



Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Government Review 2022 - 2025

Witness: Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School

Monday, 25th October 2021

Panel:

Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier (Chair)

Senator T.A. Vallois

Witnesses:

Mr. P. Le Claire, Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School

Mr. P. Worsley, Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School

[14:01]

Deputy R.J. Ward of St. Helier (Chair):

Good afternoon and welcome to a public hearing for the Government Plan with the chair of governors of Haute Vallée School, and perhaps representing some other governors as well. One of the reasons we are speaking to you is because - we will do introductions in a second but just to give it a context - the Education Law schedule 4, part 3, requires governors to plan expenditure for the year. You have an involvement in expenditure so that is the reason we are gathering evidence from you for our review of the Government Plan. So let me introduce myself. My name is Deputy Rob Ward and I am chair of the panel.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Senator Tracey Vallois, member of the panel.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

I am Philip Le Claire, I am the chair of the board of governors at Haute Vallée.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

I am Phil Horsley, previous chair of the board of governors and on the behavioural committee.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

In front of you there is the procedure for Scrutiny, just so that you can see the rules that we work by. I will just point that out to you before the hearing starts. I think you can probably work that out for yourself. If there is anything we want to add to that; I do not think we do. To begin with, how would you characterise perhaps any issues that you face as the board of governors when it comes to funding or any elements of the Government Plan that you have picked out? To start with some generalities if you like, and give you the floor to talk about that.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

First, I would like to say thank you for giving us this opportunity to bring our concerns to the politicians. We have been trying for quite some time as a board of governors to engage. I have sent an email to the Chief Minister in his capacity as Minister for Children and Education on 17th May, which I have yet to have a response to, despite several follow-ups. And a follow-up email to Deputy Wickenden, when he was given responsibility for that portfolio on 19th May. So to get in front of some people is very heart-warming; thank you for that. We were trying to get a meeting with the Minister for Children and Education to discuss the difficulties that the school was encountering and as my predecessor and myself do have responsibility for ensuring that the school operates within its budget we had some serious concerns that we were having to basically authorise our headteacher to go over budget, to spend outside his budget, just to deliver the very basics. We did finally get a meeting onsite with Deputy Wickenden on 22nd September, which was attended by Phil Horsley, Sean O'Regan from the department, and Stuart Hughes, the headteacher, and we were able to voice some of our concerns there. But we did not feel that they were given a level of seriousness that we believe that they have. I would like to start, if you do not mind, because this is a very ... I am quite uncomfortable about this meeting in many respects so I would like to start by saying how incredibly proud we are of Haute Vallée and what Haute Vallée achieves in spite of its many challenges. We have a wonderful culture of inclusion and diversity. We have a caring school community and during the lockdown every child was contacted, I think it was every day, by a member of staff or a teacher to ensure that their welfare was looked after. We have the same curriculum as Haute Vallée, with the exception of Mandarin; it is the only subject we are not able to offer but we have exactly the same curriculum. Our results over the last 3 years have gone from 27 per cent of students attaining 5 A to Cs in their core subjects to 64 per cent. So from 27 per cent to 64 per cent

change. We have students now who have a vision of the future and who talk to us about what they are going to do when they leave school. If you had asked those same students 3 years ago you would have got the usual "Don't know." "What are you going to do?" "Don't know." "Where are you going to go?" "Don't know." Now we have children with aspirations and visions that they believe that they are going to be what they want to be. That is down to Haute Vallée. But that is in spite of the challenges. This is incredibly hard this next bit because effectively we are being asked to air our dirty linen in public and something we are very proud about, we need to now tell you about the shortfalls of the school. I am quite cross about that, if I am honest. I am quite cross that I am being made to do that because we should not have to. We are a victim of our own success. We had 51 approaches for managed moves at the start of term from fee-paying schools. We have fewer children going to Hautlieu at 14 now than ever before, which is a great success.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Despite meeting the criteria.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Despite meeting the criteria, yes. 46 per cent of our students have English as an additional language yet the school has received no funding for that area to date. We know that 3 people from C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills) went to Madeira to look at a model that is used over there but we have never heard anything back. The school has never received anything back. There is currently an opportunity for the school to bid for up to £950 funding to support students with E.A.L. (English as an Additional Language). which, I am very sorry, is laughable. If we take the number of students with English as an additional language in our school and divide that £950 by it, we have enough money to buy one Oxford School dictionary per 4 children.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I just ask you a couple of things? When you said you have to authorise to go over budget, to go back, is this the first time you have had to do this?

