



Public Accounts Committee

Quarterly Review Hearing

Witness: The Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment

Monday, 3rd February 2020

Panel:

Connétable J. Le Bailly of St. Mary (Chair)

Deputy R.E. Huelin of St. Peter

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier

Ms. M. Scott

Mr. A. Lane

Mr. T. Rogers

In Attendance:

Ms. L. Pamment - Comptroller and Auditor General

Witnesses:

Mr. J. Rogers - Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment

Mr. T. Daniels - Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings

Mr. R. Buchholz - Principal Planning Officer

[13:31]

The Connétable J. Le Bailly of St. Mary (Chair):

Good afternoon and welcome to this public hearing with the estate management. First of all, could we introduce ourselves. I am taking the Chair today in lieu of our Chair, Sarah Ferguson, who unfortunately is ill. My name is John Le Bailly, I am the Constable of St. Mary.

Deputy R.E. Huelin of St. Peter:

Rowland Huelin, Deputy of St. Peter.

Mr. A. Lane:

Adrian Lane, independent member of the Public Accounts Committee.

Ms. C. Tomlinson:

Caro Tomlinson, I am the P.A.C. (Public Accounts Committee) officer.

Principal Planning Officer:

Ralph Buchholz, Principal Planning Officer.

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Tim Daniels, Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

John Rogers, D.G. (Director General) for Growth, Housing and Environment.

Mr. T. Rogers:

Tim Rogers, independent member of the Public Accounts Committee.

Ms. M. Scott:

Moz Scott, independent member of the Public Accounts Committee.

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier:

Deputy Inna Gardiner, St. Helier 3 and 4.

Comptroller and Auditor General:

Lynn Pamment, Comptroller and Auditor General.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Thank you. In response to the P.A.C.'s report on estate management in February 2019 you accepted that the recruitment of a replacement director of J.P.H. (Jersey Property Holdings) should be prioritised. You said a dedicated director for property would hold responsibility for strategic asset management and the establishment of a corporate landlord function, including operational estate management, facilities management and maintenance. You still have an acting director, why is that?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

We have been struggling to recruit is the simple answer. Tim has been doing the job very ably for the last 12 months but rules within the procurement and the recruitment of staff mean, through the Appointments Commission, we need to go out to the market and find the best person possible. We have been doing that. We have had problems within our target operating model in terms of the constitution of G.H.E. (Growth, Housing and Environment) and what it finishes up like so the long-listing process we did before Christmas had a very limited response so we have been out again to the market and in the intervening time we are going to press Mr. Daniels to do it on a contractual basis for the next 6 months while we are trying to recruit and go through the process.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Have we readvertised the post?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes, the post has been ... it is through a specialist agency who is looking and searching for people of a similar background and profession. That is the way that the H.R. (human resources) team are doing it, which is the best way to find these people.

Mr. A. Lane:

Can I ask, why ... I think you said you went out to the long list and that did not prove fruitful, that you have had to start again. Why do think it is proving difficult to find somebody to fill this role?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Running big asset, big property portfolios like this is a job in demand. It is a job that is very lucrative in other areas and to attract those people to Jersey and to attract those people to do that job here has proven to be quite difficult. I do not know the answer to that because I do not really understand why it has been proven to be difficult but that seems to be the case.

Ms. M. Scott:

You were mentioning problems with the target operating model somehow getting in the way. Could you just expand on that, in terms of how did they affect you recruiting your acting director?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

The structure has been challenging, it has not delayed the process ... although perhaps it delayed the process but the whole set up of G.H.E. has been in question, predominant since September, but we have still been trying to recruit a director of property through that period.

Ms. M. Scott:

So that is not so relevant then?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

It is a bit of a diversion, if I am honest, but the agency have still been looking but the challenge of what G.H.E. does in the future is something that has been put into the mix.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

A quick question, what has changed in the recruitment process? Because it has not been successful what do you change? Requirements? How do you ensure that it will be successful this time around.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

That is a really good question. I am not leading on the recruitment process, the H.R. team are doing that and I think it is ...

Deputy I. Gardiner:

But you are the Director General, I would question H.R. what has been done and what will be done differently this time, I would not waste another 6 months trying to recruit without success.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

There is a limit to how you can attract people to Jersey and I think what is interesting is there is a challenge in terms of you need to have more than one person go for an interview. So there is a process that we are in and we are doing. I think I have a long list meeting this Thursday and that will ascertain whether there is more people out there. If there is, we will take it forward, if there are not then I think we have to reset and a review in terms of how do we stop banging our head against the same wall.

Ms. M. Scott:

Could we just establish, how many specialist agencies have been tried and used since the last public hearing?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I think we have had 2.

Ms. M. Scott:

Just 2?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes. Sorry, there was one before when we were trying to replace the role when it was property and capital.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Good. We move on to question 2. Tim.

Mr. T. Rogers:

I note some of the progress that has been made and obviously some of the challenges that you have outlined in the previous question, but you had agreed that a temporary team would be pulled together from the existing resources, specifically to draft the estate strategy, ideally by March, and you were hoping to have that ready by July. You clearly are still at a draft stage, when do you anticipate that strategy being completed?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

The strategy is complete, is it not?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

It is effectively waiting final sign off. The strategy was designed to set up a process that would facilitate the estate management. We have got together the Corporate Asset Management Board, which has met and is meeting again, I think, this week and taking the management process forward. The Asset Management Board has approved the strategy, and the strategy has been exposed to the senior management team within the Government and has been approved by those organisations, and it has been exposed to the Council of Ministers and to the Regeneration Steering Group. It is at that final political level that we are waiting for the final rubber stamp. So to all intents and purposes I do not see there is any more amendment to be made to the strategy itself, it is just a process of final approval.

Mr. T. Rogers:

That indicates good progress. When you do anticipate that being available to the public.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

After the final agreement by the R.S.G. (Regeneration Steering Group).

Mr. T. Rogers:

Any idea on time on that?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

When is the next meeting?

Principal Planning Officer:

I think it is the end of this month.

