



Economic and International Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Government Plan 2022 - 2025

Witness: The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture

Wednesday, 27th October 2021

Panel:

Deputy D. Johnson of St. Mary (Chair)

Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin

Witnesses:

Deputy L.J. Farnham, The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture

Deputy H.C. Raymond of Trinity, Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (1)

Deputy K.F. Morel of St. Lawrence, Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2)

Mr. R. Corrigan, Acting Director General, Economy

Mr. A. Scate, Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment

[11:30]

Deputy D. Johnson of St. Mary (Chair):

[off mic] sum of £10.2 million allocated to each of 2022 and 2023. Can you give some background as to what it is intended for over the recovery period, over the period?

The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture:

Initially we will be funding the extension to the business support schemes. That will include the fixed cost support scheme, the visitor attraction scheme and the visitor accommodation scheme. That is estimated to cost somewhere in the region of £3 million to £4 million, depending on prevailing

conditions as we move through the winter. In addition, we are working on productivity support and we are also doing a piece of work resulting from the Economic Council's report, which highlighted 5 key themes. That is a high level answer initially. I am not sure if Richard would like to add anything to that.

Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin:

Can I just ask about this allocation, Minister, if I may? You have indicated this is around £3 million going specifically to the COVID business support mechanism but of course that is the first call, if you like, on this additional funding. The monies available to your other priorities, if you like, will vary depending on the level of COVID. If we have a really bad time with COVID over the winter period it may be that the monies are used so you will have less available. They are the themes that come out of the Economic Council report.

The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture:

If the situation with COVID worsens and we were to start moving backwards into the levels of mitigations we saw over the last 18 months and, for example, we had to bring payroll back at a much higher level than it currently is then we would almost certainly need to go back to Treasury for further funds because the £10 million allocated in each of the areas is really there to see us through to the end of the pandemic and to start building back better, if you like.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I am pleased to hear that because I am a little concerned that the sprint activity that we have been told about, which comes out of the Economic Council report - a really, really good report, if I might say - is reliant on not too much of this money going towards COVID. We see that initiatives from the council report are going to come potentially after that from business as usual or from funding that goes to arm's-length organisations, even some funding that goes to the environment for rural affairs. I just worry that you will have enough to do the work the Economic Council suggests, especially given that we are told here that if you have not got enough you will be looking to the Government Plan for 2023 to 2026, which is an awful long way away. I think to myself how you have sprint activity which may not get any funding for another 3 years, 4 years, is hardly sprint. So I ask the question, I want to make sure there is enough funds available for that other activity other than the COVID-related business support measures.

Acting Direct General, Economy:

Yes, there is the sum of £10.2 million in each of 2022 and 2023. The intention is that that has to be directly COVID-related because it comes under the overall COVID head of expenditure that has been allocated from the Treasury into a variety of departments, including the Department for the Economy. There may be other elements of economic recovery and renewal that go beyond a strict

COVID-related need to change or to evolve the economy, for example on carbon neutrality. There was a pre-existing need there and a pre-existing commitment that we have to deliver upon. That is one of the themes of the Economic Council report and that is something that can be funded separately through the climate fund or indeed through other longer-term bits into the Government Plan. The biggest single source of funding for any of these initiatives is in the substantial departmental budgets that would already exist across Government and recognising that the Economic Council recommendations are not just related to the economy. They are related to a number of areas of the work of government in its entirety.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Okay. So I apologise then. I misunderstood the slide. The £10.2 million is specifically for COVID-related and nothing else and the funding needed to start the initiatives from the Economic Council report is from other sources of monies other than the £10.2 million.

Acting Direct General, Economy:

It can come from both, yes.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Just going back to the £10.2 million for COVID-related, can you identify how it is allocated between various sectors? The events industry has been perhaps the hardest hit of late. Have you demarcated between various areas or is it just one in global figure for the lot?

Acting Direct General, Economy:

We have 3 schemes already in place to support the fixed costs for the period through until March 2022. There is the fixed cost support scheme, the visitor accommodation support scheme and the visitor attraction and event scheme. I believe it is the Minister's intention to formally reset the cap on claims under those schemes. So if any businesses have capped out because they have claimed at a certain level up to the scheme maximum, we will be resetting that for the next 6 months such that they are eligible to reclaim again. We have not allocated money by sector beyond the actual scheme allocations and the entitlement to claim under those schemes, so the balance will be used in the event we have to stand up further business support in the event of a significant fourth wave, should that materialise, or indeed be the subject of bids from the sprint activity relating to some of the Economic Council recommendations and where we can clearly point back to that being in the interests of short-term COVID recovery rather than perhaps a carbon neutrality, which is a wider and pre-existing Government commitment.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Thanks for that. Can you please remind me as to the current schemes still in force? Sorry to hark back to the events industry, is that due to expire at the end of this month or has it been carried forward?

The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture:

We agreed to carry this forward until the end of March 2022.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

End of March, okay, thank you. That is when the rest kicks in as you say.

Acting Direct General, Economy:

Those 3 schemes are extended until the end of March, the fixed costs support scheme, the visitor attraction and event scheme and the visitor accommodation support scheme. As I said, the Minister is intending to reset the cap on those for any businesses that have already claimed the maximum entitlement under the schemes to date.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Just getting a little bit more general, Minister, we are seeing a real problem for some sectors of the industry with recruiting enough staff. Do you think you could stretch things enough to say that that is COVID-related or is too much of a combination between Brexit and COVID and other factors?

The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture:

It is largely Brexit-related I think ahead of COVID-related. Of course, COVID has had a major impact but it is predominantly around shortages of skills and labour in certain areas and the availability of those skills, which we normally drew from closer European countries. It now requires a much more bureaucratic process and of course work permits and visas as we are outside of the EU.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I was sort of hoping you might have given me a slightly different answer inasmuch as I am wondering whether some of this £10.2 million COVID funding could be used to help industries which are really struggling to recruit at the moment, or do you think that might be stretching this fund, the specific ...

The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture:

There is certainly a COVID-related element to it but that is something we are saying we have to look at. I think the answer is predominantly in reviewing the permit scheme we have at the moment and the Minister for Home Affairs, I am pleased to say, has announced a slight change to the 9 months with an extension to 18 months. The cost of bringing staff into the Island now has grown exponentially by the time fares and recruitment fees are covered. I think we worked it out at an

average spend of about £1,700 per employee for a 9-month period, which is quite ... I think there is going to be more help required and where we are focusing on at the moment is the large jumps in striving to achieve a living wage or minimum wage. We are going to see a jump to £9.22 from January. Support will be needed for certain sectors, including agriculture, to help them bridge the gap and that is a key piece of work we are working on.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I accept that. It is interesting that we can extend permits and that is good. That does not cost us anything. Do you think Government are going to have to put their hands in their pockets and come up with schemes that help financially to try to get more recruits into these jobs?

