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Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Proposed Budget 2027-2030

Witness: The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs

Thursday, 5th November 2026

Panel:

Deputy V. Li of St. Helier North (Chair)

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine of St Mary, St Ouen and St Peter

Connétable T. Palmer of St. Lawrence

Witnesses:

Senator H.M. Miles, The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs

Ms. K. Briden, Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs

Mr. P. Yates OBE, Governor, States of Jersey Prison Service

Mr. P. Brown, Chief Fire Officer, States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service

Mr. R. Smith, Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police

[13:02]

Deputy V. Li of St. Helier North (Chair):

This is a public hearing of the Children, Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel, as part of our review of the Proposed Budget 2027-2030. Today is 5th November 2026 and our witness is the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs. I am Victoria Li, Deputy for St. Helier North, and I Chair this panel. Before we begin, a few housekeeping points. This hearing is being filmed and streamed live and the recording and transcript will be published on the States Assembly website. Please make sure all mobile phones and devices are switched to silent. For the recording of the transcript, please

state your name and roles the first time you speak and stay close to the microphone. We have received apologies from Connétable Curtis of St. Saviour and Connétable Labey of Grouville, who are unable to join us. I will now ask my panel colleagues to introduce themselves, followed by the Minister and Assistant Minister.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:
I am Constable Tina Palmer from St. Lawrence.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:
I am Deputy Chris Rebindaine from St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
I am Senator Helen Miles. I am the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:
Robin Smith, Chief of Police.

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:
Kate Briden, Chief Officer for Justice and Home Affairs.

Governor, States of Jersey Prison Service:
Paul Yates, Governor of La Moye Prison.

Chief Fire Officer, States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service:
Paul Brown, Chief Fire Officer.

Deputy V. Li:
Thank you so much. We have quite a lot to cover today, so I am just going to march through. If there is any questions that require any detailed answers, please feel free to say that, to come with a written letter or something to submit later. Minister, the Common Strategic Policy, launched on 29th September, commits that the Government, under priority 7, to community safety and Island resilience. Is there any priority 7 commitments that you are responsible for that has no funding?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
That is a very good question. The priority 7 around community safety and Island resilience is as broad as it is long. Certainly, what we have identified coming through the Budget is the most significant areas that are required for investment. So, as you will know, we have the implementing violence against women and girls recommendations. We have the Sexual Assault Referral Centre.

We have the extra investment that we need for the Emergency Services Control Centre, and also the Fire and Rescue Service. So we are one of the only departments that has had significant growth. So, I would say, from my perspective, that yes, there is sufficient funding to make sure that we can improve community safety and Island resilience.

Deputy V. Li:

That is very helpful. Thank you. When developing the C.S.P. (Common Strategic Policy) and the Proposed Budget, what were the principal safety, security, and resilience risks identified within the portfolio?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Once again, all of those come back to community safety and Island resilience. So one of the principal risks was making sure that we have the emergency services capability to meet any incidents that we have. You will see in the Budget that there is a restoration capacity for the States of Jersey Police. Certainly, we are continuing with the investment case for the Fire and Rescue Service. They were given money in 2022. It is an ongoing commitment. Most certainly for the emergency services control room, in order that they are properly equipped to deal with emergency calls quickly. From a victims and witnesses perspective, clearly the money going in around the violence against women and girls also is factored into that. If I missed anything, just ...

Deputy V. Li:

So, out of that, it is very reassuring to hear that most of the priorities have been covered with the funding. Were there any funding bits or areas of investment proposed by Justice and Home Affairs that were not included in the final Budget? If so, what will not be delivered as a result?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

It was really made very, very clear from the Minister for Treasury and Resources right at the beginning of this process that there will be no growth bids. So certainly what our Budget growth has come from is previous States of Jersey Assembly agreements, but also as a result from Comptroller and Auditor General recommendations and also various different inspection reports that have said we need to do certain things.

Deputy V. Li:

We have received some of the submissions when we have our stakeholder engagement. The Viscount's Department said that its new posts are enough only if the case numbers match forecasts. The Probation Service also said that its 2 posts are enough only for the targeted post-custodial scheme, and the Fire and Rescue Service Association also identified that, with no funding at all, some of the needs. So this is what we see as a pattern that the services are funded to forecast, not

to risk. To our understanding, if the demand exceeds the forecast during the Budget period, what mechanism releases more funding and who will decide that funding?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

The whole foundation upon which this was built was what we call a demand-led model. So rather than going for full demand to start with, what we have done is we have something like £800,000 in reserve, which can be drawn down for any of those areas that sees unexpected demand. To a certain extent. it is a little bit how long is a piece of string, but there has been some significant analysis and forecasting and profiling done across our stats staff, across the department, to come up with a realistic expectation of what we are likely to see as a result of the violence against women and girls recommendations.

Deputy V. Li:

Does that model cover all departments, Viscount's Department, the Law Office, or does that only cover specific departments?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

No, that will cover all departments.