Mr. T. Rogers:

Excellent.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

We will probably share it after that.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

We are regularly talking about this Concerto property management system, is it live yet?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

It is in the process of user acceptance training as we speak. We had a bit of a challenge transporting the data on to Concerto. It was coming from a number of systems, J.D. Edwards, Trustforge and Excel spreadsheets. The data cleansing process to achieve that was somewhat involved. However, we have a data set that is live, that has been tested. It is in the process of being rolled out as we speak. We are running it in parallel with J.D. Edwards, which is the current billing system, until we are sure that Concerto will handle, without any faults, the information that is going into it. We are dual running the systems and I expect in 2 months that it will not only be live but will be doing our billing and our financial management through it.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

So 2 months, end of March, end of quarter you will be able to report to us that it is live and realising value?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

I would not want to look too far into my crystal ball. I am sure, as you are aware, in I.T. (information technology) issues can arise but that is what we are planning to do.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Most migration projects have pretty tight methodologies to ensure that they are on time and on budget to deliver.

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Absolutely.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Do you have the right methodologies in place? Are you assured or confident that you have got the right methodologies in place to meet that deadline?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

The methodologies are being applied by the external contractor and working with them on the data they are issuing confident sounds and they do not believe there is any reason why those timeframes should not be met but, as I say, we are ... that is what we are aiming for. I have confidence that it is achievable. The people that are providing the service are confident but I will not sit here and put my hand on my heart and say we will have the design active in 2 months.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

I cannot remember how many hurdles you have had to go through but hurdles equal delay, delay tends to equal cost. Do you still hold to the original budget? I am not sure we know what it was.

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

The migration or the adoption of Concerto was on a fixed fee and we are on that.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Are you sure it is going to, having watched it go through the process, realise the benefits that the original business case would have requested?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

So far I believe it is, yes.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Are you seeing any benefits yet?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

We are only just starting the U.A.T. (User Acceptance Training) so it is early days. But in terms of having the amounts of information available to look at and to interrogate, I am approaching the savings process with a slightly springer step than I might have hitherto, inasmuch as the information we are getting appears to be useful, pertinent. So, again, I think it is too early to leap up and down but I believe that is acting as it should and providing us with the information that we were expecting.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Just to add to that, we are trying to get one version of the truth and ...

The Connétable of St. Mary:

So more information than the truth?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

One version of the truth. Because if it is on legacy systems and different systems you never quite get the full picture. So that has been our intent but there is a huge piece of work behind all this and a culture change as well, and some business process we are engineering to enable it to happen.

Ms. M. Scott:

This has taken some time, can you give us a couple of examples of lessons you have learnt?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

The key thing for any change is about ... there is a cultural change aspect and there is a fundamental change in being able to transition on to a different way of working that Concerto provides and bringing the people with you.

[13:45]

So you need the right leadership and the right attitude to deliver a more modern version of doing what you have done for the last 30 years on paper if it goes electronic. There is a real reluctance to electronic systems if you are of a certain age, perhaps, or a certain mentality. I am probably one of those people.

Ms. M. Scott:

How have you been supported in this? Because it is your leadership, is it not?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes, what we did is we predominantly drafted in one of my senior managers from another area who had led on I.T. system changes and asset management changes. Who was brought in for the last 18 months to actually lead on this.

Mr. A. Lane:

You mentioned the Corporate Asset Management Group meeting, you also mentioned the Regeneration Steering Group, can you just articulate for us what the difference is between those 2 fora, please?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

The Corporate Asset Management Group is officers and the Regeneration Steering Group is political. So there is a hierarchy. Fundamentally the decisions are made at the political forum.

Mr. A. Lane:

Could you remind us then what each of those groups does, please?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

So the function of the Corporate Asset Management Board is to look across the current asset estate to understand effectively what we have got, what we are doing with it, but also to look forward to understand what the future needs are and to use information at its hands to be able to propose an effectively prioritised work list in terms of disposals, acquisitions and strategic decision-making. Those strategic decisions are then forwarded to the political group for debate, discussion and ultimately approval, sanction. To then hand that down to the Asset Management Board to effect.

Mr. A. Lane:

When did the Corporate Asset Management Group start meeting? That is the same question for both groups.

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

The Asset Management Board had its first ... its inaugural meeting, I think, at the end of November last year and is really a new-ish concept, although it is following on from the setting up of Jersey Property Holdings in 2005 and that desire to create a pan-Government view of the estate. The Regeneration Steering Group was set up in 2010, I think, and it was linked to the States of Jersey Development Company and was designed to steer S.o.J.D.C. (States of Jersey Development Company), however in the work that it does in its remit and its terms of reference, they are, to all intents and purposes, pan-Government so what we have been doing is encouraging the R.S.G. to broaden its horizons somewhat within its remit, to not just look at S.o.J.D.C. but also across all Property Holding vehicles.

Mr. A. Lane:

Has that been documented in its terms of reference?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Its terms of refence are documented yes.

Mr. A. Lane:

Has that expansion scope been documented in its terms of reference?

Principal Planning Officer:

The current terms of reference, as approved in P.73/2010, it might be just worth reading out some of their remit from that because I think that the remit that was established then effectively, as Tim described, enables this kind of pan view across all States owned assets. I will just read out the purpose: "The primary purpose of the Regeneration Steering Group is to provide a political steer and/or guidance in order to inform policy guidelines for all major public property and infrastructure regeneration projects in Jersey." So that is the basis for which that expanded terms of reference is based upon. The R.S.G. meetings is obviously providing clarity around that point and to work in the way that Tim has just described.

Mr. A. Lane:

The terms of reference of the Corporate Asset Management Board or Group, I am not sure which one it is.

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Board.

Mr. A. Lane:

Board. Are they aligned to that Regeneration Steering Group in terms of where executive responsibility sits?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Yes.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

One of the things, I think, the Regeneration Steering Group has had in previous years, it has had a real focus on property and land transferring to Andium Homes and predominantly S.o.J.D.C., our States owned Jersey development company. Some of the areas of their terms of reference they have not perhaps focused on, so this opportunity we have finally to have all the property referenced in one place with the R.S.G. terms of reference already quite expansive, because I think it is a case of nudging the R.S.G. into this space and making sure the membership of the R.S.G. is the right people moving forward. That is a decision for the Chief Minister who chairs it to date.

