair to say that until planning permission is given, there is a lot of cost in the design stage, and you do not want to get to a point where you are ploughing hundreds of thousands of pounds into this without a definite planning permit.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

There are 2 types of costs concerned. There is the pre-application costs that we have spent to date. Some of that is not site specific. The work that was done in 2009 with the police force about what different departments within the police force, what spatial requirements they had, what other requirements they had, that information can be reused. The next phase, which is the more detailed phase, is building specific, which is why you do not do it until after you get planning permission, because it is not recoverable if you have to move to a different site.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

That is also a very expensive process.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

Yes. We are talking about a £21 million capital project here.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Thank you. I wonder, the Minister mentioned the possibility of possible expansion into the Green Street car park site. We were invited to explore this matter, and that is what we would like to do now. I wonder if you could just explain that for us in great detail?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I am sorry that in our answers to previous questions we did not pick up the need to talk about that. We did that really in terms of a response to your initial reports. There are different dates that I have been given on this and just about every time you talk to somebody else you get a different date span. What is clear is that the lifespan of the existing building in Green Street, either the building that will be left after this project has gone ahead, which is practically the same building as now, the lifespan of that will not be infinitely long. It has already been extended, I believe, once. I am looking at Eddie, but ...

Deputy E.J. Noel:

The current lifespan of the Green Street multi-storey is 2019, but they think they could possibly eke that out up to a maximum of 10 years, so within that timeframe, that building will have to be replaced.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

2019 to 2029.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

Yes.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Okay. I was going to say 7 years to 20. That would be the scale I picked up, but what Eddie has given you is 7 until 17. Now, clearly when the point arises at which a decision is made that the building needs to be replaced or extended or whatever, there then is a situation if at that stage it became apparent that additional building would need to take place in relation to this building, which we are not expecting, because as you know on the figures, our current figures are dropping and I am expecting that pattern to continue to occur. But if that then happened, then clearly we have a situation where on the demolition of that site next door, it is possible to insert an extension to the existing building, between the existing building and what will now be the new car park, which is likely, I think, to have more floors than the present one.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

It would at least have 2 more floors, and we go up to the height of the police building, which is 2 floors higher.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes. So somewhere between 7 years and 17, although I have to say my experience in the public sector of Jersey is that all estimates as to how long buildings ought to be kept going are almost always exceeded quite considerably. There is an opportunity to review the situation. That simply is the point. My guess is that would be towards the end of that period.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Can you just, for as a matter of record, explain the 10 per cent expansion or the flexibility expansion - call it what you will - in the building that you are proposing?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

My understanding, on the papers I have read - and Barry will correct me if I am wrong - it is variable within departments, so some it is 10 per cent, some 20 per cent. I think the control one it is 50 per cent. But my understanding is this is based upon the concept simply of in open plan situations putting the desks closer together.

Deputy Chief Officer:

Sorry to interrupt you. There is an overall expansion rate of about 10 per cent, just over 10 per cent for the whole building, but dependent on the composition and the structure of elements of the building, that can vary say inbetween 6 per cent and 15 per cent or whatever it is simply because of the construction layout, because while the building is very, very flexible in terms of we can move walls and things about, there are some parts of the building where there are very solid walls there, and I suppose the most obvious one is custody suite. That is why we have invested a lot of time and effort into making sure the custody suite is absolutely right, because once that is built, that is not going to change. But the remainder of the building, which is essentially office accommodation, is flexible and can be moved about, and it needs to, because policing is a dynamic operation and we need to create different teams at different times and have that flexibility to move things around and space to do that is absolutely essential. You mentioned earlier on, I think, in the hearing that this is a 6 metre space. Yes, that is absolutely right, and the calculations are done on that basis: for an open plan office, every individual will have 6 metres, but for every 6 metres, there is a circulation space added to that as well, and I think I am right in saying that is about 10 per cent as well. I can clarify that for you exactly, but I think for the sake of argument, that is about a 10 per cent circulation space added to that, plus the 10 per cent expansion space. So other than those fairly minimal but very

detailed areas where there are strong rooms, effectively, the rest of the building remains flexible, and so you have the ability to change things around within quite a large area. In an open plan area, that is easier to achieve, because the expansion space, you can get larger benefits, increased benefits from 10 per cent expansion space in an open plan area plus circulation space than you can in a modular office. That is why we are trying to limit the number of modular offices.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So to summarise really the 10 per cent expansion, it is not about cramming people in like sardines, there is space there for that amount of ...