Deputy V. Li:

Perception of safety is hard to measure through crime statistics alone. What indicators will you use to demonstrate by 2030 that Islanders are safer and more resilient as a result of the investment proposed in this Budget?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

One of the things that we do use to help us assessing our performance is the Jersey Online Lifestyle Survey. One of the questions is how safe do you feel in your community? To be perfectly honest, we do not have that far to go. People generally feel very safe here. One of the reasons that I wanted to make sure that community safety and resilience went into the Common Strategic Policy is it is something that we should not take for granted. It does not just happen by accident. A lot of people think, because we are a safe community, that we are not doing anything to contribute to that. The opposite is absolutely true. We need to make sure that we maintain, not only emergency services, but also our prison services and agency serving the courts, our Probation Service. So, from a community safety perspective, feeling safe is measured by the Jersey Online Lifestyle Survey, but also we have other things, as you know, under the Building a Safer Community Framework, again, that is totally focused on community safety. As you know, we take an outcomes-based accountability approach to that. So it is all focused on outcomes and everything is geared up to performance

management and, not just how much have you done, not just how well you did it, but is anybody better off. In this case, people are better off if they feel safer in their community.

Deputy V. Li:
Thank you.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:
Minister, afternoon. So, the department's expenditure plans, in order to balance, appear to rely on a forecast income of £5.177 million, which in my mind is a balancing number. So how robust are the assumptions underpinning the forecast of this income to your ministry? If the anticipated income is not realised, can the department absorb that shortfall through any other mechanisms?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
I think what we do for the income forecasting is largely around, for example, Superintendent Registrar, that is your number of weddings and deaths, et cetera. All of these would come from fees and what we never see is a reduction in work, certainly for Jersey Customs and Immigration, the income that is growing year on year. We use some of that surplus income to balance ourselves across the Budget.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:
You may not have it on top of your head, but would you know 2026's run rate to know that that figure is one you can rely on?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
Yes, absolutely. Because our run rate is over for 2026. We know that we have suddenly got a spike in, for example, the number of work permits, the number of naturalisations for people to become British, the immigration casework. Clearly we have an issue with the settled status and visas, et cetera. So, I am confident that that figure reflects the workload that will take place in 2027. Passports are in there as well, sorry, passport fees.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:
So, the Proposed Budget includes workforce-related savings for Justice and Home Affairs in 2027. What measures are you contemplating in advance of the 2028 Budget in order to help deliver on C.S.P. 11 and how will the department ensure that service delivery is not adversely affected as part of that?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

The savings allocation is always a really difficult one for me. Certainly it is something that the Chief of Police will no doubt expand on in a second. But we have been allocated a significant amount of growth, which has been very carefully identified as what is required to deliver the priorities. But at the same time, you have a savings target. So, with one hand you are giving, with the other hand you are taking away. So we have agreed across the department that these savings are, I think realistic might be a bit strong, we are optimistic that we can make those savings. We have to stand alongside other colleagues across the public sector. But any level of saving to us is challenging. I do not know, Chief Officer, if you want to add to that.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

The Minister helpfully illustrates some of the historical challenges that particularly S.O.J.P. (States of Jersey Police) have had over the last 7 years or so, when additional money has come in, not much, but it has been given back effectively in savings. Just to make clear, it is important that States of Jersey Police is part of the other agencies in Government that are making a contribution to savings and trying to drive efficiencies. We very strongly agree with that. But ultimately that has meant that we have effectively stood still while demand has gone up. So, in answer to your specific question for the 2027 savings target, it is £120,000. Now, of course that is a much smaller figure than the increase in the Budget for V.A.W.G. (violence against women and girls)-related demand. So there is no chance this time around that what we are getting, we are giving back, it is a very much smaller proportion, and we accept that. So our savings target for 2027 is £120,000. We have identified vacant police staff posts for that.

[13:15]

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

I should add that it is just the States of Jersey Police saving allocation, Justice and Home Affairs on top of that have a £405,000 allocated savings target. We will work constructively across our departments to see how we can achieve that over the next year.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:

So, given you have responsibility for multiple agencies under you, do you ever look at any one of them and say: “That is what success looks like”, and try to take working practices from one and try to see if you can implement them across others?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, that is just the way that Justice and Home Affairs work. Each of the services under it has their own set of professional standards and working practices. But, for me, it is about continuous improvement, making sure that we are maximising the potential for I.T. (information technology),

making sure that we are sharing resources. One example of that, for example, is the Justice and Home Affairs Business Support Unit. That is an extremely lean team, which provides all sorts of services to the other operational services, much, much smaller than you would find in any other ministry. So we are constantly, constantly looking at ways to be more efficient, without reducing the level of service that we can give to the public, because we are about security and resilience. It is not nice to have; it is need to have.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:
Thank you.