Mr. A. Lane:

So the Asset Management Board was a priority following the C. and A.G.'s (Comptroller and Auditor General) report and our report in February. It started in November, so conscious you have only had 2 or 3 months of history, how would you evidence now that conflicting demands on property that result at the highest level?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Since the report we struggled, if I am honest, to get time to set up a Regeneration Steering Group in the summer so we had offline discussions with the Chief Minister and we have been progressing the work and the intent of what we have been doing. That is why there was a delay in feeding back to you because we needed it signed off by the Regeneration Steering Group.

Mr. A. Lane:

What was the struggle to find time?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Just availability over the summer for the members of the Regeneration Steering Group, because it is quite a senior group of politicians. So that has been done now and we are now making progress. I think a lot of this has been predicated ... the Government Plan is basically the plan going forward so for us the decision points are now key with the Government Plan in place. That was another factor in working on this. There is the Island Plan, the Government Plan and now the asset strategy. Those things were aligned towards the last quarter of last year. So we need to be up and running there, which we are, and we are now ready to move it forward.

Mr. A. Lane:

What evidence is there still that those conflicting demands are being managed? The meetings are established, how can you demonstrate that they are now effective?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

In a very limited time I would suggest we are going to struggle to demonstrate that, apart from the fact that it has the right people around the table, the right terms of reference and the right strategy and intent. Bringing it back to action, the establishment of it is a key action.

Ms. M. Scott:

Following the review last year, you also promised, in accordance with a Comptroller and Auditor General recommendation, a comprehensive high level strategy which will be adopted by all departments and used to direct asset management of the entire States estate. The draft strategy that was presented to members of the P.A.C. at a private briefing last week does not start with a list of what the Island needs in terms of Housing, Education, Health, Arts, for example, and how to prioritise and accommodate those needs. If I summarise, what I have subsequently seen looks more like a to do list than an actual strategy about how you organise and prioritise these different assets under control, taking into account assets under control of the likes of Port of Jersey and

Andium. Why have we got something that looks like a to do list and what is going to be the process to give us something that looks more like the type of strategy I am talking about?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I think the strategy is providing a framework which hopefully will be sustainable for the next 20 years. The Government Plan is the political leadership in terms of what the ambition is of the Government in terms of their property assets and what they need to do for the public. So that is another factor. It does not all sit in one place. The Island Plan is another pivotal document that feeds into that. This is not going to solve those problems, this strategy, this strategy is going to give you the structure to enable those problems to be solved. This strategy is not going to tell you where a hospital is going to be built. It is not going to tell you where you are going to build an art gallery. This strategy gives you a mechanism which enables you to make those decisions and those decisions are made at the right place and then stuck to.

Ms. M. Scott:

Let us just kind of be a bit clearer about this strategy then. It does not have priorities so what is it actually attempting to achieve in order to ensure that these priorities can be identified? In terms of which properties you are going to retain, dispose of, kind of let, repurpose?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

The tactical things?

Ms. M. Scott:

Tactical, right.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

If you look at the strategy there are tactical elements to it.

Ms. M. Scott:

There are options.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

There are options. But they are driven by other factors so there is ... if you just look at the timing, there is a significant number of other elements that we have to work off. So if you look at ... the most important document for this Government in this term of office is their Government Plan, which has, I think, a significant amount of capital expenditure. There is £11 million on pre-feasibility work, which will then start defining those things for the Government to meet their C.S.P. (Common Strategic Policy) needs, as well as ... sorry, there is a strategy timeline in the document. So the

strategy is going to have a 25 year period and then the C.S.P.s, which are timed with the Government, and the new Government each time, that ties in there. There is an asset management estate report every year and then there is a 5-year asset management plan. So all of those have to integrate and tie in together and this a document that does that. This is not a tactical document. The tactical elements of that will be shown in the estate report and the reports on the variety of projects that are being delivered elsewhere.

Ms. M. Scott:

The estate report will then be reporting decisions that have been made rather than actually stating ...

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

The Asset Management Plan period is, I think, 4 years. That will tell you what the intent is, which is based on what the C.S.P. intent in the Government Plan is and then they will be monitoring progress against that over that period on an annual basis.

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

It will start to deliver us information that will enable the decision-making and the prioritisation ... so if we are looking for a number of new houses, if there is a requirement for social housing, we have to find a way of determining which sites we might give over from the current estate for the provision of social housing. At the moment it is difficult to look across the estate and understand what are energy usages or what are costs per square foot to operate a particular site. Once we have that information we can then prioritise it and say of the available sites for social housing it will make sense to prioritise these particular sites that are available to allow us to then use that site for that particular use and that is the political decision making that will be taken in light of the Island Plan and the Government Plan.

Ms. M. Scott:

Is there not, therefore, an in between document? Because you seem to be describing a document that describes information that needs to be collected, decisions that need to be made on, say, a kind of smaller scale and then you have your Government Plan which are overreaching principles, but there is this joining of what you are going to basically be doing with certain types of property on a more ... in a bigger picture way. So how would we see this? What is the form of this document?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

The Government Plan has a list of capital projects and has a list of outputs that are required but to arrive at the provision of those you have to have a framework in the decision-making process.

Ms. M. Scott:

The Government Plan, which we know gets kind of revisited every year, is going to have the property strategy in it?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

That will also be in cohorts with the Island Plan as well. There are a number of inputs to the strategy that need to be considered.

Ms. M. Scott:

Although the Island Plan is a 10-year document so it cannot be revised.

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

It is but it is authoritative, nonetheless.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

I am not clear on the strategy or the policy of how the ... there is going to be tensions and there is going to be conflicting demands on certain properties over others and that is just going to happen. I am not clear what their high-level policies decisions are going to be set down, so those tensions can be removed and weighted and, therefore, have priorities that mean that the right properties are deployed for the right reasons against the policy. A good waffle.