The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture:

Of course the Back to Work team are running a number of schemes at the moment solely aimed at doing that and I cannot give you the detail but there are financial incentives, quite a lot of financial incentives now to employ from those actively seeking work on Island. In terms of how we address the importation of what we used to know as seasonal staff is sort of a work in progress. I think we could possibly look to provide some financial support for staff recruitment from overseas, but at this stage I think the solution is in allowing a more realistic timescale for people to come and work in Jersey without it having a long-term detrimental impact on our population. When the 9-month permit idea was conceived it was prior to us fully understanding the ramifications of Brexit and the subsequent skill shortages and it was prior to the pandemic. Everything has changed. I think working cultures have changed in the U.K. (United Kingdom) and some parts of Europe. I cannot give you an exact answer right now. I think there is a possibility we could provide some financial support, not yet but I am not going to ...

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I am pleased to hear that. I personally believe that things have changed greatly and we can offer free incentives, if you like, to try to encourage people to come back, but it does seem to me that we are going to have to do more than that if we are going to fill all these job vacancies, difficult as it may be to discuss.

The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture:

Behind the work permit is accommodation. Those are the 2 big issues and it might be more pragmatic to help find key accommodation, affordable key accommodation for bringing people in. That could be an area that we can assist in.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

I think this question is something to take further at the public hearing that we have next month at any rate. Before we leave the recovery side, I note what you say about the additional funding. Do you have any contingency planning should the funding allocated not be sufficient in that?

Acting Direct General, Economy:

We know that it is sufficient on current plans certainly. There is quite a bit of a buffer there in the event of a further bout of COVID, a fourth wave. It is talked about in low single digit millions in terms of the expected call upon those schemes as matters stand. Clearly if we go into a fourth wave and we are standing up other forms of business support once again and across multiple sectors, then we would be going back to Treasury to seek support, just as we did at an earlier stage of the pandemic. So we believe it is sufficient for the purposes of the COVID support through to the end of March and that there is some headroom there to bid into on a prioritised basis for other recovery-related initiatives beyond business support. If we go back to where we were on COVID right at the outset, we talked about respond, recover, renew. We had expected to be much more towards the recover phase by this point, but of course the second wave and the third wave further delayed that. To some extent and in certain sectors we are still very much in the respond phase of that. We want to transition to recovery subject, of course, to the prevailing infection rates here in the Island.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Before we move off this subject, could I just ask one final question and it is concerning the cost of lateral flow testing. Can you just explain to us whether any of this £10.2 million will be used for the giving of free lateral flow tests to businesses? I am aware that some businesses are still not taking the opportunity to test their staff on a regular basis, which I find quite amazing. That none of this money would be needed for lateral flow testing?

[11:45]

The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture:

No.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

We will move on to, I expect, another responsibility within your ministerial team of heritage and arts.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Yes, thank you, we will move over to heritage and arts and I just wanted to start off by asking the Minister with the responsibility to tell us a little bit more about the 2 groups that have been set up for both heritage and the arts partnership group as well so that they can move ahead from there.

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

These are the Creative Island Partnership of the arts strategy and the heritage forum to help deliver the heritage strategy. I do not know if it is a new approach to implementing strategies but the idea is we are providing 2 new strategies for those areas. We are inviting stakeholders to come and play a key role in helping Government understand how best to use those strategies to fund the arts moving forward with these stakeholder groups. The Creative Island Partnership, which is the arts strategy, is made up of a number of people from all sorts of different areas and we invited people to join us. Arts and culture is so wide ranging and the idea is we have to have working groups underneath the main partnership and so there is a lot of people involved there. We want the sector to help us understand how best to deliver the arts strategy. With the heritage strategy and the heritage partnership it is much more limited to the 3 principal stakeholder groups: Jersey Heritage, the National Trust and Société Jersiaise. It is chaired by me and the idea is that the other heritage forums such as the Channel Islands Occupation Society and so on would be invited in as and when necessary, but it is all about stakeholder engagement and helping them to help us deliver for the Island.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Have the public consultations started or are they about to start?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

On the strategies themselves?

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Yes.

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

The arts consultation finished in the past few days and the heritage consultation is continuing. I know on the arts strategy as well there was a very large amount of stakeholder consultation before the drafting of the strategy. The consultancy Tom Fletcher Creative Consultancy that was engaged to undertake the strategy spoke to hundreds of professionals and amateurs across the board. The heritage strategy was drafted by Jersey Heritage itself and it consulted with other organisations as a partnership for the heritage strategy to support that.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Have any initial projects been identified to date or are you still waiting for the outcome of those consultations?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

The consultations themselves, at the moment we are amending the arts strategy to take account of consultation responses, most of which are very positive but there is room for amendment and change. For the heritage strategy the last meeting we had about 2 weeks ago with the Heritage Forum, the work entirely through that for our meeting was focused on finalising the programme of work for the years ahead. That is going to take another couple of meetings - that is set for February - but the idea there is those key 3 stakeholder groups or organisations agreeing the strategy for the years ahead.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Will the programme potentially, when it comes to arts, for example, be keeping the separation through the Arts Centre and the Opera House or will this consultation also include the potential for either using one and not the other or maybe closing both and going to a completely new and separate venue for arts and culture?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

I have no intention of closing either, but what I do want to understand is how best to use those venues and how best to manage the operational functions around those venues to get the most from them. For me that is very much an open question that we are looking at at that moment as to how best to manage the Arts Centre and the Opera House for the performing arts in Jersey. There are things, for instance, if we wanted to see more production of theatre and performing arts in Jersey, how would that fit in. Currently we are very focused on management of the venues themselves just as venues to entertain Islanders with. We are not looking at what more could be done in terms of production, bringing theatre groups and performing arts groups to the Island, so that is definitely another question and one we are looking at.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Going off-piste a little bit, certainly my experience of using technology to link up live to other venues across not just the U.K. but Europe and have live events where you sat in the Opera House and watched things happening somewhere else live is very exciting and I am sure we will go there.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

On the timeline, can I clarify, once the consultation has taken place and you have determined your strategy, is it the council who will determine that strategy or would it come back to the States for any form of approval or authentication?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

The strategy itself I do not think needs to go to the States. I will certainly present it but I do not think it needs to be agreed by the States. As far as things such as the structure of how we manage our

arts venues going forward, again I am not convinced that it would necessarily need to come before the States through the approval process and there is no question about my desire to be entirely transparent in any decisions we make. I have no preconceived idea as to what is the best way forward.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

I am just concerned the Assembly itself has the opportunity for input, but from what you say it certainly will. Okay.