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

No. We made a conscious decision as a board of governors. We felt that there was a true dichotomy in we have to hold the school to account to the budget and we have to hold them to account to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, and we felt the 2 were mutually exclusively. We think that has been proven. We do think that is known. There is the funding review, which has taken an inordinate amount of time. We believe the answers are there but might not be palatable. We felt it was underfunded, therefore to hold a school to account to a budget that is known to be flawed, on a flawed formula, was farcical. To hold that head to account, which is happening at department

level, is farcical. We said: "We will hold you to account for a broad and balanced curriculum and doing all the things that the staff want to do", which as Phil says, they have done admirably.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Of the 116 students that started school this academic year, 42 of them had low prior attainment before they got to us. There is a great inequality. We have a canteen that seats 160 students maximum but we have 600 students on roll going up to, predicted, 750 quite shortly. We have got netball courts that would be more suitable as an ice rink they are so slippery when they are wet. We have a retaining wall by the Horizon unit for children with autism and A.D.H.D. (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), which is structurally unsound but the response from the department has been to put a fence around it. We have got students trying to access extracurricular activities but we do not have the funding to employ the teachers to run those extracurricular activities, unlike in the fee-paying schools where the teachers are paid to deliver those. A fee-paying student will attract something like £2,000 a year more baseline funding than a student at Haute Vallée. You have things like the Victoria College initiative that all year 7 students will be given a musical instrument and tuition to get them to grade 1 by the end of their first academic year. We struggle to put children into music education and our music block is woefully unsuitable for that kind of work. There is a very strong feeling that we are not fully supported by the department. It was really interesting to see the Scrutiny report from Friday in the *Jersey Evening Post*, the reference marker was talking about the new facility for the intensive support service because we went to the department - must be almost a year ago now - with a scheme to support students from across the Island, not just from Haute Vallée, who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. We costed it, it was a model based on some work that Stuart Hughes had done investigating other models in the U.K. (United Kingdom), successful models, and Phil, my colleague, went to see Mark Rogers and was given an undertaking that this would definitely be funded.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

It was categorically supported that this was a good idea, it was useful to curtail the issues that people had seen into the wider society and stop the exclusions, keep people in mainstream education. We whittled it down to £70,000 in the end. It started off at about £150,000 that we needed. At the time there was an air of urgency about it because it was coming up to the summer holidays. We wanted to put that support in place prior to it, so it could continue through the summer holidays. Promises, promises. They were all reneged on.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That would have addressed the needs of how many young people?

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

I do not have the numbers. It would be a relatively small number. It would be those that would be considered for either exclusion or an assignment or some other facility. They are relatively small numbers.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Ironically we had a public hearing earlier today where we talked about money put aside for a project, £400,000 for the most affected children ...

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Youth intensive support.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

They are talking about a cohort of around 10 children who are perhaps the most ...

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

It would be that or less. But it is the impact and that is why the numbers were small. It was not a huge amount of money.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

But it already existed, it would have costed that money but it was not funded.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

We were not able to go ahead with the project but it was a model based on that. I think that the numbers of 10 to 12 are ringing bells in my head but I could not put my ... there has been a lot of media attention around the students running riot - to use the media's words - at Havre des Pas and Off the Rails café and things like that. Just to be very clear, a very small number of those children were Haute Vallée students; very small. But this was an idea to put something together that would support all of the children across the Island. As I say, to be very blunt, we feel that we have been lied to.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Personally I was lied to. I was told it would get full support and that support was never forthcoming. As the school has alluded to, they are small numbers but we would have been doing that 2 to 3 years prior. The teachers can see this coming. It was not a case of trying to deal with - for want of a better expression - those children. It is the ones in 3 years' time and 4 years' time.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Early intervention.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Early intervention. They can see it coming; it can be avoided for relatively small amounts of money. I think that was kind of the straw that broke the camel's back. There is the big issue of the funding review and we believe a missing £23 million from education, which we will probably come on to at some point. It was this £70,000 that was the straw that broke the camel's back. That is where Haute Vallée is facing adversity. There is just no support.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Another big challenge we have is recruitment; the process is clunky. It is slow. It is cumbersome. We do not even get our adverts out for the newly qualified teachers until they have all got jobs. So they have all been recruited and they are off. So we get left with those that have not been able to get a job, if we are lucky.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