Deputy Chief Officer:

Yes. In fairness to the Police Association, they did raise a point about one of the offices where I think people are crammed in like sardines, but as I say, that is a stage D issue. We have looked at it again. My colleague and I looked at it again with the architects and that can be remedied very easily, so we get it back to 6 plus 10 plus 10 and we can adjust that. The plans you have seen as well, at stage D they look rather detailed at the moment, but those are considerations just to ensure and satisfy the planning application that our user requirement works within that building. When we get to the next stage, then we can configure those offices and the layouts of those offices differently, and we will just use sort of standard size desks in there. We could have different size desks, you can put them at different angles, move them about, and it is just simple movements like that you can increase your circulation space around them even more. So there is adequate expansion space within that building for the foreseeable future.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

It is really not taking the proposed existing space and cramming 10 per cent more people into that space. It is all about the existing space is 10 per cent larger.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Over requirement.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

Over requirement than is currently needed.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Just for clarity, if I can interject there, is it an exercise of basically shifting the desks a bit closer together, or if for whatever reason there might be surplus, perhaps you will have to lose one or 2 of these breakaway rooms, or is just putting the desks closer together or are there going to be other aspects to be sacrificed in order to make it work? Can you just explain that, please?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

The office spaces have been designed to be 10 per cent bigger than they are needed to be. That is exactly what it is. The space is designed to be 10 per cent bigger than is required.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

So therefore there should not be a reduction in things like the breakaway places and ...

Deputy E.J. Noel:

The individual space that people have should not change.

Deputy Chief Officer:

But we have built-in capacities where there is over-capacity, if anything, in terms of breakaway places and meeting rooms, far more than we have at the moment, which could be used as, again, increased expansion of space if need be.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Can I just say that it is slightly more than 10 per cent for another reason that we have not told you about, but will now. The plans that we produced were based upon an assumption of a certain number of police officers, which I think from memory was 238.

Deputy Chief Officer:

It was 236.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Sorry, 236. Numbers of police officers fluctuate, as indeed do numbers of people working for the police who are not police officers, but within the 3-year period of the Medium Term Financial Plan, our base figure, the lowest number that we are aiming not to go below during that period, as far as we can, is 227. That does not mean that

there will always be 227, because you get a fluctuating number because you train officers ...

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

That is police officers?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

That is police officers, yes, because you train officers in batches. So ideally, if everything is working perfectly, the worst scenario we get just before a batch comes out on training, it is 227. So there will be some effect with the fluctuation. We will at times be below.

Deputy Chief Officer:

Never up to strength, it will never be up to strength because of people moving, leaving, whatever factors. We stand today at 221.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Just on that point, for the numbers then, for my own benefit, 227 refers to the police officers, though we understand that also there is a police modernisation programme in order to convert certain police roles perhaps to more civilian roles, and I wonder if you can just give us an idea - or can you tell us - what the exact, I suppose ... what do you call it? Fulltime equivalent role, or total people that will be employed in this building, what that would amount to?

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I do not know the answer to that.

Deputy Chief Officer:

Today we have 221 officers, in reality, 88 civil servants and 9 manual workers. Our authorised strength for all police officers is 227.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

That is what we got the money for, the authorised strength.

Deputy Chief Officer:

That is the authorised strength, but we have 221 in reality.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

The authorised strength is much higher than that.

Deputy Chief Officer:

The building is built for just over 300 people with 10 per cent additional space.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Thank you. Any questions?

The Connétable of St. Martin:

There is a few things, I suppose, that have come out and we have heard them today. We have obviously heard them in the States ... well, it was not a debate, it was a proposition only. The concern, I think, that certainly came out today, the consultation with the Civil Service part, and we are not sure how much with the Civil Service. We are talking of at least a third of the staff are civil servants. That has not been discussed. The consultation with the staff, with the police staff, seemed to come on very late from the information that we had, and the results we had or the replies we had during the hearing that we had with you subsequently changed after the St. Paul's meeting that we had, so that was one little area. Something you said this afternoon: "We had a fixed budget and it has not gone up". Now, that is a concern, because it has been going on a long time and that fixed budget has not gone. Again you expressed concerns about Deputy Martin's proposition. I think Deputy Martin put her proposition very thoroughly. She put a stop to the whole debate going forward, the whole proposition going forward, really.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

I am not commenting on Deputy Martin's proposition, because we will debate that in due course.

[16:00]

With regard to the consultation, there has been an ability on several occasions over a long period of time for all members of the staff to take part in that consultation. This additional piece of consultation was carried out by the Police Association office members when it changed its committee 2 or 3 weeks ago. So the point is that conversations started over a year ago for this particular building, so prior to that in terms of spatial requirements, that was done back in 2009, so going on for an

extended period of time, and the doors have not been shut on certain categories of staff. Those doors have open to all staff that work for the States of Jersey Police.