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

We will certainly bring in Scrutiny as well.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Can I just check that both these consultations will be published before the end of the year?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

Yes. As I said, the arts consultation is closed and so the responses there are ready to be published. The heritage consultation I think closes at the beginning of the December, so hopefully before the end of the year; if not then very shortly after.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

How close then are you to determining the heritage programme during the course of this Government Plan?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

The way the heritage programme works is that there are going to be a number of different areas. There are many different areas that can start in the term of this Government Plan, if we are talking about one year ahead, but they will stretch over 3 or 4 years. I could not say that all of them will be achieved in those 3 or 4 years because there are things such as developing career opportunities in heritage for Islanders. That is not something that starts and stops with the Government Plan. The start of this Government Plan will lead to many, many years beyond. I could not say they will all be delivered within the next 4 years because that is not the nature of all the projects.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Some of these projects are going to involve compliance with various international conventions. Could you just tell us a little bit about that?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

Compliance with international conventions is a key area of heritage's work. It is an area that cuts across departments. We have the Geoparks initiative, which Jersey Heritage is engaged upon at the moment. Geoparks is an international set of standards but it is not necessarily just up to one department in government to make sure the standards are met. So one of the key areas that we are going to be working on, one of the programmes is to make sure there is proper compliance with international conventions. It is something that when I was chair of the Scrutiny Panel we highlighted as part of external relations work is that Jersey is signed up to all sorts of international conventions and agreements but there is no agreed upon method of ensuring our compliance with those. Often it falls to individual departments. As far as heritage is concerned, it is going to fall to government departments and the heritage organisations to ensure compliance with those agreements.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Before I get to my last question, and maybe the Chair may have one in addition, can I just ask specifically about archaeology? I know obviously when people think of Jersey heritage they think of Mont Orgueil and Elizabeth Castle and the other standout sites that we have, but we do have in Jersey an absolute world beating archaeological centre. Will that be an integral part of the heritage work going forward?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

Archaeology is an integral part of the heritage strategy and development of our own on-Island expertise as well as engagement with international centres, universities and other organisations to make sure that archaeology is at the heart of our heritage strategy. There is no question about that.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Thank you. I have one last question but do you have ...

The Deputy of St. Mary:

You go on your last question, which might be the same as mine.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

It may well be. I just wanted to explore the very small link between heritage and the Department for International Development. We note that we think that 1 per cent of your funding is going to go to International Development to do work on Island identity. Is that correct or have we misunderstood that?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

I could not say exactly what was said but the heritage strategy is involved in the concept of Island identity. As I understand it, it is not about passing funds to the Department for International

Development. It is just about spending within on the heritage strategy about developing the Island's identity through its understanding of heritage.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Thank you. That probably clears it. To that extent, funds allocated to your ... well, that will reduce the amount available for ... let me rephrase the question. Will the report arising out of the consultations going forward set out any particular guidelines particularly as to Jersey Opera House? How are you going to deal with that?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

On the arts strategy? No, it will not specifically. That is a separate piece of work that will come up through the Creative Island Partnership and our own internal deliberations on how best to manage and structure the Opera House going forward. It is not specifically built into the arts strategy. It is a stream of work that flows out of the arts strategy.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

That is right. So when will the Opera House assessment be carried out?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

We have basically a couple of months because the Opera House is closed for refurbishment but we expect that to open I am saying the third quarter of next year. That is my view although some people think it will be earlier, but it will be by then because when the Opera House reopens it has to be in its final state with regard to any structure around it. That is the absolute deadline.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

On general funding, again can you remind us, your funding is tied to a certain percentage of G.D.P. (gross domestic product) or whatever it might, is it not?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

Government revenue expenditure. It is 1 per cent.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

That covers arts and heritage and culture, so it is a general pot and you can allocate as you might think fit between it.

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

Yes. It is approximately £8 million for the year ahead and in basic terms there are 4 organisations that are funded from that pot, and that is Jersey Heritage Trust, Jersey Arts Centre, the Jersey Opera

House and Arthouse Jersey. Those are the first questions I have to ask myself as Assistant Minister: how much goes to each of those organisations? Obviously the amount that finally goes to each of those organisations is based on their business plans, their ambitions for the year ahead and then the years beyond that. Anything left over is then used. In this case there will be some left over for helping the implementation of the new arts strategy but then there are also other events that go ahead. For instance the Queen's Jubilee is coming up in the year ahead and events like that also go through that.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

For the sake of completeness, particularly as you were involved in the Lottery proceeds aspect, that 1 per cent is over and above the Lottery proceeds allocation, but can I ask in determining your allocation as between sectors, do you have regard to how the Lottery proceeds are distributed?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

No, I do not. I have no view as to how that might be allocated. That is separate decision for the Association of Jersey Charities and the Jersey Community Foundation to make and I do not know how they make that decision in advance of them making it.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

That is what I wanted to clarify. They are independent, okay.

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

Absolutely, yes. I have no view at all as to how that is allocated.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

That is all on that section. We are now on to skateparks. I know that there is £200,000 ... well, Ports of Jersey money allocated to skateparks. Could you just clarify the distinction between the monies allocated by Ports of Jersey and the Government as to the skatepark, please?

The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture:

Do you mind if I ask Andy to cover that?

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Yes, I am happy to answer on the specific breakdown. We are expecting within the skatepark project to get a contribution from the Jersey Development Company and also the Ports of Jersey. Both of those companies are holding that in mind. They have not given us that money yet but they will receive a bill from us when the works are due to be paid on the skatepark project. The Jersey Development Company money is £425,000 and the Ports of Jersey is £75,000.

[12:00]

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Again, I see that there is funding of £200,000 provided in addition to that that was previously approved by the States; is that right?

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Yes, we have this project spanning years effectively, this year 2021 and going into 2022. We are expecting some money from the Government Plan to be carried over from this year into next year where we effectively finish the project off. The total project costs at the moment we are estimating at about £1.8 million. We have not had the final attendance back yet. We are waiting planning permission before we issue any contracts so the contract prices have not been set yet. But what we have is carry over money from a previous Government Plan into the next year effectively; that is why the numbers look slightly different. We are putting our money through the Government Plan process, adding it to the Ports of Jersey money and the Jersey Development Company money to pay for the project.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

You come out with a figure of £1.8 million for the ...?