We are a month behind the U.K.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

We are usually at least a month behind the U.K. There is the cost of living and again back to inequity, the fact that I believe De La Salle has a staff house for N.Q.T.s (newly qualified teachers) coming to Jersey that provides a subsidised support. We cannot offer that. We do not have that. Are we in a crisis? We have not been able to recruit a geography teacher for this year so we are one short. We know that next year we need an additional 9 teachers. If the process is as slow and cumbersome as it has always been we are not confident that we are going to be able to get those 9 additional teachers, as well as fill any vacant posts that arise between now and the end of the year. All of that, I think, is a preamble that leads up to the big point. The thing that we want to talk to you guys about and we think needs to be in the public domain and that is the underfunding of our school system; the gross underfunding. We asked Stuart Hughes to do an exercise and to look at ... well, he took out the utilities and the staff wages and admin costs, what was left per student to buy the pencils and the exercise books and text books, and there is not anything left. Nothing. There is no money left. After we paid the bills and the wages there is no money left. We cannot buy school books, we cannot buy pencils. We have all known about this underfunding for years. Many of us have been involved in different ways. I was the founder of Autism Jersey and sat on many panels.

[14:15]

In fact, I sat on a social policy forum for the Chief Minister. I chaired that for him and at that time we identified there was a shortfall in funding for education. So Stuart Hughes, our headteacher, was

asked to be part of a group that was challenged with looking at the funding model and how we fund students' education in Jersey. They did a big piece of work and they looked at the model and they created a new model that looked at what it actually needed. Not whistles and bells. Not frills and music. Just the bare costs of a baseline budget that would fund the appropriate education of all of our children. That model we know is completed and we believe it is being reviewed by experts at the moment. I use that term "experts" in inverted commas because we do not know who it is.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

We have a fear that has taken so long. Why has that taken so long? The answer is there. While we accept that a funding formula is complicated, it is not as complicated as we are being told. It is not as complicated. The amount of resource that has been put into it and we have the answer. We believe the answer exists. It is just that the answer is unpalatable.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

This review has happened, they have spoken to headteachers from across the Island and schools and they have ...

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

They have created a model and that model has been delivered to the ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

The model exists?

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

The model exists. The model has been given to the department. When Sean O'Regan visited the school on 22nd September he made a statement that that model had shown that there was a £23 million deficit between the current funding and the funding needed to deliver the new model. The model that all of the headteachers have agreed is an appropriate model.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

I think there was also a U.K. external consultant involved in that process as well. So it was an audited or ... it was not just the headteachers. There was a structure to it.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

It was not just the headteachers saying: "Please give us some money." It was done properly.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We have spoken to the school funding review as a panel so we are aware.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

This £23 million funding, which by the way does not include the special educational needs review that has been happening sideways. The £23 million is without the S.E.N. review.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can we just say, we have spoken to them, we have not seen this model though? I will say that to you. We have not seen this model.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

The model does exist.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is why I was so interested in that.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

It may well be in draft form, as it has been presented to the department for sign-off, but it is there. As Phil says, we are extremely worried now that this is not going to go anywhere. When Deputy Wickenden was in the same meeting where Sean O'Regan declared the £23 million missing funding, the Minister for Children and Education said to us: "I am afraid the pot is the pot, there is no more money." And he asked us: "Do you think we should stop digging the roads up?" I have a couple of responses to that. My first is a question: "Is the new model now being looked at with a view to bringing it down to the level of funding and if so what was the point of a review?" If it is not and it is a shortage of funding, then yes, I think we should stop digging the roads up if we have to because the Government of Jersey have said that you are going to put children first. So you either need to do that or you need to change your slogan to "Putting roads first". The most powerful thing I heard, and I have brought it for you, a year 11 student, a young lady, asked the headteacher if he could take this down off the wall. It is the "Putting children first" poster. She asked him to take it down because she says: "Politicians in Jersey are not putting children first." So on behalf of all of the children at Haute Vallée I would like to give this back to you because we do not think it is appropriate that this is up on our walls because we do not think that you are putting children first. Can I leave that with you?

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

That was backed by the board of governors. They were fully supportive. He said: "In actual fact we encourage you. The journey we have been on over the last 4 or 5 years we do not feel that sign should be put up either."