Deputy V. Li:
With the violence against women and girls and victim support, the £5 million has been allocated to this specific work task. What proportion of that Budget represents one-off implementation costs, what portion relates to the ongoing service delivery, and what funding commitments are likely to extend beyond the current Budget period?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
Okay, there was 3 questions there. My understanding is the business case has encompassed all of those. Starting with the last question first, this violence against women and girls, community safety never ends. So I am fairly sure that, where we will have embedded a lot of this into Budget, so you can see with extra staff, we will have extra staff that will take that. But you never know what will come up in the future. Maybe it will extend into the 2031 to 2036 Budget. The first question was about one-off funding and ongoing funding. I am not sure that we have a calculation. It is in the round. Is there a calculation about the one-off as opposed to the ...

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:
There is not off the top of my head, we could provide it, but I would say by far the bulk is staff posts and therefore they are durable. So to review, on a demand-led model, as the Minister says, that there is a small amount of one-off funding. But that is, for example, for the continuation and implementation of the Family Courts Review. So a one-off review has come in, and then the cost of implementing that are then embedded in the budgets. But we can write with more accuracy if that helps.

Deputy V. Li:
So, because this is about forecasting demands, are there any elements of the V.A.W.G. programme that you anticipate that may require additional funding beyond the budget period?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

It entirely depends what cases come through the criminal justice system. Because obviously you have to look at this as a system. It is not just a one-off. It is not just about the police; it is not about Justice and Home Affairs; it is not just about the prison. It is systemic, which is why you are seeing investment going into Health, you are seeing investment into the Viscount, into the Probation Service, into Victim Services. What this does is it reflects underinvestment in previous years, previous decades. I can see that there will be ongoing need, but I could not predict that with any accuracy for 2031 at this point in time.

Deputy V. Li:

Because one of the things, one of the responses that you gave to us as the panel, that you advise the implementation of the legislation could generate between 199 to 369 additional offences annually. So that is where the question comes from. How confident are you that, if that demand exceeds forecasts, what the pressure that the department is going to have and how are you going to get on top of it?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

That is where the £800,000 that is held in reserve for drawdown will come in. But, again, that is not a blank cheque, so to speak. That will only be used if absolutely necessary. The other thing that we have said as well is potentially an extra 12 to 43 custodial sentences. But, again, we just do not know because obviously some of the other work we are doing is around sentencing policy. We are looking at repatriation of offenders. We are looking at different ways to reduce the prison population while maintaining public safety. So it will be very situational, to be perfectly honest.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

This is the first time in my experience that, working with Treasury and J.H.A. (Justice and Home Affairs) colleagues, we have tried to predict what future demand might look like with the onset of new legislation. Chair, as you have described, we have tried to predict what that might be using a number of analysts, as the Minister has already referred to. This is the first time I have seen this. We should be very encouraged by this, because, as the Minister says, we will draw down on reserves. We have called it the demand-led model because I do not think we could think of anything more creative to call it other than a demand-led model, but essentially what that means is we can go to that fund if the demand increases. That could be upwards of 11 more additional officers. So that is agreed, subject to us seeing the demand that we get. That is a very sensible way going forward. It will not be more business cases or whatever, it is already agreed, it just has to hit those triggers. If it does not, that is a good thing, because we are less busy, all our colleagues are less busy, and there is less money taken away from the Island.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Also, the community is safer.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:
Yes. Thank you.

Deputy V. Li:
So, following your comments about it with the prediction, what evidence gives you the confidence that the £5 million allocated in this Budget will be sufficient to achieve the outcome that you intended to bring?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
The Chief Officer has just articulated that. There has been an extrapolation of current offences. You can look at, when the future offences are implemented, you could make a fairly reasonable prediction from current offences that have not been able to be charged, if you see what I mean, because the legislation did not exist about where that is going forward. So, it has not been done on the back of a postage stamp. There has been some proper data analysis and evidence analysis around this.

Deputy V. Li:
As the newcomers, we have seen how efficient that your department has been putting the Budget forward really quickly and efficiently. So we would want to, as a panel, like to know what key assumptions underpin the funding model, and how did you determine whether this funding is sufficient or not in the first place?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
As I was not the Minister who put in this funding model, and again one thing I do want to mention is credit has to be given to my predecessor for this, because it was under her watch, if you like, when the recommendations of the taskforce and the next steps were decided. So I am going to ask my Chief Officer if she would answer that, she is far better placed than I.