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

It is about £1.8 million at the moment, so we are hoping it might come in even less than that but again we are seeing materially increased rises for instance in steel and wood. There are some parts of the project ... there is obviously a lot of concrete in the project but there are also a lot of other products. Until we get those final tender prices back we do not have a specific number but we are trying to budget for worst-case scenario.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

To clarify, that covers both skateparks?

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

It covers the main skatepark.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

The main being?

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

The main one being the current planning application we have in at Les Quennevais playing fields. So that is in at the moment. We are scheduled to go to the Planning Committee in November on that one. Then we are anticipating further facilities within the Island. So we have further monies in the Government Plan going into 2023, 2024 of a further £500,000, but there is £750,000 in the Government Plan. We are expecting further spend in St. Helier itself. We are currently looking at the South Hill proposal, for instance, at the moment; the size and shape of that. We are also looking at whether we have another satellite facility either in the east or in the north.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Thank you. You answered one question I think which you said the planning application for Les Quennevais is due in next month?

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

It was submitted earlier this year; it was registered on 1st July this year. We are expecting that now to go to the Planning Committee in November. We are confident about that one. It has a lot of support however we have answered the various issues that it has raised. We are hoping for a planning decision in November and then we will spring forward with the contracts thereafter.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

You are confident, because it has been delayed, presumably there has been quite a lot of work going on behind the scenes.

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

I guess I am confident as the applicant that we have done the necessary work. We have been in good dialogue with the planning service on this and with the various other users of Les Quennevais, I think it is important to say. We have had, as it currently stands, about 180 letters of support for that planning application. There are some objections; I think we need to be clear about that. There are about 15, 16 or so letters of objection but the vast majority are in support. So we feel confident that as a sporting facility in the sport playing fields, that is the right location for it, and we have answered all the necessary issues.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

That deals with Les Quennevais. What about the South Hill one? Where are we with the planning application on that one?

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

South Hill, it has been reported around some of the issues that we have there in terms of how it fits in with the listing of the wider Mont de la Ville area. So the listing for Mont de la Ville covers

everything; Snow Hill all the way down to La Collette Gardens effectively. It is quite a large listing. We also have some ecology and some archaeology issues to work through. The site that we have chosen at South Hill, we are confident that it sits outside of those main impacts, whether it be ecology or archaeology. But we are currently looking at how that works size-wise on that part of the site. I think how it fits with the Fort Regent activity corridor that we are also planning as part of the Fort Regent proposals, because the Fort Regent proposals effectively look at kilometre distance from Snow Hill all the way down to La Collette Gardens. We are trying to be sensible about how the skate proposal fits in with that activity corridor, using some of the moat areas and some of the other activity areas that we are planning. It may well be that it changes slightly in size and shape but it is the anticipation. We still have a proposal to put back in in South Hill for that.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Just to finish this off - obviously we will come on to Fort Regent in a general sense in a few minutes - when do you anticipate an actual application to Planning will go in?

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

We do not have a date. It is probably going to be, if anything, early 2022 at this point. The team's efforts have been firmly put against the Les Quennevais project to make sure that that proceeds, and we have done a lot of design work and some redesign work on that site. The team has been focusing on that and they have not done any work on South Hill but I think we want to see how the master plan for Fort Regent is also developing, to see how skate and scooters and other outdoor urban activities factors into that activity corridor. It might well be that we have a smaller skatepark and different scooter facilities. So we are just trying to go through that with the team to make sure we are filling the sensible uses in the right places.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

You refer to a satellite skatepark elsewhere. That is presumably further down the line, is it?

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Obviously we have a satellite skatepark already up in St. John. There have been some discussions with Parishes as to whether that has improved or whether that stays in its current form. We have also had some aspiration around facilities in the east. I think at this point it is an aspiration so where we invest that satellite money it may well be eastwards, if St. John stays as it is. But that is still to be decided.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Anything else on that area?

The Deputy of St. Martin:

No, I think Andy's answers have covered everything.

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (1):

Can I just cover 2 points? In fact the Constable of St. John has been in touch with me in the last 48 hours just to say could we have an update. So following on from what you were saying, we would follow on from that. Can I just point out one of the essential things about South Hill, which is the one that has considered all of us and all our time, is the health and safety and that road is very close to where South Hill Park is? Not only the States police but we have had all sorts of different people saying we must look at that, and that becomes a very important aspect of looking at South Hill. It is not so much the park, it is the surrounds. As you can appreciate, what we do not want to do is see people coming off the skatepark and then going on to that road that goes down to the harbour. That is one of the biggest issues that we are looking at. So we are looking at access to the park so that they cannot. Health and safety is a huge issue with South Hill. I flag that up. Let alone the other problems with regards to heritage and everything else.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Can I just ask further to that then? One of the other issues was around toilet provision and I know at Les Quennevais we may have solved; there are facilities alongside. But there are no facilities for toilets closet to the South Hill site. Is that something you are looking to?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (1):

It is on the list, Deputy. What happened was that the site where the gun emplacement was up at the back there is a facility to put some form of ... but that was only discussion. We have not had an update with regards to the Havre des Pas group there recently. But it is our intention to do that as well. But it is definitely on the paper to say they do need that requirement.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Moving on swiftly to Elizabeth Castle. We note that there is repair and maintenance on the castle to be done in 2022 and 2023. Can I just start off by saying is that repairs and maintenance over and above that which would normally be done on an annual basis?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

The 2022-2023 repairs and maintenance, that is specifically, as I understand it, for the redevelopment of the hospital, coal bunker and the military quarters.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Has a specific amount of money been allocated for that project?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

Yes.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

How much was it? Sorry to push you.

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

So £750,000 was allocated last year. Next year it is £1.25 million followed by slightly over £2 million [off mic].

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I take it you go out and get quotes for this work. I just want to make sure that the tender processes are properly scoped.

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

This work is being undertaken by Jersey Heritage Trust. So basically the money is passed again to the tenders, et cetera. It is not sort of my ...

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Do they build in a contingency for this work given the monthly increases in building materials at the moment? I presume there would be a large contingency.