[14:00]

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I think it perhaps is best to use an example, if you look at the development of perhaps a replacement for Highlands College, there is a very simple way of replacing Highlands College with the new Highlands College at Highlands on the existing grounds. But is there a better way of utilising that, giving Highlands College an opportunity to be closer to town, to be closer to the finance centre, so there is lots of opportunity and options there? That piece of work is a subset of this and that is in the Government Plan capital delivery section as a prefeasibility project and it has got a prefeasibility vote. There is a lump of money aside to that and that is going to then look at the best use of that land and the best place to deliver that for the Island and for the people who are going to use it. That then, the acknowledgement of that being the right place to do it and the right piece of land and the right subset and what happens to the land that moves across will then go into this process. Then that will go up to a political decision-making at the Regeneration Steering Group and it will be their recommendation, I think, or is the Council of Ministers, and then the Government sign it off. Because, as officers, we are not empowered to sign off these decisions, we have got to go through this mechanism so that the decisions are made at political level.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

I would like to go back to the strategy and where Moz started and that Rowland continued. You mentioned Government Plan but for the Government Plan we have the Common Strategic Policy, we have, for example, Putting Children First and we have well-being. What I would like to understand, and this is the tension that we mentioned, how you prioritise in your higher strategy what is coming first and what is coming second, how we are managing. It is not from the site what will be better, we have a site and we have top priorities which are based on Common Strategic Policy, Government Plan, Island Plan all together. Who will decide what are the priorities; that we will not decide every time on this site it is this priority and that site it is better? It should be set as one.

Interim Director, Estate and Asset Management:

Yes, it is the same information, it has to be because otherwise you would develop a piece of work that would go at a tangent to the policies and priorities already decided. The C.S.P.s are the ones that are feeding into this and there is a sort of a slide on the presentation.

Ms. M. Scott:

Sorry, could you expand on what a C.S.P. is?

Interim Director, Estate and Asset Management:

A Common Strategic Policy. There is a sort of a rather boring slide but it shows the influences feeding into the strategy and it shows where the various Island Plans, Government Plans provide information, so that this cannot be standalone, it has to refer to existing policy and it takes those policies but it takes information that we do not hitherto have to enable those policies and decisions to be made in the States ...

Ms. M. Scott:

Sorry, can I just interrupt you?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Of course.

Ms. M. Scott:

Because we already have experience of Government that has got quite a few conflicting policies in the Island Plan. It is an actual point that the Planning Officers Society raised when reviewing the Island Plan, saying they have got a bit of a problem here because we have got conflicting policies; not quite clear what dominates over the other and the politicians are not really giving much guidance

here. Would it be naive almost to like imagine that you could have a map of all these Government properties and have a kind of intention for each of them that has been worked out as a result of a number of kind of decisions being made in terms of like unifying all these conflicting policies to have an overarching strategy for these properties? Is that going to happen and, if so, how is it going to be done?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

The elements in the prefeasibility vote are the first tranche of those properties that that will happen. The people who are leading that will probably have planning backgrounds and planning-based. You are right, it is really getting a balance of priorities. If we were a commercial organisation we would just want to make as much money as possible but we are not, we are doing this for the public of Jersey and the C.S.P.; that this Government has decided that they have got some significant policies. Putting Children First is probably the highest priority and it is the one that has been given the most credence, so that is the one we have got to focus on in terms of how we prioritise and then presenting that information to the Regeneration Steering Group, who will then be making the final decision.

Ms. M. Scott:

You mean they could look at all the properties and say: "We are putting children first, so we are going to make all of these children homes." I cannot quite understand how you are saying, right, okay, this is going to be predominant policy when it comes to resolving these tensions between these properties. Surely you have got to look at all these conflicting policies and say: "Well, that is the most natural site for this; that is a natural ..."

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes, and that is the intention. I was using that as an example of a policy. There are environmental policies as well in terms of the C.S.P. You have got to measure them and then use them all.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

It would not be in the strategy, it would go back to the Regeneration Group?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

The Regeneration Steering Group is going to make the decisions on each site individually when we have done that piece of work but that is a tactical element that is subordinate to this strategy document. This is a way of working.

Principal Planning Officer:

Just to add to that, this document, it is a high-level strategy document with clear objectives, which link back to things like the C.S.P., Putting Children First and everything else. But the detail that you are referring to really sits within the Asset Management Plans. When we look at education as a whole we look at what your overall requirements are for education. What assets have you got? Are they the best use of those assets in the right places, et cetera? Then you look at the other assets in other directorates as well and say, are these assets being used equally as well or not? Then you might end up having a sort of refining of those assets in different places.

Ms. M. Scott:

How do you resolve those tensions without having a bun fight?

Principal Planning Officer:

It is also down to the basic service requirements as well. There are certain service requirements that every asset will be needed to meet.

Ms. M. Scott:

No, indeed but how do you resolve those tensions?

Principal Planning Officer:

But what sort of tensions would there be?

Ms. M. Scott:

Say you have Education and you have Health and they want the same building and they sort of want a building officer on site, how do you resolve those tensions at a strategic level?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

We take what their needs are and then we will offer them options and solutions. I am not aware of any conflict of that nature. There are probably more conflicts about if the properties are going to be going external to the States and what the use is for that property. But within the States that is a function which we will manage. An example is Rouge Bouillon, Rouge Bouillon currently is a fire station and the fire station needs replacing. There is an opportunity for fire and ambulance to amalgamate, which gives some benefits. The challenge is, should that be at Rouge Bouillon or should that be somewhere else? If that is the case then could Rouge Bouillon be used as an expansion of the education facilities there? There is a big melting pot of decisions and that is our job to look at what the best needs are for that site. In the prefeasibility vote we have got a Rouge Bouillon site review, which is agnostic to the solution; it just provides the best solution for that site.

Ms. M. Scott:

I will just ask ...

Principal Planning Officer:

Some solutions may not even involve States-owned land. There are case where it might end up being an additional acquisition zone, yes.

Ms. M. Scott:

How are you engaging for arms-length bodies such as Andium Homes and Ports in terms of this strategy and the overarching strategy?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

We have talked through with both of them. We are trying to get a level of maturity with our internal processes first. We are working very closely with S.o.J.D.C. and we have been doing that for a while and also with Andium. Ports of Jersey is a position we are discussing with the new Chief Executive at the moment.

Ms. M. Scott:

Given that part of the strategy will depend on decisions by the States yet to be taken, such as the location of the future hospital, why have you not included contingency plans for different scenarios of building proficient needs?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Contingency plans?

Ms. M. Scott:

Yes, we are seeing this kind of presentation and strategy of a number of different options of things to be done but, again, the actual identifying the different scenarios of building proficient needs, where are we going to see this?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

It is just related to the hospital site or ...