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:
So, the key thing is some quite important strategic principles that we applied to it at the earlier stages. Obviously, the V.A.W.G. taskforce had recommended that there would be new legislation. There is of course the overall effect of, because of the work of the taskforce, reporting of offences of this nature under current laws has increased as well. Demand is already there in S.O.J.P., as Robin has alluded to. But it was clear that, partly because of that and partly because of the new offences, we were going to see an increase. That was mapped out in real detail initially by the S.O.J.P. analysts, as the Minister said, by really looking at what offence types that would look like. It was a

really, really detailed piece of work, taking into account, obviously it is your space, not mine, Robin, but all the College of Policing guidelines and all the ways that you look at prosecuting that sort of offence and how long preparing those offences takes. Of course, as Robin will frequently say, much of them involve digital devices now, and you have to take all of that into account. So it was all of that work that gave us that broad assumption of, as you said earlier, Chair, it settled on 169 to 369. So that is a very broad assumption. But what we did then was ask all of the agencies involved, and obviously, importantly, that was not just the Justice and Home Affairs ones of the Prison and the Police, but all the statutory agencies essentially, and what that might mean for them. Also properly tried to pan out, well, that starts with the police, well it starts with the offence, but it starts with the police. Then how does that map through the system? So it is not a big-bang effect when a piece of Law is introduced, there is a lag, and then there is a lag for the rest of the system as the police get to investigate it, and then it is determined whether it goes to prosecution or not. So the initial volume necessarily declines through the system with all of those pinch points. That is what is reflected in the funding. That was also a fairly novel approach for us to have taken, because we were including the non-ministerial departments in the approach. That was very important to me that, as a system, and this was agreed at the Criminal Justice Working Group, which is chaired by the Attorney General, as a system, we were walking together on it. It simply did not make sense for a part of the system to have investment, and the other parts not to be able to keep up, whichever way that panned out. So we were very keen to walk in tandem, which this approach has given us. The demand-led model, as Robin said, has not been done before. We were very, very keen to do it. Treasury were very keen to work with us on it. We have had a really good outcome, subject to your scrutiny and the debate, of course. But we have put forward what would potentially be a good outcome. The confidence comes from all of that analysis. But, nevertheless, we are still inherently working with variables. So the demand-led model gives us a good buffer for that variable. We have been honest to say, obviously, if demand does not pan out as high, even as high as, say, 169, well then we would have to have honest conversations about maybe we do not need as much resource, or maybe that can be used for other priorities. I do not think that will be the case. But it these things can go down as well as up. The other thing, just to say briefly on what we are calling the central demand-led model that the Minister has referred to there being £882,000 held in reserves in 2027, in case we are tracking higher than we expect. That is the police amount and it is set out in the plan. But that does increase for other agencies in the future. So there is up to £2.7 million in 2030 for if we end up tracking more towards the 369. Now, that is not in any way an exact science. What we are still working on at the moment is how do we understand what is happening in the system and what is the trigger for whether we move to that higher scenario or not. We have mapped even higher scenarios than what we call the centrals; there is a high. Treasury, understandably, were not going to fund that without enough knowledge, whether that was the right thing to do. I almost hope we do not get there because that means lots of crimes have been committed and that is not what we want. I expect you might have questions about that, so I will not talk about it too much. Prevention of it all

in the first place is, of course, absolutely paramount. We have not lost sight of that. Hopefully, that helps with the strategic approach.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:
Can I add one more brief point to that? Treasury probably will not thank me for saying this, but I almost want Treasury to answer your question. Because I have just done the calculation, there were 8 meetings with Treasury, some called them Dragon's Den meetings with Treasury. Treasury, quite rightly so, given the importance of public finances, have been very rigorous about this over a number of meetings and business cases. So, if there was any need of any reassurance, Treasury have played their part, as they will know. Thank you.

Deputy V. Li:
On that note, as a panel, what numbers or indicators should we look at, let us say next quarter or in a year's time, whether that investment has achieved its intended impact?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:
The reason we put forward the bids, of course, was because of the increases in demand. The increase in demand across the whole of the justice system, not just policing. So I will speak about policing, but of course, it is across the board. We talked about 30 per cent increases here, we talked about increases in violence against women and girls, serious sex offences, domestic abuse. States of Jersey Police, already measure that. So what I would like to see in 2027 and in 2028, it will not be straight away, but of course we still need to get those resources in place.

[13:30]

So we really will not be seeing anything; I would be surprised to see anything certainly in the first quarter, and may not even in the second quarter. So I am just managing expectation, I guess. All the reasons why we put that forward in terms of per centage increase in demand across the board, including our Digital Forensics Unit, we start to see that either there is a decline, it will not be a cliff face, but we start to see a decline. We can give a suite of measures, some of which we already keep.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:
So, as has been identified, the majority of this money will be spent on personnel. So there is legal advisors, police officers, forensic specialists, victim support staff. I know you do not talk for the L.O.D. (Law Officers' Department), but in terms of the staffing, what is the timeframe for the recruitment of all these people and is there any risk factors being assumed in terms of whether the right people exist to be recruited?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, absolutely. It is a huge issue. This is a big chunk of people to recruit. So one of the risks will be that we cannot get people in quickly enough, but the Government of Jersey has their own processes and procedures for dealing with that. I know States of Jersey Police, for example you cannot just produce 15 police officers overnight. We know that we are going to have some challenges bringing people in to support, we might have to use agency staff until we can get people fully trained and fully Jerseyfied when it comes to particularly transferees coming in from the U.K. (United Kingdom). I know we are talking about the V.A.W.G. stuff, but certainly with the Fire Service growth as well, there will be certain posts that are required for the Fire Service, and those are not always easy to find. It is the nature of Jersey to a certain extent as well.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:

So, at what point would you imagine you would be fully staffed in terms of your initial phase, if we are going for the 169 end rather than the 369 end of the spectrum?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

I can only really speak for the Justice and Home Affairs Department. Certainly, all of this implementation has been overseen by the Criminal Justice Systems Board, so any particular risks in recruitment or any problems will be highlighted there. But I would certainly hope, by the end of 2027, the Justice and Home Affairs posts will be in post and up and running.

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

Just to add to that briefly, the financial profile for 2027 is reduced slightly to allow for recruitment lag. So, in most instances, of course, we cannot start recruiting until you have debated and approved the Budget. In some instances, we do run at risk essentially and assume that we will need a number. So, for example, we are doing that in relation to police officers, we will always, one way or another, need some more police officers, so that recruitment can start. But, yes, the funding does assume that postholders, completely new postholders will be in post from about the middle of next year. But the implementation of the V.A.W.G. Law is also staggered so that, obviously, you do not get demand on the day you introduce a new Law as such, but in any event, we would expect all the Laws to be in by the end of next year and all the resources to be in by the end of next year. To us, that is comfortable, that dovetails, it will fit with the demand profile.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

So, for example, the Non-Fatal Strangulation is probably going to be the last Law that will be implemented out of the suite of 5 because there is a significant health implication to getting appropriate resources in place for the Health Department who will need to train various other people.

So that is why the implementation has been staggered because there is no point in implementing the Laws and then having nobody who can support those.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

From an S.O.J.P. perspective, one of the challenges is not having enough money. As I have said to my team, the next challenge is having the money and being able to spend it. I know which challenge I prefer, and it is hard to get the right people. I know, Constable, you have a lot of history and experience in H.R. (human resources) as well. So the timescales that the Minister has alluded to and the Chief Officer alluded to, the back-end of next year, we have already pressed or fired the starting gun, because the time it takes to get new recruits to be feet on the street, as we say, is about a year. So we will be recruiting 8 in January. That is not coming out of this funding. What we will now need to do is look at how we can recruit again and then look for transferees, which we are actively now about to press a button in terms of advertising for transferees. Of course, they require something I have just heard that is called Jerseyfication, as indeed I did, and are still having. So there is a bit of work to be done there. But of course, they come with the right experience. You may be interested to know that we are not just looking to identify officers from the U.K. who have V.A.W.G. experience, we are also looking for response experience. The reason for that is that is a specialism in itself, of course, because then we release our own staff to go on and be specialists as well. So we want to get that right mix so that our new staff, and our staff who have worked very hard to get specialist positions, they push up and through and that will be good. But it will be a challenge.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:

In addition to the personnel side of things, obviously, there could be impacts, as you say, in the timeline wave as you go through the process, and therefore court and prison capacity has to be understood. So, Minister, obviously prisons are under your domain, do you believe there is sufficient funding that is being allocated at that end of the timeline?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, there is investment going into the prison. I do not know, Paul, if you want to refer to that.

Governor, States of Jersey Prison Service:

Yes. In a sense, we are in part at the end of the process. However, we have already started to put measures in place to, not only make sure that we are very efficient, but also that we have that flexibility and capacity. An example being returning U.K. prisoners to the U.K., which provides local capacity here. Also, as part of the strategy, identifying local efficiencies and savings as well as a continuous activity to make sure we are getting better value for money, but still delivering, not only to the standards, but more. Also making sure we are saving costs in the right way, in the right place, and that adds to then our ability to provide more spaces. One would not argue that incarceration is

expensive in that sense, but nevertheless the broader strategy now of reducing front-end imprisonment is really exciting and a really important fundamental part of the overall strategy to reduce the numbers coming into prison. We have already begun to see that a little bit already. That will give us that organisational flexibility to manage the spaces we have within, hopefully, reductions in people being sent to prison. The introduction of post-custodial supervision with probation will hopefully give sentencers much more confidence in the community punishments, which are really effective, and hopefully custody is reserved for the most serious cases and the cases that present the most risk to the public. So there is a range of measures, both strategic, operational, and stress testing-wise, that we are using to make sure we are functional now in terms of providing spaces and providing that value for money. There may be, in the longer term, again, it is demand that will dictate to a certain degree the funding, but certainly, at this point in time, funding is challenging, as ever. It is the staff that are the most expensive resource in that regard, but also one of the most valuable resources. So we are working very, very hard. I can say with confidence, I know the price of a sausage, and so with that the price of some of these salaries. So we are very, very detailed in understanding what our Budget is, what we need, and providing value for money.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:

Just picking up on one of the points you have made there that intrigues me, so we are prepared to send people back to the U.K. So they have gone through our criminal justice process, but then we send them back to the U.K. As a taxpayer, I am sure I am very pleased to hear that somebody else is going to be paying. But our sentencing tends to be much stricter here than it is in the U.K. So is there a philosophical argument as to whether people going back to the U.K. might not be ending up with an easier ride than if they stayed here? I do not know who makes that decision.