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

I have spoken to them about this. The normal contingency that you expect in a project of this nature but also speaking to them they said one of the things that gives them comfort - prior to the current inflation - is that they know these buildings very well. They have been surveyed over many years. So what they are saying is that this is a very known quantity of work. It is not something where often with heritage buildings and refurbishments you find new things, as you dig deeper. They are very confident that they know these buildings extremely well. They are not expecting anything unexpected with that side of it. The other element is that if the Government is providing £5.7 million over 4 years, starting last year, the requirement [off mic] themselves and there is also an area where if there were a need for gross contingency that [off mic] because Elizabeth Castle is an income for Heritage. So Heritage feel that they have [off mic].

The Deputy of St. Martin:

When it comes to the general development work at Elizabeth Castle, is this hospital project the last one that we envisage doing or are there further projects in the pipeline, which could help to provide even more facilities at the castle?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

I do not know of any specific projects going forward but Elizabeth Castle is a century-old building, it is something that is going to be continually looked at over the years. There is no stop to Elizabeth Castle. It is interesting that this work has been wanted for decades and finally it is being done but I think over the coming decades there will be new projects [off mic].

The Deputy of St. Martin:

When do we hope that this project might be completed?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

It is to be completed by the end of 2024. The amendments which allow this money to be provided in last year's Government Plan are expected to be done by 2025.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Four years?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

Yes.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Just on that, you anticipate there is going to be an ongoing requirement for funding but equally do you think it has been underused over the years? Is there scope and has that scope being looked at under arts or heritage consultations for greater use to be made of it? It seems to me to be not neglected but not promoted as widely as it might be.

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

That is a really interesting question. We do not have in the Heritage Trust Deed a specific requirement to look at that but I think you are absolutely right that Elizabeth Castle is something that could be used in many different ways. Because we have [off mic] Elizabeth Castle to Jersey Heritage. So I think there is scope for seeing how both as a heritage construction and an important part of Jersey's history, also as a cultural and arts venue. We know that it has been used in the past for art and for entertainment. It would be interesting to look at that but nothing specific, I understand, at the moment.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

A follow-up to that: is that funding which tourism - your wing as it were - is alive to and are working on?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (2):

I do not believe they are working on it. The value of Jersey's heritage is something that I know Visit Jersey have a mind to and I spoke to them about it. It is something I constantly push. One of Jersey's selling points is our history. I think it would be hard pressed to find 45 square miles in any other part of this world which have [off mic] so there is no question it is a vital part of our tourism.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

I gave you the opportunity to flag that for tourism's sake, thank you. The next topic we have here is Inspiring Active Places. I am not sure who is going to do that. That is also linked into Fort Regent to a certain extent. We do note a figure of £814,000 over the life of the Government Plan is allocated. Do you think that will be sufficient, given the general thrust we have for broadening this area?

[12:15]

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (1):

I think it will give us the overall picture, which is what we are trying to look at. This is across the Island. It is not just looking at one particular area. We are looking at all the places. There is no doubt that sport is catching the eye of quite a few people, which has been coming through from previous administrators of sport and everything else. I think that this amount of money set aside for us to look at the areas that we probably have not had to look at before. For example, if you took FB Fields, with regards to the new housing estate down there, we have also got to provide the facility for the youngsters as well as looking after the sports that are already there. So it gives us an opportunity to look at also what we are doing in all different parts of the Island. I think probably in the past we have tended to singularise where the sports have been, where in a lot of cases now it is important that we spread it across the Island. This is really the set up that we are trying to get Jersey Sport and Catriona to go down that route of making sure that we have got every area covered. That was put into the plan to make sure that we could look at all these points and all these places. It is an overall picture. This is the big issue. Out of it will come obviously we are going to spend more money X, Y, Z or we are going to spend more money here. But I think it will put everything together to see exactly where we want to be and how we want to make sure, and as we keep saying, children come first and we are making sure that we are looking after the youth of the Island for now and for the future.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

It is encouraging to hear that you are looking at new centres for new places to have Inspiring Active Places for sport. Are you actively looking at creating a new centre for sport at St. Peter?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (1):

It almost comes down to a personal opinion. The situation is such, I know we are still a small Island, but getting people from A to B at certain places is not easy therefore this is one of the reasons why the Inspiring Active Places came up. That we felt, and it is encouraging to hear what you have just said, I think we have to look wider afield. It is no good, for instance in your Parish, taking somebody from one end of the Island to St. Peter. I think there have to be facilities at your end of the Island. It is not just a question of getting the children there or the grown-ups there or anybody else. It is a question of getting a minibus to pick people up, and those sort of things take the time out of what they should be doing. I am fully behind it. I am very conscious of trying to put one place as being the centre of attraction for sport because there are other places that can provide better facilities and the work that I.H.E. (Infrastructure, Housing and Environment) and both Economic Development are doing with regards to the situation going on at Le Rocquier and looking at different things. The other one that has come out, which is the one thing that has surprised me - it is a negative to the States to some degree - the actual usage of some of our sporting facilities. Because we have some of the facilities but we do not have the personnel to run them after 5.00 p.m. or 6.00 p.m., that we have not used some of our facilities. This is one of the points that is coming out quite relatively early on with regards to Inspiring Active Places.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Is there a place for public-private partnership in this as we move forward?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (1):

I believe there is. One has to convince everybody else. I think there is definitely a joint coming together on that I think if we have private money. The one thing which I really keep pushing, it still has to be affordable to all. I think that that is the essential thing in putting something forward like this. It is no good saying: "Okay, we are going into private partnership" but it still has to be affordable. If you go into private partnership you then cannot go back to Government and start saying: "Can we have money to be able to do it." It has to be a feasible proposition from day one. This is the work that is being undertaken at the present time.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Given that the scope and potential enormity of this, I guess it is incumbent on us to ask again: do you think £814,000 is adequate to cover all the ...

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (1):

I suppose, in honesty, I do not think it is. But it is a start and we have to keep moving. You know that I will push, and I am sure you will, we have just got to keep pushing for sport and how important it is. I think in the past, and I can quote this, I look back over the last 10 years, I think, and I was looking at some of the comments made in the tourist agenda minutes. Sport was not even mentioned. It did not appear and if you look at what has happened now with regards to sport and the people that want to come in. The most important thing, sport is run by one of the biggest sectors of this Island, which is the volunteers. We have to make sure that we keep the volunteers going and making sure that we keep all the sporting bodies going. I would love more money, it would be silly not to say so. We would love more money but we have to start somewhere and I want to push it so that we can push more money. The next Government, whether inside or outside, we have to push for sport and for the activities of looking after the welfare. The other thing is that people tend to forget - we always think about children - we have to think about the people sat round this room as well. The more active we are, the more fit we are, the less pressure comes on the health service and everything else. I think it is essential that we have to push for more money. It is a start but we have to make sure that we get some more.