Ms. M. Scott:

No, that is an example, so I believe what we are saying is that, again, you have got a whole range of different properties, you have got a whole range of policy needs and in terms of this you have got different options you can do with these different buildings. In terms of this, where will you be saying: "We have this different option to these different buildings or this is the most natural thing to be doing with this building."? Where will we see this?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes, okay, that is, I think, a really pertinent question at this current timeline. Perhaps one of the reasons this looks so unpractical as a strategy is not having a decision on where to put a hospital has a significant knock-on effect to a significant number of sites and not having a decision in terms of future office has a similar effect. I think the office ties in 18 sites within States ownership and the hospital is 4 or 5 significant sites within the States ownership, so that really locks down the portfolio. For us, those decisions need to be made as quickly and effectively as possible and, you are absolutely right, then we need to work out what plan B is and what is the best use of the sites that are going to be vacated, what the timeline is going to be and all those other mechanisms? To start pre-guessing those things is an infinite amount of permutations and combinations at present. We have got ideas because some sites lend themselves to do other things quite easily but we have just got to be very cognisant that those decisions are the key ones, which I think office will be before hospital but hospital has been promised being September by the Deputy Chief Minister. There will be progress on both of those but they are real blockers and brakes on us trying to make any tactical move forwards.

Ms. M. Scott:

Thank you.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

I would guess, listening, I think, that the property portfolio, it is huge and everybody sees that a lot of it is sitting there, not going anywhere and, effectively, it is rotting away. I just think we need some confidence that there is a vision ahead and ...

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

That is a bit of a bold statement and the majority of our properties are in Education and Health; I do not think that is a fair statement.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Okay. We look at the building the other side of the Royal Square and now La Folie is in Port's ownership; I accept that.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

There are some properties in absolutely the condition you have said and need those decisions but that does not apply to the majority of the properties in our control.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Okay, I will rephrase that, the perception is that there is a lot of property that is not being maximised on. The idea to have the vision and the guidelines, notwithstanding those 2 key decisions that are going to take place later on this year, to ensure that those properties will be used to their maximum benefit, be it disposal, be it rental, be it development or whatever. I think you mention a very good process, is you made the recommendations to the Steering Group and it goes to C.o.M. (Council of Ministers) and it goes to Assembly. I think we see too often that the Assembly on a whim might make a decision that is not necessarily in accordance with your initial recommendations without the clear guidelines ahead to ensure you are following that strategy and I think we just need to be assured of that.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

That is why we have got a strategy, yes, but we ...

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Yes, but we have not seen it, we have not seen it yet. But we just want to be assured that we will be making the right decisions and making sure that the right tensions are resolved for fast decision-making, so we have a property portfolio that is maximised. I am not sure the wording ... okay, back to John.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Could we go to Inna, please?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Okay. Last year you were criticised for holding bilateral discussions with individual departments, and today that has been mentioned, instead of comprehensive overarching corporate discussion, which would consider basically needs and timetables for all departments in relation to their property requirements and yet I would like to check, have you had any comprehensive discussions at corporate level? If so, please tell us about them.

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

The Asset Management Board is that comprehensive discussion, it gives each of the individual directors the opportunity to state their requirement. I think as Ralph was sort of alluding to earlier, if there is an education requirement we make sure that not only Jersey Property Holdings and Education understand the education requirement but also the other directorates get the opportunity to understand what is being required.

[14:15]

There might be a requirement, we touched on Highlands earlier for perhaps an engineering faculty to be re-established as part of any Highlands move. Would it not make sense to have that co-located perhaps with the D.V.S. (Driver Vehicle Standards Department) or possibly with the ambulance or blue light service so that there is a synergy between the 2? We are starting to have those discussions. John mentioned the relocation of the Fire and Ambulance Station and those are the very discussions that are being held. I can report that they are being discussed, that the Asset Management Board is the body to take that forward but we are seeing a comprehensive change in the approach.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

There is a senior person with property responsibilities from each department on that board and I think that is a first; I do not think that has happened in the past. It has been bilateral, as opposed to a unified ... there is still bilateral meetings on tactical things with Health, Education, Justice and Home Affairs. But having everybody together, hopefully, will give us that clarity and to start making better decisions on our property.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

The overarching corporate property discussion will be part of the Corporate Asset Management Board's reference? This is one of their tasks, it is not just disposal, okay.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

That is their task, yes.

Mr. A. Lane:

Last year you agreed that a property performance framework would be in place by July 2019, among other things, helping you to prioritise whether you could do building maintenance, et cetera. Where is that now?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

That side is over the Concerto system, so once Concerto is fully implemented and, as I say, we are starting to see the results now, that will deliver us the information that will enable us to make those decisions.

Mr. A. Lane:

The framework postdates that building of the information. Sorry, let me ask the question, so Concerto will provide the information?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Yes.

Mr. A. Lane:

Where is the framework?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

The framework for the decision-making ...

Mr. A. Lane:

For the decision-making ...

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Again, that is at the Asset Management Board; that is the organisation that will prioritise.

Mr. A. Lane:

For example, at an operational level, how are you prioritising which buildings to maintain and how much you are spending?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

As it currently stands there are 2 areas of maintenance, there is planned preventative maintenance, which is programme-scheduled and is linked to life of equipment, sanitary and regulatory requirements. But then there is also a bit of money that is available if a roof blows off or if there is some unplanned maintenance. Currently those sit within their stovepipes, sort of the pre-Asset Management Board organisations. What we are looking to do is to take a pan view and to understand if there is greater stress perhaps in the hospital and health area because we have got to extend the life of the hospital, then money can be moved to support decisions that need to be taken by the health services. But that discussion will occur at the Asset Management Board, Health will say: "We have got an unplanned maintenance event; that is going to put us close to the limits of this year's budget, what can we reprioritise from other areas to support us?"

Mr. A. Lane:

Concerto would be available and fully loaded with data in 2 months' time, when ...

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

It is available now, it will be functioning, we hope, in 2 months' time.