Governor, States of Jersey Prison Service:

It is an insightful point in some respects, and probably slightly above my capability in that regard. But, nevertheless, it is very expensive to keep people in prison. Certainly, if those prisons are from another jurisdiction, as long as they served a proportion of the sentence instructed by the court, it would seem reasonable that they should then go to the U.K. and serve the remaining part of their sentence. We do know that in the U.K. the early release scheme means that some prisoners get released a lot earlier. Those more serious cases, though, we have the option to mark those as restricted cases, which means they will serve a lot longer. But certainly, those that are from the U.K. in this particular case, or other parts of the world, are required to serve a good proportion of their sentence before they are eligible to go back to the United Kingdom.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:

Thank you. The Viscount's Department has stated it is operating at or near maximum capacity in most areas and considers further savings to be unfeasible, despite having identified a £40,000

saving for 2027. Given the substantial growth in workload across the department's core functions, how has Government assessed whether the Proposed Budget provides sufficient long-term funding to maintain service levels and avoid future resource pressures?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
Specifically for the Viscount's Department?

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:
Well, as I said, we included the non-ministerial functions in our appraisal of what the demand might look like, to make sure it was consistent across the system. As a non-ministerial department, the Viscounts make their own representations on their budgetary position. So, if they have a case that what has been allocated is not enough for them, then they can revisit that as part of the non-ministerial Treasury process, which is prescribed slightly differently in the Public Finance Law than it is for ministerial departments.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
Absolutely, but certainly from the V.A.W.G. perspective, the line is really clear that the money that has been coming from the V.A.W.G. pot is expected to absorb V.A.W.G.-related demand and not any other sort of demand that is placed upon them.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:
Yes. The Viscount's comment was in relation to the 199 to 369, depending where that fits, as to how that impacts their own.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
That is reflected in the line, so £37,000 for 2027, and then when we get the full implementation of the Laws, that ups to £130,000, and then drops slightly in 2029 and 2030. But, again, it harks back to Kate's very accurate description of the way that this was put together as an Island-wide. That is a really good example because, if we had not included the Viscount's in this particular model, they would not have been able to play their part, if you like, in delivering the V.A.W.G. recommendations. So, again, credit to my predecessor, this was a very forward-thinking way of working and identifying a budget that will do the job without other people saying: "Well, you did not think about us, so how do you expect us to do this?"

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:
Thank you, that is my turn now. Before I go on to my questions, I wanted to just touch back on the recruitment strategy, because this whole 4 pieces is a chain of events, so your recruitment strategy for me, finding the right people is going to be your biggest challenge, the right person, but movement

across the services, across the blue lights, maybe a talent strategy that they can spend time in each one and then people shine in what they are good at, and then maybe you could have a shared talent pool or something that might be a better thing than you recruiting separately to yourself or to yourselves. So just something to think of.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
Of course, we need to think as well about our colleagues in C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills Department), which I know is relevant to you, we have a Uniformed Services course, that Uniformed Services course is going to be redesigned slightly. There was a new leader of that course, and certainly I am quite excited about ...

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:
The degree, the criminal ...

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
Yes, I am quite excited about the possibility of having, apprenticeship is the wrong word, but a course there that is going to align much more closely to the needs of what we require for our emergency services in the future.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:
Yes, that is the most sensible approach. Right, so the funding for Victim Services is expected to exceed £2.9 million, so what tangible improvements should victims and survivors experience as a result of this investment, and how will the Minister assess whether services have sufficient capacity to meet the demand?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
What we have done is we have heard what the taskforce said about the difficulties that those in the Victim Services were having, and a lot of that was about access to services. So people were generally very content with the service that they were receiving from the police, but it was during the court process and otherwise. So, for that reason, there is much more focused victim work. All the victim agencies are part of the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Harms Partnership, so they have a voice at the table, and they have certainly helped us in putting together the needs, if you like, for what Victim Services require.