The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture:

It is worth mentioning that the £814,000 is for the activity in 2022 and then during that, as we get into feasibility and more detailed design work and we study the projects, I think we can make a good case for capital for future plans.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I could not agree more with you on those issues. Health and well-being is a really important subject moving forward, and keeping our population fit and healthy is vital to that. There are facilities required for health and well-being specific to sport, if you like. We need sporting facilities, we need community facilities where we can do the health and well-being stuff. It is all vital but at the moment we are very fortunate we have world-leading stars in netball, for example, home-grown. Of course we see rugby here at the moment again, which is a fantastic advert for the Island and can only encourage others to come as well. I think it is incumbent upon us to make sure that we are in a position to make sure we can encourage our youngsters to take that initiative, that enthusiasm they see from these rugby stars, netball stars, whoever - they are all over the place - and have the facilities for our youngsters to start getting involved, which is really good.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

You have already said, we have a list here of 6 projects which are being covered by the £814,000 but, by definition, they refer to team progression concepts. So it is inevitable that you require further funds.

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (1):

Yes. As I said, it would be silly for me to sit here and say we do not. It is a start but we have not had a start before so let us use this start. As the Minister has just said, that is for 2022 and we have to keep pushing for more because I think more will come out of it as to what is required.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

What I am really saying is by including this in the current Government Plan that this start figure, by accepting it, the Government surely is committed to the idea that it is really a precedent for a lot more money and you are giving that assurance effectively.

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (1):

Yes.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Thank you. Going back to this list. I see again the second item is Island stadium, which we have touched on before. How are we ...

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (1):

I am looking into the corner. I have to say personally that I wish we could just put the Island stadium at the end of the spectrum at the moment. I think there are far more important things to be doing with regards to some of the major sports now. I have looked at populations across the U.K. and I have looked at populations in Europe, it is amazing. People start talking about Island stadiums, 10,000, 15,000. Very rarely are they full. We have a population of 100,000 and we are talking in terms ... and a lot of the stadiums are not geared by the people that live in the Island. They are geared by the associations. That if you want to join something higher you have to have a - you know this from rugby - 10,000 seat stadium otherwise you could not get into the Premiership. F.A. (Football Association) rules start saying that you have to have particular restrictions around grounds and there must be a stadium there. The rules are not set by us sometimes and I think there are far more important things. If I could use money to inspire activity in sport than the stadium at the present time then I would. But that is my personal opinion. There are people who believe that we should have a stadium where everybody can take part in. But we have, as we stand at the moment, St. Peter and we have Springfield. At the present time, as long as we can keep them abreast of the rules and regulations of the F.A. and the R.F.U. (Rugby Football Union), then I think we are sufficient at the present time. If in the future or somebody comes along and says they are going to build a stadium and it is not going to cost us anything it becomes a different matter. But I think we must park it. That is my personal view. That is the view I hold with the committee and with Jersey Sport as well.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Thanks for that view. The only point I make there of course is does not the delayed decision on that affect the plans for Springfield, for instance?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (1):

The thing about Springfield is that we have planning permission and we are adhering. They met with the F.A. 3 or 4 weeks ago but if I could hand over further to that, Andrew.

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Yes, so in relation to Springfield specifically ... first, Inspiring Active Places is a 10-year strategy effectively so it is touching this Government, it will cross the next 3 Governments effectively as well. So I think it is important to put that into context in terms of when we would expect funding through the Government Plan. The Government does spend a significant amount of capital monies every year. We would expect sport to figure highly now coming through that capital programme each year. So it is not one big lump. It will be various blocks as we go through that next 10 years. I think it is also important to say that the 2022 money is about feasibility, about how we move forward the first next stage, which is the east of Island focus for I.A.P. (Inspiring Active Places), which could be a new centre around Le Rocquier School. Working with the Education Department and the school I think it is going to be really important we get that right. In terms of Springfield, we are, as the Minister said, having some really positive conversations with the F.A., as well as Jersey Bulls, around how they are using that. It is going really well for both at the moment. Our immediate focus is to invest in Springfield. That is about the viewer experience at Springfield and the spectator experience but also the internal use of the building at Springfield for the active gym, so we still want to decant our gym facilities into Springfield. That will be a brand new purpose-built gym facility there. The likes of which we have not seen in the public sector for many years. Our focus has definitely got to be around Springfield for football. If at any point in time we do spring forward - forgive the pun - to look at if there is another stadium location, including there is a conversation we would then have to have around what is the future of Springfield. But we are certainly not at that point in this Government. I do not think we will be at that point in the next Government either. The majority focus for Springfield is to support the football activity, which is really going well there at the moment.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Before I leave Springfield, and I like to think there is some planning application in the offing there.

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

We have had a planning application approved for the reconfiguration of fencing around Springfield because it is a 3G pitch. It has a fence around it. It is not a great spectator environment. Certainly as Jersey Bulls are attracting more and more spectators and bigger gates, so we do need to work

around that. The fence effectively is going to go back a bit and enable some sanding and seating behind goals. That has been approved. We are looking at the implementation of that at the moment around the accessibility standards, and so on and so forth. As the Minister said, we have had the Football Association over recently to look at what Springfield can do now and what it can be. A lot of that is linked to the success of the football club, as the football club goes up the tiers. We are currently in tier 9. If it goes up through the tiers further, further ground requirements are needed. So we need to just keep alight of that. I think the reality of Springfield is certainly a case for the forthcoming years ahead. It will be a lovely problem to have if Jersey Bulls are then in a much higher tier and we have a problem of playing in tier 3 or tier 4, or wherever we get to. But that would be a nice problem to have at that point. But certainly for the foreseeable future we should be set. The works within the Springfield building will need building bylaws. There is a lot of internal works there in terms of the main sports hall.

[12:30]

Following the proposition in the States earlier this year we now will not be reconfiguring some of the play area and open space as much as we would have planned to initially, following that proposition that was agreed to effectively keep the play area and the green space in a similar extent. For what we need to do for the decant, certainly we have plans ready for that to go ahead.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

At the moment there are no planning applications in or about to be submitted on Springfield; you have what you need?

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

I think we have what we need. We might need to make a minor amendment with the fence. We will just go through some of the accessibility details in terms of just making sure that is accessibility friendly in terms of seating areas or standing areas. I would hope that was a minor amendment, it has already been approved. The major fiscal stimulus application is now effectively focused internally to the building.