Mr. A. Lane:

When will those conversations start, effectively, at the Asset Management Board?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

They have already started.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I think you talk about priorities and you are quite right. We know enough about our properties to know where the priorities are and I think the priorities we hit last year were significantly led around health and safety, water, asbestos. We had big issues with those issues, particularly at Fort Regent. We, effectively, on a slightly reactive basis, had to focus on the basics of making sure we were safe and that is where the priority is for asset management in terms of that tactical level on each building. The worst case scenario is that we refurbish a building that is not needed and the other worst case scenario is we are in a building which is not safe and not fit for purpose for the occupants and the customers within that building. We prioritise on that one first and with Concerto fully implemented across the whole portfolio we will be able to look at the spend and priorities moving forward.

Mr. A. Lane:

Okay. Just characterise for us, what have you done to demonstrate ongoing improvements in performance and efficiency of buildings, including conditions that, say, are relative to that board?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

If I am honest, I think last year was about stabilisation and getting rid of some of the legacy issues we had, which we have got information on from last year. We were not in a position which was satisfactory at the start of last year where we had to basically get in front of some of the immediate issues we had to deal with. As I say, Fort Regent was perhaps a very visible example of something which caused us significant problems with asbestos and water.

Mr. A. Lane:

Are you now in a position that is satisfactory?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

We are getting closer, I think is the best description, is it not?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Until we have alliteration of 3 or 4 years of Government Plan, until we understand where the hospital is going and where the office is going, we cannot divest ourselves of significant elements of the estate that are currently proving to be either expensive or a challenge to maintain. We are not seeing the results immediately but we can see the route to those decisions.

Mr. A. Lane:

What does satisfactory mean?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Satisfactory, for me, is it has got to be safe for our clients and customers, that that is an absolute minimum and satisfactory needs to be fit for purpose.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Could we go on to question 9, Inna?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Yes. It is referenced to disability legislation, your department pledged over a year ago to undertake an audit of the public property portfolio to assess its suitability in relation to the forthcoming legislation. The initial assessment of a sample of public buildings indicates here that a significant investment potentially running into some millions of pounds over a period of time will be required to implement improvements. A prioritising cost investment strategy will be brought forward in consideration into the next Medium Term Financial Plan 2020, we know it is a Government Plan. Where is it now?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

There is money that has been put into the Government Plan to effect the changes that are required, but what we are doing is having a re-look at the premises that we have currently got to determine exactly where the focus should be. The challenge would be that we do not have enough money to make universal access in all of our properties. We are going through a prioritisation process with disability bodies, charities and the like to make sure that we can get a workable solution that will then get proposed to the Minister to approve expenditure, so that we can provide to the best of our endeavours the access that the law requires.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Can you please confirm that you have finished the audit of the public property portfolio?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

No, not yet.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

What has happened because it was like a year ago that it should be finished and we are a year forward? What has happened, why has it not been finished?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

There were not any resources last year, the money has been made available this year.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Basically the audit, it just started?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

A review of the audit has just started, yes.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

When do you plan to finalise it? Because we are know that from September ... from September 2020 everybody will be liable.

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Absolutely. Yes, it is a priority to be finished.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

When, a month, 2 months, when?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

I hope it will not be more than a month.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Okay. What progress have you made towards improving disabled access to public buildings since last year?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

All our new-build public buildings are fully D.D.A. (Disability Discrimination Act) compliant, as required under the law. Any new build, any refurbishment we do we look at that and provide access. Modifications to building and changes to buildings will come at the end of the review, after a prioritisation process.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

It was brought to my attention that mobile scooters are not allowed into the Broad Street building, how does it comply with the Disability Law? Because basically people with mobile scooters will not be able to be employed in the Broad Street office, which is new.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

The Broad Street office has full disability access through the back lift.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

The people who use mobile scooters, they cannot walk. I have been told that the mobile scooters are not allowed into the main building, into Broad Street offices and need to be left at the garage.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Okay. All I can say is one of the reasons Broad Street was chosen because it has full disability access at the back of the building with a lift.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Okay, can you please just follow through and find out which is the case or not?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I am not aware of that rule, if you could let me know out of the meeting I will investigate that.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Okay, thank you.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Tim, question 10.

Mr. T. Rogers:

You have in part, I think, answered this in response to an earlier question from a colleague but just looking at the target operating model, you were hoping to clarify ownership responsibility and delivery of the target operating model and how it affects strategy goals and the corporate plan. But clearly there have been some changes, would you just like to elaborate on what those challenges have been and how you see the target operating model being reviewed or revised?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes, that is a good question. The original target operating model for G.H.E. started at a strategic level with property and capital in under the same person. The post-review, particularly when we went through the first iteration of recruitment after that had been instigated, showed that that was a really difficult role to fulfil and a very big role. If you look at ... particularly the growth and the capital ambitions for this Government are significant, probably the biggest capital programme that has been signposted in any M.T.F.P. (Medium Term Financial Plan) or plan in the past. There is a huge amount of ambition set through the capital programme, which is brilliant and it is something the Island needs. The thought process in the agreement was that role would be split into 2. The

subordinate roles and tiers and groups within there have not really changed in terms of functionality because it was always 2 separate functions. I think the challenge we have faced is we have had a lot of delays on our target operating model, a lot of them which have been very frustrating and a very painful process has been made to last longer than it should have done.

Mr. T. Rogers:

Those frustrations are around the identification and securing new people or are there other aspects to it?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Getting on shaky ground here. There has been a lot of political unrest with the formulation of the G.H.E. and its roles and make-up, which will result in some further changes.

Mr. T. Rogers:

Without drawing you any further on that, how confident are you of what type of timescale you would like to see this resolved for your own part and that of your colleagues?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

About a year ago, Tim, would have been just acceptable; this is not acceptable at all. People should not be left in this situation. We have got a revised structure for the whole of the organisation, which we will be going out to consultation for imminently, so we will try and get through it as quickly as possible. But it is really difficult when the tier 2, the senior people have not been recruited as yet, so it is a challenge in time.

Mr. T. Rogers:

Okay, thank you.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

The P.A.C. asked you last year what the top 2 priority items were in terms of property management and they asked you to identify 3 to 5 clear objectives that could be achieved by the end of the year. What were they and what have you achieved to that point?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Difficult to remember what I said 12 months ago.