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

That is where we think we are. In light of all of that, I know that the Government Plan has been written and I know the Deputy Wickenden statement that the pot is the pot has been made, but if that is the case then we know that the unsustainable way that the school is being run at the moment, and teachers must be on the verge of burnout. They must be. Because they cannot possibly cope with the levels of stress and pressure that they have been put under on a day-to-day basis to deliver the top rate education that they are giving. We have gone from 27 per cent to 64 per cent of our children getting 5 A* to C. Surely that is something that we should be very proud of. But that is in spite of that. I cannot believe that that is sustainable. If we do not get the appropriate funding we cannot keep those numbers up and we cannot keep having our students leaving school with an aspiration and with a vision of what they are going to be doing. We constantly hear in the press about the skills shortage, we constantly hear about the fact that we have a shortage of labour. We are training up these kids to fill that gap. Or are we? Are we just going to abandon them because we cannot afford to give them an appropriate education?

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Just on the funding formula, you mentioned the £23 million deficit: is that just for primary and secondary schools? I just need to double check that. It does not include Highlands?

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

It does not include Highlands. It does not include the S.E.N. review. The S.E.N. review, as the former chair of Autism Jersey, I remember meeting with Wendy Hereford, who was the head of the inclusion team at the department almost 20 years ago, and talking about the dearth of services for people with disabilities and the fact that we do not ... we talked about inclusion but we did not really because a lot of the time people with special and additional needs are excluded from the classroom because they are too challenging to be in the classroom. Unfortunately this is still the case in a lot of places. We have great support at Haute Vallée but it is without funding. We are having to use some of our S.E.N. funding, little as there is, for E.A.L. That is just bonkers. That is unacceptable.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is difficult because I recognise from a previous career what you are talking about and I have to be very independent, if you like, for this Scrutiny process. But I want to ask you: do you think we are at a particular tipping point which perhaps has been brought on by COVID, and which has highlighted some of the huge problems that we face? Do you think it is just built up and built up and got to this point now? What are the long-term implications in your opinion, for your school and others, if this is not addressed?

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

I do not think COVID can be blamed. It is a fact, of course it is, and it has made life more difficult. But we have been having these conversations about the lack of funding for the last 5 years that I have been a part of the board.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Do not forget it came from that 23 per cent. The standard at school is being judged on, which is debatable as to whether that is the correct ... these are the results, but that is the world we live in. When that was at the low point, the 23 per cent, obviously questions were asked, improvements were made in the team, and that has been improved in the face of adversity. It is about that sustainability so no, I think it has been there for years and years and years, if not decades. The fear is we will see that come crashing down the other side at some point because of staff burnout, lack of funding, lack of support, and then the interventions will happen because the results will be through the floor, we will see some awful behavioural issues that nobody wants to see. It goes back to that. We can see it coming, we have always been ... let us do something now.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

I was a parent governor in 2004, when my son attended Haute Vallée. I have a long connection with Haute Vallée and I had a great love of the place. I really do care about it. We were having those same conversations in 2004 about going over budget when Bob Fairhurst was the headteacher. It is not new. I can tell you for a fact that 17 years ago we were having those conversations.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

What is new is the slogan "Putting children first". So the slogan is new. The problems are the same. The behaviour is the same. What was Einstein's definition of madness? You carry on with the same behaviours and expecting different results.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I know you cannot speak for other governing bodies, but you must have some sort of communication.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

I think we can for Grainville.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

We have met with the chair of the board of governors at Grainville.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Do you think there are other schools then that would be in a similar position?

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Absolutely.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Absolutely.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

When I met with the chair of the board of governors at Grainville, he echoed pretty much line for line my concerns and said that they had been having exactly the same conversations. It is a generic problem. Underfunding is underfunding. Inequity is inequity. You cannot say that it is right that a student at J.C.G. (Jersey College for Girls) or Victoria College gets £2,000 a year more spent on them than a student at Haute Vallée or Grainville. That is fundamentally wrong in anybody's book. Everybody should have the same baseline funding and then you can start looking at the additions and the extracurricular stuff. Lots of the children at Haute Vallée, and they are incredible young people, they are absolutely incredible, I am so proud to be the chair of the board of governors, and I feel very disloyal saying these things out loud. I really do. But they come from some really challenging backgrounds and homelife. We are giving them an opportunity to break free of that and break free of the poverty trap, get a decent education, become the skills of the future, become our politicians, our doctors, our engineers. All of those things that we need. But if we are not going to fund that what are we doing? Are we just saying to them: "You need to go back on the scrapheap. We do not care"? We cannot keep doing this to these young people. They are the future of Jersey. There are 600 young people at Haute Vallée at the moment, soon to be 750. We cannot just write those off and say: "We have not got enough money for that." We need to stop digging the roads.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