The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture:

Can I add, I think there are aspirations of the sporting clubs. We are hearing how sport is becoming more important to the economy and I think there are aspirations by Jersey Bulls and the F.A. to provide better facilities, not just for larger gates but for improved hospitality offerings because they play an essential part of making these sports clubs financially viable. But there are also other options becoming available as well out at St. Peters when you look at the Strive Academy and what is being proposed there. It is certainly going to be an interesting space over the next year or 2 but the

outcome has to be, in the fullness of time, facilities that can ensure ... it is really important that sports are able to survive financially.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I note that the £814,000 is for this year and it is a statutory. It is right that things like sports strategies are living documents and evolve as time moves ahead. But do you have any specific deadlines as regards timing for any of these individual projects so that inside the strategy a decision will be made on, for example, the Island stadium on the St. Helier sport and well-being hub? Is there a timeline on those, because we could end up just discussing strategy *ad infinitum*, and actually get there and deliver?

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

The indicative programme at the moment is of the £814,000 for next year, the vast majority of that money will be targeted to the Le Rocquier proposal in terms of its design feasibility and what we need to get through to planning stage. It is dependent on capital money being agreed through future Government Plans to get into the Le Rocquier proposal first on the list through to 2023, 2024, maybe into 2025, but that sort of period of time is 2 to 3 years. An Island stadium is not funded within the I.A.P. but it is something we would obviously be talking to the private sector or any other providers about. In terms of the big blocks; Le Rocquier would be upfront first in the next few years, Les Quennevais itself would need replacing and rebuilding. That has probably 7 or so years of its main life left. That would be at the back end of the programme, nearer to 2030. We also have investment around Springfield - again depending on whether we went Island stadium or not - if there was another location for our playing pitch and stadium then obviously we would then look at reinvesting more money into Springfield at that point. That would be later on in the process. The bit in the middle probably is then expenditure on FB Fields around the 2025 timeline. But the vast majority, what I have not mentioned is the decant facilities we have been planning for Fort Regent. That is in mind for 2022, both at Springfield and if we can progress Oakfield we will, with a revised hopefully design up there. That is 2022. Then we spring into Le Rocquier, then we spring into FB Fields, and then it will be Les Quennevais, and then if we need to loop back to Springfield we would then spend money back in Springfield again.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

You mentioned decanting from Fort Regent. Before we get on to that, one final question on Springfield. Is there any hope of financial support from the F.A. if the Bulls go up the league table? Do they make any contributions with a view to splitting the cost for football, as it were?

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

I am pretty sure the answer is there is always that opportunity. The pitch at the moment it was a beneficiary of Football Foundation money, so I think there is always that dialogue to have certainly. I know the Bulls are look at various sources of funding at the moment. They are not Government-funded, they are privately funded. But we would hope that as they get more successful obviously more opportunities become available to them as well.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

I really meant from the F.A. perspective.

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

I am not an expert in the F.A.'s community programme but certainly there are monies in the F.A. that go to grassroots football effectively, both in non-league and low league. I will be looking to my left with a bit more knowledge of the football environment.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Grassroots seen on synthetic pitches, is it?

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

That is right.

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (1):

Can I just add one thing there? I think sometimes we forget things as well and that is we are really at the last processes of sorting out cricket going to Grainville and that becoming almost their home. We are in the process, I think the lease is fairly close to being signed, but it never appears anywhere. We now have cricket. Talking to cricket, we have the bowls club up there, we have the tennis club up there, and we are all talking together to try and work something out because they want to increase their ability to put nets up and everybody is talking. It does not appear anywhere but that is all going through and they are looking to move up there ready for the summer of next year.

The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture:

I do not want to pre-empt any further questions you might be asking but we wanted to make it absolutely clear that ... we talked about Oakfield and Fort Regent but no sport will be displaced without a new home being found for them. There has been some speculation about that so we just wanted to make that clear. If you were going to ask that.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

It will be our final area. As Deputy Raymond has mentioned cricket, which is obviously topical at the moment, does the improvement in facilities at Grainville enable us to host more tournaments than they have been able to previously?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (1):

Yes. Using the other fields that we have in St. Martins as well then we are okay, especially now that they have got through the recent T20 out in Portugal. We hopefully will be able to hold ... that is what they are trying to do. The standard of pitch there is okay, the area of the pitch is big enough, so we should be able to hold tournaments there and they are looking forward to doing it. Also it will give them a base because they want to do their own catering and everything else. I think it is a great idea but, as I said, sometimes some of these get bypassed, we do not see them. But that is all going ahead fairly rapidly.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Given that Sharjah can put on an international display without any crowds presumably we do not need the crowd. Sorry, we are on to decanting for Fort Regent. Obviously we are aware that the ...

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (1):

If I start this and hand over to Andrew. I have a slight difficulty here because, as you know, I am vice-chairman of the P.O.G. (political oversight group) that runs Fort Regent, which has nothing to do with Economic Development. I wanted to make that clear because that is run by the Chief Minister under I.H.E., so Andrew and I are sitting with one leg either side of the ...

The Deputy of St. Martin:

I think we only intend to ask questions about the decant.

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (1):

Okay, as long as you appreciate that ...

The Deputy of St. Mary:

We were live to that potential.

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (1):

That is fine.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

That is the point really

The Deputy of St. Martin:

You are not getting off the hook.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

How is the planning that currently affects the decanting and do you have a plan B basically?