[13:45]

So, one of the most important things is the Clinical Director. That is going to be based at Health. One of the things we hear is that there is no referral pathways there. We have also increased the

number of independent domestic violence advisors sitting with the Jersey Domestic Abuse Service, and again it is really easy to assess that capacity. They just do not have the capacity to meet the needs of the people that are coming through. Evidently, you have more firstly, then you require a team manager, and there also is some support services staff as well. So, in terms of the non-statutory services, if you like, we have identified Freeda as a training and delivery partner, and some money is going to be allocated to them. They already do some excellent work around training G.P.s (general practitioners) in the I.R.I.S. (Identification and Referral to Improve Safety) system, and again, what I fully expect is those sorts of issues to be brought to me as the Chair of the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Harms Partnership.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

That is a really great answer. Thank you very much, because it joins it all up, and it is a little similar to the care industry, where families do not want to have multiple conversations with multiple people. They want that consistency all the way through, so that their experience and everything is the same. So thank you for that. How much engagement has taken place with victim support organisations, you have alluded to this a little bit already, and other stakeholders in developing the funding proposals, and how has that engagement undertaken? How has that engagement influenced the allocations included in the Proposed Budget?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

As I said, we have the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Harms Partnership that was set up following the full taskforce recommendations, and the partnership is broader than just those agencies that sat on the full taskforce, so that we are getting a much broader reach. Again, we support all of those partners in their campaigns to make the Island safer. So we have just supported, for example, the recent N.S.P.C.C. (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) Stop It Now campaign. We have the Safe Places campaign coming through. So that is the forum for all of the partners to come together and really have their voice heard, and not only intelligence on what is happening on the ground, but what their needs are and how we can best respond to them.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Brilliant, that is vital. V.A.W.G. funding appears to be highest, and I think we have touched on this, and why the funding requirement decreases after 2027, but I think we have covered that. The Proposed Budget includes significant capital funding for Dewberry House Sexual Assault Referral Centre. So what measures are in place to ensure it is delivered within budget and on schedule? What ongoing operational costs are anticipated once it is opened, and have these costs been incorporated into your future financial planning?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

We have allocated £1.3 million in 2027. It is a change. We had to find an additional amount to cover the financial gap that was identified when the supplier tenders were returned. The issue for this S.A.R.C. (Sexual Assault Referral Centre) is it has taken a lot longer than expected, because we did have a planning appeal, and it is just the nature of the beast really, which is quite disappointing, because if we could have got on and built it, then we were ready to go. I believe that the supplier procurement stages have been completed, and groundworks were due to commence certainly before the end of this year, and we would like to have it completed by quarter 1, 2028. So that is the capital stuff. I am going to defer to Kate for the revenue spend.

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:
Well, I have some oversight of that, but in fact it is under Robin.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:
I need to get the numbers for you for the revenue spend, because I have just referred myself to the capital spend and the additional money, which the Minister spoke about, around £1.3 million. I can also confirm that we are looking to put, as it was described to me, a spade in the ground at the end of this month, which is great news. In terms of revenue spend, I can provide more information.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:
Okay, thank you very much. How will the success of the Dewberry House Centre be measured? What evidence will demonstrate that there is improved outcomes for victims and the effectiveness of wider criminal justice systems, the measuring of it?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:
It is important that the S.A.R.C. is seen as an Island-wide asset. It is not just a police asset. I am the accountable officer to deliver it, but it is going to be used by lots of other agencies. Of course, what we want to see is that we have measures that provide greater services, better services, quicker services. But the feedback we get from those people that go to the S.A.R.C., they remark about the environment, the people they are working with, the effectiveness. Of course, where we gather evidence from that location, whether that delivers tangible results in court. So we will arrive at a suite of measures, not least of which to illustrate to you in scrutiny, but also to Islanders, what is the value of the money that has been put forward? Some of that will be quantitative, like charges, et cetera. Much more of it will be quantitative, the experiences of those people that attend there.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:
I suppose one of the other outcomes will be people coming out the other side of being a victim and being able to rebuild their lives and becoming economically active again and getting those add-on services, as those will come under all of that.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Again, the focus, it will be very important for children and young people to have that singular centre where all the professionals come to them, as opposed to having to go around to different professionals. When we conceived the idea of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre, we conceived it along the lines of the Icelandic model. They have something called a children's house, and it has been modelled on that. So your real one-stop shop, so that everything is about the victim at the centre of the process, and not the other way around.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Brilliant. Thank you very much.

Deputy V. Li:

Chief Officer, you just mentioned about the U.K. and we noted that the U.K. Government has committed £55 million over 2 years towards the delivery of the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy. So, while Jersey, I understand, is a much smaller jurisdiction, so, again, what evidence gives you the confidence that the £5 million allocated in this Budget would be sufficient to achieve what you wish to see as the intended outcomes? Is that because the £5 million also covers some of the renovation of the S.A.R.C. or other premises that you are going to provide?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

No, the S.A.R.C. is entirely separate to the £5 million. The £5 million is within the revenue budget, if you like, the Sexual Assault Referral Centre. But, of course, it will consolidate some of the other services. So, we will not be paying rent on Dewberry House. There will be various other elements that will move up there more permanently. So, there will be an ongoing revenue saving from having disparate premises. But the £5 million, if you compare the £5 million against the £55 million, probably proportionately, the total Budget, we are paying much, much more towards this provision for our community than the U.K. are. Although, you have to appreciate the structures are entirely different in the 2 jurisdictions.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

The final thing I would say is that we, of course, already have a S.A.R.C. at Dewberry House. We tend to now start calling it the new Dewberry House. This is purpose built. This is not the renovation of a large house. I might be sticking my neck out here, but we will have the best S.A.R.C., certainly in comparison to other small islands, that will be one of the jewels in the crown for our victims. This is purpose built, built on the knowledge of where other S.A.R.C.s are, and indeed some very experienced staff that already run our current S.A.R.C. at Dewberry House.