To get a library, we had a bus donated by LibertyBus and it was a great project to be involved with and we project managed it all, we used the prison service to do some of the carpentry work, which was fabulous. It was a great project we were all very proud of. We did it because we did not have a library.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Providing a breakfast club, which we have sponsorship from the local supermarket. I cannot remember the numbers off the top of my head but hundreds of meals a week are being given out free to the students because otherwise they would not have breakfast. So we are providing that service. We were one of the first schools to have Caring Cooks.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

They have done a fabulous job.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

We are very proud of being connected with them because they are superb. But all the effort that goes into providing a breakfast club takes staff time and that staff time is already pressurised. When you have got a teacher that is already doing 50 or 60 hours a week, and that is not an exaggeration, that is what they do. That is their life. Then you say to them: "By the way, can you come in an hour earlier every day to help with the breakfast club?" they are doing it. But how long can they keep doing it. You cannot keep asking people to give, give, give, and not provide them the support to deliver what they need to, to do the job.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Do you think there is a tipping point now where staff are hitting that provides you with concerns in terms of retaining staff?

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School::

Not yet. But it would be ridiculous not to expect it to come. We are both in business, we both run fairly large companies. We know what staff burnout looks like. We are seeing the signs of it. But just looking at the workload, the pressure that are on these poor people, that absolutely give 110 per cent every day, all day. It is not sustainable. You could not ask somebody to carry on doing that. It is not sustainable.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It is a very clear message but if you were to speak to Government directly and via Scrutiny, because we are not Government, we are here to scrutinise Government and try and provide a platform for that scrutiny, which is what we are doing today, what would you want to see happen right now?

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Put children first.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

In a nutshell. Go back to the Government Plan, look at the funding. We know that the model is showing that there is a £23 million deficit for the mainstream. We know that the S.E.N. review has happened but for some reason it has not been published. We cannot understand why unless it is to hide it because it has unpalatable news in it. But that funding needs to come from somewhere and I am afraid Government needs to look again at its budget and spend the money appropriately. We both work on a daily basis, working with budgets and balance sheets. We know that our business, to run effectively, you have to deal with the core costs. There are some things that you absolutely

have to spend. If education is not a core cost and something you have to spend, then we have really messed up as an Island. We have lost our way. Education, education, education to paraphrase. If we do not give our children, our young people, an education, there is no future for Jersey. There is no hope. The skills shortage will never be challenged. We will always be short of skills but we will not sustain it. We cannot.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

It does have to happen now. I think your question on are we reaching a crisis point; I think yes, we are. I think we need to act now. Even a show of support that somebody comes in and backs a project and provides the money and starts talking honestly about the fact that there is a shortfall, and just show these people on the front line that they are being supported.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

The students, the young people - I am going to labour this point, I am sorry - I feel very disloyal I am having to do this because if you met these ... I know you have met these young people because you have been into schools. They are so positive. They are so able. They are so wonderful. They have these aspirations. They leave us all glowing when we speak to them. If we do not fight for them they cannot fight for themselves, they do not have a voice. The year 11 girl that asked us to take the poster down off the wall, she needs somebody to stand up for her. We need to do that. But you guys, as politicians and Government especially, if you are going to say put children first, put children first. That is it.

[14:30]

Senator T.A. Vallois:

In terms of the deficit that you have at Haute Vallée, do you have any indication of if you were to manage that deficit, so bring it into budget, just as an example, what type of things would you have to get rid of? It is just to give an indication.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

A huge chunk of the curriculum. Then again you are going back to this inequity. What you are basically saying is if you come from this demographic and you go to Haute Vallée you are not going to be given the opportunity to study a broad and balanced curriculum because there is not enough money for you. You have to go to the private sector for that. Fundamentally you cut the curriculum down to something that I would say would be unpalatable, is the polite way of putting it.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

We know that when there are cuts in schools it is usually the arts are the first thing to go. But we also know that a curriculum without art and music and drama, it fails children. We know that. Children do not thrive and they do not flourish and they do not become the fully rounded human beings that we aspire to produce at the end of their time with us. We want them to leave ready for the world.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