[14:30]

The highest priority was to get the strategy done, the second-highest priority, for me personally, was to make sure we have safe buildings and I think we were not in that position 12 months ago and I think we are now.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Have priorities changed for any reason? A lot of things have come into play since then, like climate change and how has that affected you?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

It is an ongoing challenge. I think there are 2 elements to that, one is the opportunity that the Government has provided us with a zero carbon strategy by 2030 sets a really different ambition in terms of how we build and locate our services and buildings for the future. I think that is going to have a significant effect on what we are going to be doing and where we are going to be doing it, which is quite exciting and the right thing to do.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Given that a large part of the Island does not have expected infrastructure, will this be addressed as part of identifying possible sites that could be used to supply new building supply throughout the Island before the Island Plan because this is very significant to the Island Plan? We have got large areas of the Island which do not have full infrastructure.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Is it in respect of drains or ...

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Mostly drainage and fresh water supply.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes. I do not think that is a question for the property ... I am happy to answer it.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

But it affects the work you do in that if you have not got that infrastructure in place you cannot rezone the Island Plan for specific needs.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes. Again, the Government Plan has put £1.5 million in for drainage extensions and a significant piece of work is going to be undertaken with Jersey Water to undertake that work. I think there are

2 schemes already in the pipeline, to avoid the pun, not in your parish but there will be some coming along. Yes, to have full infrastructure for the Island would be a great ambition.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Will it be achieved? It seems to get ...

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

It is a political decision because the cost and value for money diminishes the further out you go and the less properties there are. I am not sure if it really has a guiding influence on Island Plan because the further away from the network you get the less chance there will be generally. Because you are normally in a green zone, you are normally in an area of protected land, where you are not going to be building homes or a hospital or a factory. This Government has been very clear that it wants to extend the foul sewer network and also extend the mains water network, which is something ... they have put money behind it and we will achieve. But I think you know as well as I do £1.5 million is not going to solve that problem because the further out you go the more expensive it becomes and the more challenging it is.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Do we have any further questions?

Mr. A. Lane:

May I ask you a quick one? Just go back to the question of Deputy Gardiner about the disability, you have flagged in there and we might well just have a set of risks around not complying with legislation and making decisions about where you would choose to comply or not. What is the process that you adopt in logging, evaluating and ensuring those risks are accepted by Government?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

The D.D.A. requires it to show reasonable endeavours to achieve the measures required by the Accessibility Act. You are absolutely right there, once the prioritised list of actions is presented for approval, there will be, effectively, a register of companies to show what efforts have been made, what endeavours have been undertaken to provide access, whether it be visual, audible or meeting mental requirements and that those risks will be logged and acknowledged.

Mr. A. Lane:

They are logged in the central risk depository.

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

They will certainly be logged in the G.H.E. repository of the G.H.E. risk register. I apologise, I am not aware how risks are migrated from that to the central risk register.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Basically if there is a general risk around this that is significant, then that will go up to the corporate risk register; that is their model.

Ms. M. Scott:

How exactly are you measuring risk, did you say?

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

There will be a matrix in terms of impact, possible fines against non-compliance, but there is also the endeavours to show what efforts were made to provide a facility. There will be a sort of a routine risk assessment of what the impact would be of non-compliance.

Ms. M. Scott:

Where does the information from the matrix come from? Is that pure legislation or is that some ...

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

There is a standard matrix for risk-scoring and then based on what the outcome is, that will then get ...

Ms. M. Scott:

It is an engineering sort of case.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes.

Ms. M. Scott:

I just wanted to ask just something to follow up, you identified 2 priorities you had that was getting a progress on the strategy, as it were, say, for buildings and could you just explain how you kind of measure the success or failure of those things too in terms of like ...

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

The strategy was ...

Ms. M. Scott:

Yes, and in terms of where you are insofar as you can give yourself a 10 out of 10 on this strategy.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

As a civil servant, we never do 10 out of 10, do we; let us be honest? I think the strategy was binary, last year we did not have one; this year we do. The 12-month period we have had we have put a huge amount work in and huge endeavour to bring all this together, in line with what was requested when Jersey Property Holdings was set up. But there was a different time and a different time where governments and Chief Officers could behave slightly differently. In terms of my other priority of making buildings safe, as an engineer I am never satisfied, so it is a case of you just keep going through the process and repeating the process and making sure things are safe. We have struggled with staffing and resources, we still struggle to get the ... we have got adverts out, which we are going to be recruiting in for somebody to look after our water safety, which had been a significant risk for the States of Jersey, as well as asbestos, fixed installation and testing of electrics; all those basic things which we have struggled to find the staff for. When they are in place I will feel a bit more comfortable. We are better than we were but you are never finished with properties, particularly with old ones. We are moving forward but it is very slow. The fact that this year we are opening a new secondary school, which replaces a very old secondary school, is going to be a very positive thing for the Island and the communities and that is what we have got to focus on.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Inna, would you like a question?

Deputy I. Gardiner:

Follow the same 2 priorities and 3 to 5 objectives, I do remember this conversation. It was not a year ago, it was in July, 6 months ago.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Okay.

Deputy I. Gardiner:

You, yes indeed, stated the priorities but I do not see, maybe I missed it, again, I cannot now see that 3 to 5 objectives because I think it is something that should come back to us and maybe it is missed in the communication. It would be really great if we would have for the next 6 months, we are meeting you in 6 months, that we can follow up and have what will be your 3 to 5 clear objectives that we can see in 6 months' time and maybe another 2 main priorities for the next 6 months' time, so we can basically refer it to something in writing.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Okay, we can do that.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

That is good.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Can I just make an observation? There were 3 subjects that sort of came up quite regularly: Concerto, to lay out Concerto and the impacts of Government decision-making, both operational and strategically; the hospital, that is going to be in September, and recruitment has come up quite often. You cannot do anything about the hospital, we are going to have the view as a team. Concerto is going to be fully operational, as you say, by the end of March. Recruitment seems to be the big issue, the reoccurring issue. Firstly, can I ask you, really help us with how you are going to solve that one because that is going to be a blocker for your ability to deliver? The other thing is when you have got the hospital and Concerto sorted, what other issues or challenges do you foresee that might hold you back from delivering on these issues that you are putting forward?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes, that is a good question. I think recruitment at a variety of levels you get through it eventually but the Island is very busy at the moment in these fields. In these fields of construction, of development of the Island, there is lots of tower cranes, we are very successful as a jurisdiction. The recruitment is challenging and we have got to attract people to want to come and work in the public service doing these jobs and that is proving to be quite tricky at the moment.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Is that pay? Is that conditions?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