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Yes, the decant of the Fort is probably in 3 areas. There are some activities the Fort going into their own private solutions. There are a number of users at the Fort who have found different areas for their business. Some are going into their own private solutions and looking at other venues. There are some other venues that we are looking at within public ownership. So, for instance, some activities are going to Les Quennevais, some are going to Haute Vallée, some are going to Victoria College, so there is a whole multitude of decant options depending on the club and the sports that they are undertaking. The 2 primary decants are for the active gym, so that is going into Springfield; that is still a live project we are progressing with. That frees up the northern end of Fort Regent. Then we have the sports hall replacements for the activities in the sports hall, which include gymnastics and the gymnastics clubs plus the other, I guess, racket sports but football, badminton, et cetera, netball, and other sports hall users. The Oakfield facility was the one that is proposed for that. Where we find ourselves with Oakfield is in a delayed position effectively. We are moving back with planning to see what the art of the possible is, I think. I do not think we want to throw the Oakfield site and solution away. It has been chosen for 2 main reasons. One is it is already in sporting use so the Oakfield facility has got 3 components to it. There is the existing building, which would become the permanent gymnastics centre and martial arts spaces. The playing pitch, which unfortunately is just a grass pitch. It is subject to weather; it gets flooded and it has limited life and use because of that. The second is around 3G pitch covering on that. So give it more usability. The third element was the covering of tarmacked netball courts, which are currently down at Haute Vallée, effectively to put a frame and flat roof over them to create a permanent facility. I am saying frame and a cover, but it is a frame and fabric building. It is a permanent building which effectively closes those sports hall spaces. There would be 3 netball courts plus then the multiples of badminton courts you then get within that facility. It is 3-parted. We have got a current planning application in for the 3G pitch. That is still a live application. That, in its own right, increases the usability of Oakfield certainly for schools that use it now in the college. Then we are looking at the moment just to address some of the concerns that have been raised around Oakfield, whether it be landscaping or design or materials or colour. We are quite hopeful we will get to a solution. It is not something we want to throw away. The second main reason for choosing Oakfield, firstly it was in sporting use. Secondly, it is the proximity that the site offers to Haute Vallée, to Highlands, and the other schools in the vicinity. It effectively then is a centre that school children can easily get to rather than traipsing up to the Fort effectively, which we ask them to do at the moment. That is difficult for

some of the primary schools, for instance, in the area to do that. It is easy for secondary school children but it is harder for primary schools. The reasons remain for the site. We truly do not want to lose that opportunity so we are going to loop back with the design team to see what are the possibilities really around landscaping; certainly increase landscaping. We can look at materials and colour and those sort of things. The building, to a degree, has got to be a certain size. It has activities in there that require certain roof heights and things like that, with balls and shuttlecocks and all that being thrown around. But we are just going to be testing that against the national standards that we have to meet and I guess the edges of the building, whether they need to be as pronounced, can they be rounded off and those sort of things. So we are currently in that process at the moment. More news to follow I think.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Leaving the details - the revised application aside - do we have your assurance that the existing sports will not be kicked out of Fort Regent unless they have a new home?

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Absolutely.

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (1):

Nobody is leaving Fort Regent unless they have somewhere to go. Without any doubt at all. I have been looking back over the last couple of years. I have made this absolutely clear. Can I also say, I have been speaking to the martial arts people with regards to where they stand? Yes, we all know they are a little upset but nobody is going to leave Fort Regent. The other thing is that yesterday I asked the team to come up with where do we stand because there is still - dare I say it - that word maintenance. We still have to maintain Fort Regent because people are going in there. Sitting as Assistant Minister for Health and Social Services, I kept my eye on where we stand with COVID and everything else, and the facilities that we use up there; both Gloucester Hall and Elizabeth Hall. Therefore, as long as they are there, it is going to be very difficult to provide any facilities to anybody else. But we are talking in terms, if there is a hold-up, that we will allow certain events to go on there.

[12:45]

We shall be looking at that as COVID eases. But it is going to be controlled by COVID, so the existing people that are in there at the present time are very safe. In fact, they have just received a letter stating that they will be there at least until October next year. That letter has come from KKP, from the other side of the P.O.G. that are dealing with the decanting of Fort Regent.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

Can you clarify who is going to be there until next year; the COVID?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (1):

No, the people that are using, i.e. the martial arts people have been told that they are there until October. The original letter was April. It has now been sent out in the last week to say that they are there at least until October. But I am going to keep them up to date, bearing in mind the health situation as well.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

On the COVID services provided at Fort Regent, how long are they going to go on for?

Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture (1):

We are talking in terms of circa Easter. The biggest problem is what you said earlier on, and that is we do not know what is going to happen this winter. We are all on an edge as to are we going to have to keep Fort Regent open for COVID, and if we do then that does take precedence over anything else that we deal with at Fort Regent.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

We are getting to the end but maybe just a question I can ask Andy. The delays we have just seen, does that have an effect on the funding from the Government Plan for this strategy?

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Potentially our indications around monies, we were looking at fiscal stimulus investments for the Oakfield proposals available - proposal as a singular - so we do need to look back with our Treasury colleagues to understand ... first, I think we need to understand as a project team how much delay we are talking about and what that rework looks like. The reality would be if we can rework it fairly quickly as a project team we will be back into Planning and that is likely to be another 12 to 13-week timescale. We are potentially, if I then say 3 to 4 months, that is the sort of window we are looking at. There will be a conversation with Treasury as to whether that no longer meets fiscal stimulus rules or whether we have to look at other options. The other option we would have to look at is our capital programme and potentially reprofiling that spend. Again, we have a significant capital programme in government, around £80 million a year. A large percentage of that is spent on other things like I.T. (information technology) investment and things like that. But then we would need to look at how we reprofile that. So if it did not meet the test of fiscal stimulus we would simply have to look at other sources because it is a really vitally important investment we feel. With all of these clubs, as the Minister has outlined, who want to use this facility but with all the others we are talking about as well. The other underlying message around our decant is making sure the sports buildings

that we currently have are used more efficiently and better. I have mentioned a number of schools for instance. We have sports facilities in schools. Some of the clubs and associations are happy to move into different directions, whether it be to Victoria College, whether it be Langford, whether it to be to Haute Vallée, those sort of areas. Again that is part of the decant plan as a whole.

The Deputy of St. Martin:

Would a quicker solution to progress this not be to go to appeal?

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

It could be. What we would try and get is what is the quickest route to improve on. An appeal may take longer. We can rework the plans and make them more digestible, if I can put it that way. That is probably still a quicker route for us, I think, rather than an appeal route because that may take at least 4 months. I think it could be longer.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

On an interconnecting point, reference to the South Hill skatepark application and the need to marry that in with other things down at Fort Regent, does it kick back on what you had on the planning application in any way?

Director General, Infrastructure, Housing and Environment:

Certainly I think the main work at Fort Regent is again threefold. One is the improvements to access. So that is a proposal that is likely to come in by the end of this calendar year. We are then going to spring into 2022 around some of the outdoor improvements, around the spaces up there - the green spaces around Fort Regent - so reinvesting back into some of the public open space and gardens. Then the third stream is really around master planning. We need to settle on what the final mix of uses will be at Fort Regent in the longer term and then what that starts to look like.

The Minister for Economic Development, Tourism, Sport and Culture:

We are not expecting that to have a delay on the submission of the planning application at South Hill.

The Deputy of St. Mary:

I think we have finished ahead of time, which is also a record for us. Thank you for your kind co-operation everyone and we look forward to seeing you at our quarterly hearing in the not too distant future.

[12:50]