In engineering, they say some of the ultimate engineers have probably got maths, further maths, a science subject and music. It is a proven link to being a rounded person.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

The fact that Stuart Hughes has done the calculations and said that after the wages are spent and the utility repaid there is no money left for anything else I think speaks volumes. To be able to deliver the budget he would have to either cut some of the utilities. What does that mean? Not having lights on? Not having heating? He would have to cut the staff numbers. That means, as Phil says rightly, cut the curriculum but increase the class sizes perhaps to unacceptable levels where we know students do not attain. What do you do? There is no fat left. There is no fat left on the thing. We are running absolutely lean. If you see the way the staff and the students care about the things, there is no ... when I hand boxes of pens out and reams of paper to people, people are recycling and reusing, there is a real drive to save as much money as they can.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I just asked the question to give the context because the Government Plan hearings that we are having, we are focusing in on some of the efficiencies and the arguments they are making about efficiencies. We put that as an opportunity for you to explain to us what that means if you were trying to bring it into budget.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

It is at the bone. It is absolutely at the bone. That is even with being over budget it is absolutely at the bone.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Of course in the next couple of years you have that cohort coming through in terms of the children who were ... the high birth rate back I think it was in 2012, so you have that coming through in the next couple of years.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Another 150 students joining the roll over the next couple of years.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

So the exacerbation of that will mean further deficit or cuts to the curriculum.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Yes. It means the funding per head is the funding per head. No different. It just becomes a bigger version of the same problem. Not enough money.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

The existing model does not allow for a smaller school so Haute Vallée as a small school does not have the numbers to get but it is flawed because there is no allowance for what we call an overhead and your fixed costs. The model is flawed so it goes back to the conversations we had with the head where we would not hold him to account. We cannot answer the questions because the original premise is too flawed to answer the question.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

We have some admin function that is not being met at the moment but we are not allowed to recruit administrators until the review of admin has been completed. So there is another tension there. Teachers are not being able to rely on the admin team as much as they would normally be able to because there are not enough administrators, and because we are a small school we have a smaller team anyway. Then there is a real fear that that will be centralised, like recruitment was centralised, and we end up with a second-class service.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

The answers are in the school. It is the headteachers, the senior leaders and the teachers themselves and the kids themselves. The answers are there, they just need support. They just need listening to and backing.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

You are saying as a board of governors you are not willing to hold the headteacher to account to a model that was fundamentally flawed so therefore agreed that, yes, there is overspend, which is only keeping you to the bare bones of running that school is essential. So you continue to overspend. A funding review was offered and undertaken by headteachers and by staff, and there is a formula somewhere that has been agreed that will work and will change that and correct that.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

And an external body that I believe should be expert.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Which will correct that. But that has been lost somewhere. You have not seen an outcome from that.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

That must be 18 months in the making. That funding review was commissioned ...

Senator T.A. Vallois:

If I may, it is probably one for me to deal with because I am a former Minister for Education. But the funding review was done, was completed, was published last October. Additional funds were put in the Government Plan but that covered the overall budget deficit and some extra bits and pieces because there had to be a piece of work on the funding formula, because the funding formula last time it was done was 1992. Your premise of the fact that it is based on a flawed model, well needs of children have changed and needs of education has changed since 1992. So then that work was supposed to be carried out this year on the funding formula with the teachers involved. That is why the headteacher at Haute Vallée would have been involved, and we were told as a Scrutiny Panel earlier this year that they would have that completed this month. But we have not heard anything since.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

I go back to one of my original comments; it is not that complicated. It is complicated but it is not that complicated with the timescales involved. It is ludicrous.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Those people that were charged with creating that funding model have done that and they have produced that funding model and they have presented that funding model. We just do not know what has happened to that funding model.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It does appear that it shows a £23 million deficit in the funding of our education system, not including Highlands College or S.E.N. provision.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Correct, that is Sean O'Regan who said that.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That has not been identified plus there are other issues of when you did have a project such as the intensive support service, the £70,000, which seems to me a very small amount of £23 million - but

that is just a comment. Perhaps an obvious comment - was rejected and therefore you could not have that impact on those few children that ironically we talked about in the last previous hearing.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Just to be clear, £70,000 sounds like quite a lot of money. To me it does anyway. But if you can change ...