It is the combination of things. I do not think many people enjoy this sort of process as part of their weekly fare, to be on the television. But in a more junior level I think we have got to look at recruiting younger people, training people up and developing our own skillset, as we have done in infrastructure where there is a significant programme for graduates and a significant programme for apprentices. I think in property we need to be developing, on a the more tactical level, a similar process. What follows a hospital decision is a significant amount of work and if you look at the Government Plan, as I have said before, it is probably the most ambitious capital programme I have seen in my 20 years I have been here. If you look at the ambition of solving the Fort Regent issues and solving the sports facility strategy, which is great, brilliant, big public realm improvements, Highlands College, the hospital need, to name just a short number of those things, as well as the Port doing their work on their redevelopment, as well as S.o.J.D.C. doing theirs; this is a significant undertaking for the Island. I think the next phase will be exactly what you have been intimating,

where do we prioritise and how do we not overheat the market? I think there is a real challenge. If everything lands at one point we have got to make sure that we are really intelligent in terms of how we procure and how we use different construction methods to do this. Avoiding some overheating, which I think we have managed in the past, where we started getting conflated costs and not getting the best value. We are at the start of a big journey. I think it is a case of once all the pieces line up and then you start looking at the programming, and the consequence of the programming is the costs and the staff elements, not just for officers but for the Island, it becomes an intricate piece of chess moves which we have got to do to avoid that inflation and to get the best value for money for the public.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

You are implying that resourcing is your key issue.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Resourcing on a small island where we want to protect it and we do not want a massive population increase is always an issue. On the big projects I have done in the past we have been very cognisant of the resourcing that needs to be brought in, where it is housed, how we can deal with it when you need specialist help. But I think the future has got to go towards modular construction and off-Island repeatable constructions, whereas we would spend less time on site but give us the best outcomes.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Most of your construction work is outsourced, you do not have the actual ability to fall on your own people to do it.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

In terms of construction, our coastal team and our drainage teams are both in-house on our smaller projects but they are doing planned preventative maintenance. On the major projects it is all outsourced to third parties both on and off-Island. We try and use on-Island ones as much as possible.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Should we be trying to increase that labour force as much as possible?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

I think that is a really good question. It is one where I think we should be procuring in a more mature way so we can give a longer framework of work and maybe in line with the Government Plans, which gives you a bigger tranche of work enabling the local companies particularly to upskill and to have some more longevity in their programme.

[14:45]

Currently capital is voted on an annual basis which means that it is really hard to underwrite a contract beyond that year. I think there is a real opportunity there which we are missing in terms of local supply chain and how we deliver.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Probably going totally off-piste here but it is a subject that interests me. You talk about modular construction. As I understand it there are 3 benefits, and probably many more, to modular construction. One of them is financial, there is the environmental and obviously the timescales.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes.

The Deputy of St. Peter:

Do we have an indication of initially the financial benefits of modular construction? I ask that because everybody says that it is more expensive in Jersey because you have got to import and the skills are more expensive. Do we have an indication of what that could be to offset against the potential additional costs of modular construction? What would be the savings first before the additional costs of doing it in Jersey?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes, that is so scheme-specific. An example, which we are currently in the middle of, is on the sewerage treatment works, the basis of the primary tanks and the final tanks are cast in situ and the walls are precast concrete. They are starting to be delivered, so very welcome to come and have a look at it. They are basically massive lumps of concrete, which have been made in a factory and then they have been delivered on Island and they get tied together, saving us months of programme and significant amount of cost. It is really hard to give you a definitive modular is cheaper. We have used modular construction in the past on many schemes but it is pretty scheme-specific. If you are moving a building or a room in a building you tend to be moving air, particularly if you are shipping it but if you are shipping a wall you can ship lots of walls in a very efficient way. I think it is horses for courses and you have to develop those solutions. Other people who are working on this as well because it is not just Jersey that is having this problem, it is a global problem and a problem that happens in the north-west of England on the other side of the Lake District just as well as it does here.

Ms. M. Scott:

Can I just follow up? Yes, this question that you mentioned about the possibility of doing some cross-learning here in terms of where you have got staff shortages focus more in training. We have brought up separately the subject of succession planning and training, in fact we are aware that the Chief Executive has said that on average everybody across the public sector had a training budget of £10. Have you put in any proposals in terms of improving the training within the property sector? Have you considered anything like partnering, like we have seen in the finance division? I just wondered what thoughts you are formulating there.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

On property alone we have not really established that maturity yet. We tend to take in ... our project managers for the asset management stuff tend to be ex-private sector property people who have spent their lives in the property sector and then transition across to us for the last 10, 15 years of their careers, probably because we have a warmer office and they are not on site every day and the challenges, as you get a bit older, of working like that. I think we need to think of a better way of getting involved earlier with younger people, with people who are going through Highlands' apprenticeships and training. But a lot of the times for us we need experienced people who can help, ask for the right work, make sure the right work is being delivered. There is an opportunity, I think, of property developing more partner arrangements with the supply chain here. But the supply chain here is also limited and struggling for staff and resources as well. It is not like we are in a little bit of isolation and everybody is ... there is a skills shortage in the technical industries within Jersey.

Interim Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

But I do have a trainee surveyor at the moment on my staff who is going through his professional qualifications and part of the organisational model that I am involving John for has got 2 more trainee surveyors to come in at the bottom for us, to train and bring into the system. So it does boil down to resources though.

Ms. M. Scott:

Just going back to the issue in terms of recruitment, you said another department has been assuming responsibility for that and using agencies and so far that there has been 2 tried. Have you had any kind of discussions about how that process might be ... if there is some benefit in changing that particular side of the process?

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Yes, it is not my field of expertise so I have got to rely on other people to advise me on how best to get the right people in place.

Ms. M. Scott:

Right, thank you.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Have we any further questions? If that is the case, then thank you very much, thank you for your attendance.

Director General, Growth, Housing and Environment:

Thank you.

Ms. M. Scott:

Thank you.

[14:50]