Deputy Chief Officer:

The consultation has been extended to the Civil Service manual workers and non-police officers themselves. It has been very extensive really since the inception of the review of the user requirement for this current site and there have been lots of opportunities there. Some of the issues that have emerged as a result of the consultation, the most recent consultation for the Police Association, are not new, they have been raised before, and we have addressed those. You dealt with that in the design stage with some of the iterations. I think the common theme that is coming through now is the obvious concern of the Staff Association is the absence of staff car parking. That is the only thing that I think remains outstanding. All the other issues that have come up during the course of the consultation from the outset and the most recent we have been able to attend to and, yes, people require clarity and understanding about how the building works, how it affects them, and I think we have been able to satisfy that.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

Can I just come back to the Constable's second point, which was about the budget not changing since it was originally voted on by the States? He is correct, the budget has not changed since then. The budget is £21 million. What has changed ...

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

It fluctuates in that period.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

... is the requirements have changed. That budget was set on a much larger police station with much greater square footage requirements and with more extensive security requirements than is currently required.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

The building itself has not been reduced ... it has been reduced, I know.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

Yes.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

But has it been reduced then to limit the budget?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

No, it was reduced because we realised that the initial ... or we were told the police requirements were grossly overstated, because at that time, they did not have the tools to do the specific piece of work to come up with what is the size that they require, and that work was done in 2009.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Just moving on to the custody suite, because this is something we talked about with the Police Association, and the natural direct sunlight issue, which I know we all believe is so, and the fact that they said: "It is not a perfect world and we have got to do what we can with what is there" but one of the responses from a member of staff went through in quite some detail and just mentioned one or 2 issues revolving around it. As I said to the Police Association, one of these comments was: "I personally believe that proper, natural sunlight is more important for staff than it is for the detainees." One comment he said was: "In terms of dearth or lack of natural sunlight, the second" and this is in terms of the officers: "most significant theme was an absence of natural light and noise of prisoners meant officers were leaving work with a headache." So it is obviously an issue. Do you feel you solved it in the best way you can or ...

Deputy Chief Officer:

Yes, I do. The design reviews, there are several iterations in the Home Office design guide about how a custody suite should be built and we have focused on this. It is the most important aspect of our building, not only for the detainees, but also the people who work there, and yes, we have had to overcome getting sufficient natural daylight into the building, because we had a building on top. We have done that through the use of new what are called light tubes developed by a Swiss company and this is the research report that was undertaken by the company with the Home Office. It is a unit called the Centre for Applied Science and Technology, which is, if you like, the scientific bit of the Home Office, and also the Building and Research Council, and we had 2 independent scrutineers from academic institutions. One was the University of Liverpool and the other one was from the BRC and they have gone through the calculations and run benchtests in relation to this. The light tubes really do work. They are very, very effective, and the Home Office are content to sign it off.

In fact, they are now going to modify their design guide to take account of this so it can be incorporated into other buildings. The point the officer made was about to ensure there was sufficient daylight for staff as well, and there is. It is not solely reliant on light tubes for staff. Where the custody suite office is and the back rooms behind that, there are windows in there. Obviously they are secure windows, but there is natural daylight coming in through windows there as well as light tubes, and of course artificial light for night time.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

So what they said in their letter, they are now considered to be Home Office compliant?

Deputy Chief Officer:

Yes.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Guidelines will change as a result, presumably to include this type ...

Deputy Chief Officer:

Of this work, yes. There is daylight through windows for the staff in their office accommodation.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

There are other buildings in Jersey that are using this technology already.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

I wonder then if we could just move on to the location of the forensic garage and what the current situation regarding that is.

Deputy Chief Officer:

We have done some work with our forensic teams. The forensic garage is onsite at the moment in Rouge Bouillon. It is a good facility. It is not often used, it is used more for storage, I think, probably more than forensic examinations. We do get a number of examinations throughout the year which do require vehicles to be garaged and dried and looked at in particular conditions, and that is obviously why it is there. But access to the garage can be difficult. There are more routine vehicle examinations where often they have been involved in road accidents, road collisions,

more so than when they have been involved in crimes and that sort of thing. So we do need that facility. It would be difficult to incorporate a garage into the current site, given access difficulties from getting the vehicle off a low-loader, but also the risk of fire hazard and also chemical spillage maybe from vehicles that are damaged and insecure, if you like, when they are being stored. So it is far better to have a separate facility - and our scientific people support this - and there is an opportunity for us to create a dedicated forensic garage offsite at premises in La Collette, which is available to us now. We could take it up now, but obviously before we do that, we would like to have some clarity around where we stand in terms of our planning application, but the offsite storage will allow us to have a forensic facility in there, but also provide garaging, specialist garaging, for our oversize vehicles, because they are stored separately at the moment as well - and there is about 3 or 4 of those - and also will provide secure storage for some of our archiving, our larger exhibits and some of the documentation, although we are beginning to convert most of that into electronic files, so our archiving requirement has reduced significantly.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Can I just press further then? When you mentioned that you: "Have a site available to use", those were your words, can you just explain what you mean by that?