Deputy R.J. Ward:

When you look at the Government Plan it does not, to be quite frank.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

If you change the outcomes for 10 children, 10 young people, and stop them going into the criminal justice system and stop them going to prison, that £70,000 becomes a very small amount of pocket change.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

It becomes an incredibly efficient way to spend money.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I think £70,000 is probably less than a year in prison, is it not?

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

I would have thought so. That was based on a model that is working, I think it was in Glasgow was one of the models that Stuart looked at. But it was an inner-city school that produced this model and they were having this impact, they were taking kids out of the criminal justice system.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

How quickly do you think, if there was funding, that you could address these issues and first of all maintain the success of the school? That is a real concern. Am I right in thinking from you that the way you are now cannot be, not even will not be, but cannot be sustained is what you are telling us?

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Yes.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Correct.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Am I right in seeing it that way because you are just at a point you believe ...

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

That is our point. As the board of governors, that is our opinion.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

We have tried our absolute hardest to engage with the department. Officially Phil went to meet with them. We have tried to engage with the Minister for Children and Education, we have tried to do it all above board, we have tried to do it quietly and calmly. This is we are at the end of our rope. We just do not know where to turn. But we know that if we do not do something soon, as in now, if we do not address this funding deficit then the children at Haute Vallée and other schools will suffer. They will not have the future that they are entitled to and deserve.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

But the impact, to answer your question, would be immediate, then in weeks, then in months. We are not talking years. The fact that we cannot recruit, the fact that we would like sums in the region of £70,000 to the original £150,000, that will help some of those future issues. Some of the support for teachers that are doing extra hours and going that extra mile. It will be immediate.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

I think the other thing is, just to be very clear, the £70,000, that was for a project that would have been instead of a specialist thing that Mark Owers was talking about on Friday. We support the specialist support unit that Mark Owers has designed. Stuart Hughes is very much behind that. So we do not want to divert the funding away from that to Haute Vallée to try and replicate that because that would just be nonsense.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

One of the principles was getting social workers into the school environment so there is this continuity. What we are seeing is that classic gap where someone has told the story to so many people they have just stopped telling the story. The teachers are there and the school is there. If you get the social workers involved in that school as well they can join up. There is then continuity across the holiday because on the behaviour panel what we often see is we start seeing the behaviour spike prior to holidays and it is because of fear, it is because they are frightened. Despite the fact they are kicking against it and behaving what we might call terribly, it is a cry for help that they are going to lose that safe environment knowing they are going into the school holidays. You see these heart-breaking examples where the school is screaming going: "Help us now, help us now, this is coming" and you see that child failed time and time again. Shame on us. We have got to do better.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

We heard a story - not a story, it is true, it happened - a child was in crisis and somebody contacted the C.A.M.H.S. (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) out-of-hours line and said: "Can you see this child immediately? We have grave concerns for their safety. We believe that they may be at risk of taking their own life." The C.A.M.H.S. out-of-hours person said: "I cannot see them because I am not based in Jersey, I am in England." So the out-of-hours on-call was a phonenumber. Social workers, we have families who cannot tell us how many social workers they have had because it has gone past the numbers that they can count to. They do not know who the social worker is this week. When they try and contact their social worker they are told they have left. There is this constant flux. Again, we know early intervention in the school, we have a school councillor who is absolutely way beyond capacity. We are not able to provide that upfront intensive immediate care, early intervention, that stops things becoming massive.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

The school can be a hope for it because that child turns up every day, most days, when they should there, and it is a capture. There are statistics around it. If they do not turn up it will get captured.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

The young people trust the teachers; that is the thing. There is trust and there are relationships there.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Yes, you build a relationship with teachers.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

That is where we should be fixing it.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Again, the social workers into the schools, having a continuity of social work and linking that up is fundamental. I think Mark Owers was fully supportive of that approach; everybody involved. It appears to be a very sensible solution. You can do that straightaway. There is no need to delay.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

But if you are diverting funding away, because the school has to divert funding away because it has to pay the electric bill or the gas bill, we are not spending money on the things that we should. If there was a proper-funding model in the terms that we would use in our businesses we would do our budgets, we would cost out things, we would know the core parts of our business that we had

to fund, and we would know what the fluffy thing is to do if we had enough money left over. None of this stuff we are talking about is the fluffy stuff. This is all a core business. If this was a private company, and I was the managing director of this private company, I would probably be recommending to the board of shareholders to close it down because it is not profitable and it is going to go bang. We cannot do that because this is not a company, this is children's futures. This is the lives of people of Jersey. We cannot just close it because it is not working. It is working in the outputs but it is working in spite of the lack of funding.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

That is an interesting sentence, it is working in spite of and not because of. That is a very, very, very damning ...

Senator T.A. Vallois:

Can I ask what your understanding of the early help model is?

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

I remember the early help model coming in, and again it is probably not something we can talk about with too much confidence because we are not involved in the day-to-day running of the school. But we do hear anecdotal evidence that people are having to wait too long for early help or when early help arrives what there is, is great. There is just not enough of it. That is the anecdotal evidence we are getting back. I do not think it is something we can, as a board of governors, get involved in.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

I just thought I would ask because you were talking about early intervention in all those areas. We hear early help being stated, whether it is in hearings or briefings that we have, so I thought from a board of governors' point of view.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We have been through the Government Plan in quite a lot of detail and there were quite a few phrases which are quite interesting. When you put them in context with this conversation it is certainly interesting. I do not know what to say apart from we do share your concerns massively.

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Thank you.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

What is the time span, do you think, in which if we do not ... I asked about the time because I think it is important in terms of urgency. If we do not correct this what is the time span where you think we may well see that drop?

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

I think it is a taut line now.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I mean maybe it is an impossible question and I do not want to ...

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

I do not want to cast aspersions on the staff at the school. They might say: "We will carry on for ever" because that is it.

[14:45]

You have to get to those people who say they will carry on for ever because they got into the industry because they care. So maybe they will keep going. But is it fair to ask them to? I do not know. I really do not know.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

There is also the risk of burnout as well.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

From a people perspective, Phil and I, as I keep saying, we both run companies so we know when our staff are becoming stressed and overworked. We know that and we will send them on holiday or we will bring them in and give them a cuddle and tell them ...

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

We can slow down our front end. You can choose not to take certain amounts of turnover. You cannot slow down the front end with education. Children will turn up every day and we need to do the right thing. We cannot slow down that.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

We cannot just deliver a poorer service and hope that eventually it will go away. As I said, these conversations were happening in 2004 when I was a parent governor. They are still happening, and it is the same conversations. When Stuart Hughes came to us and said that the funding model was finished and it had identified a £23 million deficit we were all overjoyed. It was a genuine feeling

that thank goodness, we have identified that this ... we now know. We have always said it. Now we have the black and white facts in front of us that identifies those £23 million underfunding. To be told then that: "They might have done that but the pot is the pot, you are not having any more money", we were gobsmacked. Is that the word?

Former Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Yes.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

I think at the time we did not challenge the Minister for Children and Education because we were completely taken by surprise. Speechless.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I want to say thank you for the last 45 minutes and your frankness. I know it must be difficult. We take on board what you said about school and I do not think people will see you as being disloyal in any way. I think you have made clear about the value of the teachers and, particularly and most importantly, the children in that school and their successes.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

In spite of.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

In spite of not because of, and that is I think ...

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Maybe that should be the new government slogan.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Could not possibly comment on that.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Sorry, that was flippant. An unworthy remark, I apologise.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

No, please do not. Thank you. It is not often I am speechless, I must admit.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

That is very true.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

We feel very passionate about it.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I absolutely value what you say.

Senator T.A. Vallois:

But it is valuable evidence for us when it comes to the Government Plan. We are due to have the Minister for Children and Education in next week so it will aid our questioning around education reform and funding formula.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

I think also the independent voices of the board of governors and if other boards of governors want to make submissions on paper to us they are more than welcome to do that. It would be very constructive, particularly any analytical way that you have taken in terms of being business people who are looking at this. I am seeing from it this model simply is not working, so you would possibly have it there. That would be very beneficial, so that encouragement we would certainly encourage. That is another mechanism. We can always make time to talk to people as well. Unless there is anything else you want to say ...

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

I think I have probably said more than enough at the moment.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

Can I just say thank you for your time and we will call the hearing to an end? Thank you very much for your time.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Can I say thank you very much as well for listening? It is encouraging that somebody is finally listening to us.

Deputy R.J. Ward:

We are listening.

Chair, Board of Governors, Haute Vallée School:

Thank you, appreciate it.

[14:49]