Deputy Chief Officer:

It is a property we became aware of probably about 11 or 12 months ago. It is owned by the States. It is a very secure, in very good condition. It is a warehouse, effectively. It is leased out to a private company presently, but it has now been vacated. We need to do a little bit of refurbishment, a coat of paint here and there and the construction of a forensic garage within that, but the facility is available to rent now if we chose to do that, and we would look at taking that on as soon as possible so we could begin to move some of our capabilities there in the near future.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

As mentioned in the report by the Police Association, can you confirm it is outside of the blast zone?

Deputy Chief Officer:

It is. It is right on the periphery of La Collette, but it is outside the blast zone.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

How many separate facilities do you see that you might need eventually? This is the second one. You have the police station and you have the vehicle - which is likely to be quite a size - compound or this warehouse. Do you see other locations around St. Helier being used for other office blocks or ...

Deputy E.J. Noel:

I can think of 4 in total. There would be a police H.Q., a forensic garage, the town police station, which is currently located in the Royal Square, and there will be what I call like a safe house facility, which ...

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Which we already have.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

... you already have, where victims of domestic crime or rape victims et cetera, vulnerable victims are interviewed, because they are not interviewed at the police headquarters, they are interviewed in a less hostile environment.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

That is a specialist facility and would need to be separate anyway.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

It is separate now and will remain separate. So those are the 4 that I would imagine the police force to have. I am thinking, wearing my Property Holdings hat, to pick up on a discussion that I had with the Constable of St. Brelade whereby J.P.H. are willing to talk to the Constables about having one site for vehicles that have been impounded, because currently we have 12 different sites, one for each parish, but it might be better if we had one centralised site, but that is nothing to do with the actual police.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

I asked the Police Association, and I will ask it of the Deputy Chief Officer, if this is delayed for any length of time, what effect will that have on your officers and will it have an effect on your operations?

Deputy Chief Officer:

I think it would be demoralising, although I think the amount of time that has been spent on this project now is 16 years. I think they will be glad to see it started, when we do things. They will believe it when it happens.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

Operationally?

Deputy Chief Officer:

Operationally, it prevents us working to peak benefit in many respects, because there are many things we can do by being colocated in a single building, both in terms of business processes, business efficiencies, team working, exchange of views and just simple communication. That can be enhanced dramatically. It is a very convenient site for us from a policing perspective if we could operate from that, but I think in terms of the safety of our officers as well, particularly in the custody suite, the new facility there will work very much to their advantage, and indeed for the people who are detained there from time to time. Safety is paramount and where we are at the moment, that is of great concern to us.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Can I just say, it is not 16 years on this project, 16 years on a new police station.

Deputy Chief Officer:

The new police station.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

This has only been going for ...

Deputy Chief Officer:

That is right, yes.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

A few months, if that.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I have been told by colleagues that the wider thing started in 1999, but I can remember distinctly in the days when I was working on the new Magistrates' Court in the early 1990s that there was a site which was being provisionally then earmarked

for the police station, so I think work has been going on on this in some form well before 1999.

Deputy Chief Officer:

I think officers have a can do attitude and they get on with wherever they are. The conditions are not good at all. They deserve a far better working environment, a healthier working environment and one they can be proud of, and so for the public. The facilities we have to use and share with the public when they come to us as well are not good at all.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Can I also say that the working, I do not know who is doing it, but someone is meant to be working on some more detailed costings in terms of the cost of continuing to patch up the existing buildings, because those are fairly considerable if this gets delayed. I mean, back only last year, we had to do something with our boiler, if I remember rightly.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

Yes, the current policy is to repair what fails, for the time being, but there is effectively a maintenance bill that comes to between £900,000 to £1 million currently identified of what we need to spend on the existing buildings. We are obviously not spending that at the moment unless we have to, so it is when something fails it gets repaired, and the boiler failed last year.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

We say that of the hospital as well. I mean, we are spending millions on hospital repairs when we are thinking of building a new one, but that is a different issue. Do we know how much this project has cost so far, because I think Deputy Martin's costings might have been different to what we have been given in previous meetings, what has been spent already.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

From the top of my head, the budget spend is about £660,000.

[16:15]

I think it is in that area.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

That is site specific?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

Yes, that is what has been used up of the budget, because some of that was incurred on the Lime Grove project. Some of that information that we gave, there was pre-planning information that was reused, but out of the £21 million, we have spent £660,000-ish.

The Connétable of St. Martin:

Because there have been stories of £2 million, I think, just to correct that.

Deputy E.J. Noel:

No. If we lose this site, we know that we are going to have to spend at least another £3 million, possibly £9 million on building on another site, depending on what that site's requirements are. We know it is going to cost us at least £3 million more than the current budget.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

One final question from me, and just so we make sure we have turned over every stone, as it were, we did raise the concern about the contact and consultation with the Centenniers, and while appreciating and understanding that the opinion was that that should happen further down the line, I wonder if perhaps this particular area has had the chance to be reconsidered and whether there is any change in opinion or attitude?

Deputy Chief Officer:

Yes, it was intended for stage E, frankly. But yes, we could have done it sooner, but I think we have made provision within the building for private consultation for Centeniers. There is parking there for them, professional partners who come to the building, but it was intended in stage E when we can be more specific about the design, finalising the design for the custody suite predominantly and other meeting rooms.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Yes, I think that is quite reasonable, because if we find that planning require further changes or whatever to the layouts, then clearly you are going to have to start looking again. In reality, the Centeniers come in basically to read papers on cases if they are called in and are willing to come in immediately to do that. I am looking at a former Centenier, advisedly.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Careful, he will twitch.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Then of course having read papers and made a decision that it is appropriate to charge, there need to be facilities in which they can read the charges to the person and formally charge them. So that is a functionality thing. If they need to come in, they need to have access to rooms, but inherent in designing the cells, I assume that they operate in the cell area for convenience rather than ...

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

For the most part, but they can work elsewhere in the building, and we can sometimes have 2 bases, yes.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

So there are advocates, obviously interview rooms, all these kind of things. Again, I am assuming they will have the normal mixture of secure facilities ... sorry, when I say "secure facilities", rooms where there is a glass partition down the middle and rooms where there are not. I assume we have that.

Deputy Chief Officer:

For what ...

The Minister for Home Affairs:

For interviewing people.

Deputy Chief Officer:

Oh, yes, yes.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Which we have in the Magistrates' Court, we have in the prison. You know, these are fairly standard sort of procedures, so the premises exist there. Whether they want people to come up and sit in an interview room on another floor or charge them in the cells, they are matters of detail.

Deputy Chief Officer:

Others areas that are important to us and the Honorary police, of course, is when we have joint operations, emergency procedures, that sort of thing. There is the layout and the development of the top floor of the building for major incident response, that sort of thing, and of course training, we do a lot of joint training, and again, that would be in that locality. Those are the sort of things we would want to consult the Honorary Police about.

The Connétable of St. Brelade:

The current facilities for the Centeniers I do not think, to be honest, are adequate. It is difficult when people have to go down and charge and they have to read papers in the custody charging office and take it privately in the toilets on occasion, which is why I was just keen that they had an opportunity to have some input at a fairly early stage.

Deputy Chief Officer:

Absolutely. There is at the moment pencilled in on the planning, if you like, a dedicated private consultation room anyway within the confines of the custody suite for Centeniers and others.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Members, do you have any final questions? Before I wrap this up, as always, I would like to give you the opportunity to comment, re-emphasise any points perhaps you feel we have got the wrong end of the stick somewhere. Again, I will give you that opportunity.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

I came with a piece of paper with some figures on it, because although we sent you some of those drafts of the reduction in numbers, it would have been more helpful probably to send you the figures in terms of reported crime figures over the period, and I am quite happy to leave these with you if they are of any use to you.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

My officer will take them off your hands.

The Minister for Home Affairs:

Because figures are more meaningful. The letters I have had, although we were running at 9 per cent down again up until early October, apparently October has not been a very good month for our figures, and we are now running at only 7 per cent down. That is my latest information, but we might be back to 9 per cent by November and December. But I think they are quite striking. I mean, the actual paper was 2004, but if we look at 2002, 5,427, and 2011, 3981, you can see those are quite striking figures. It is easier to read the numbers, frankly, than it is trying to estimate on the ground. Back to you.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Thank you. In that case, gentlemen, I would like to bring this hearing to a close. May I thank you for providing the evidence that you have done today. Now with our protocols, can I ask members of the media and members of the public to withdraw from the room.

[16:21]