Deputy V. Li:

Is S.A.R.C. a commonly accepted term across different jurisdictions?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

Yes.

Deputy V. Li:

Sark allowed that to be called a S.A.R.C.?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, Sexual Assault Referral Centre is known as a S.A.R.C. Most areas in the U.K. have S.A.R.C.s.

Deputy V. Li:

Okay. Thank you very much.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:

States of Jersey Police. So, Minister, Chief, within the Proposed Budget for 2027 to 2030, if we just leave V.A.W.G. to one side, what will be the areas of policing that will absorb the majority of expenditure?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

In terms of the £30 million-plus?

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:

The total Budget.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

The vast majority, of course, are people, 92 per cent goes to our people, which is also an illustration of how lean we are. It is probably not unlike similar organisations, but most of it, over 90 per cent, is entirely people. Of those people and how we divide up the organisation of currently around about 200 police officers and around about 130 police staff, the majority of that money will go into our response policing, because if you consider it as a pie chart, that is where the majority of our staff are. Around about 75 staff deal with response policing. That is 24-7 policing across 5 different teams. That is where the largest proportion of money goes to. Then, of course, we have our other specialist departments, of which that is a smaller amount, but nevertheless significant. So, for example, C.I.D. (Criminal Investigation Department), Public Protection Team, Offender Management Unit, our community team, of course, which your predecessors in scrutiny are very

familiar with. That is, broadly speaking, at a very high level, how we divvy up, if that is the right word, contribute, allocate money to different departments.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:

We covered this when we last met, in terms of digital technology and all the rest of it. Can you effectively afford to have 92 per cent of your Budget on people, when so much is now becoming technology-based?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

It is a very good question, because we, of course, like other organisations, now have that tension in the system, particularly with the advent of something I hear about every day called A.I. (artificial intelligence). We are working very hard to see how we can use those efficiencies to, if you like, in some ways, try to reduce the headcount. The other digital element of it, which you rightly referenced too, and I have been to the scrutiny panel a number of times already, is about something we call the D.F.U. (Digital Forensics Unit). 92 per cent of all our investigations now have some form of digital footprint. That is more than fingerprints. That is much, much more than DNA. But, of course, that is expensive. It is expensive in terms of people, and people having the right skills, but it is also expensive in terms of kit. So a portion of that £30.3 million goes to our Digital Forensics Unit. Really, my prediction is that is going to continue to be quite a significant cost. But, as many people do, and I will finish on this point, is quite rightly, under scrutiny and elsewhere, they ask me how much will it cost? I can explain that, but I also can explain how much it will save. Because, in the criminal justice system, to have speedier justice, to have systems where we can get straight into these machines and telephones, which are becoming bigger and more complicated, the evidence on those machines often can lead to guilty pleas and quicker justice. So it is trying to balance the 2.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:

Do you think the operational demands with cyber-enabled crime, complex investigations, or whatever, are adequately served the way you are currently positioned?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

We have a very good Digital Forensics Unit, very much so. But do I think we could do more? Yes, I do. Any Chief is probably going to say that to you. But I also have to balance that against everything else. So let us see where the future takes us in terms of future funding. We have a future bid going into the Criminal Confiscation Fund, which is often seen as very supportive. That is where we should put criminal assets, back into D.F.U., Digital Forensics Unit. So, if you are asking, which I do not think you are necessarily, would I like more, then the answer, Deputy, is absolutely yes. Do I think we have a very good unit there? I absolutely do. But demand will continue to increase.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:

So, I guess following on from that, with the proposed level of investment that you have, do you see that as being sufficient to meet the demands over the next 4-year Budget, or do you think you will be coming back in a year or 2?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

Probably not a popular answer, but I can see myself coming back. That is the honest answer.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:

Because in 2028, this is proposed to be a 3-year fixed Budget. So we may have to have looked over the horizon when devising that.

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

Yes. Of course, there are other opportunities to have money from other places as well. But it would not be accurate for me to say I do not think I will come back. Yes, I do. As I have mentioned before in previous scrutiny panels, the amount of memory now in these phones, 2 gigabytes. I do not really understand the difference between the 2, but equivalent to, somebody said to me the other day, 6,000 filing cabinets with paper in.

[14:00]

That is really just one of these. How many of these do you have in your home? How many of these do you have in your kitchen drawers and all the rest of it? So we have a very good triage system and the rest, but technology is going to continue like this. We will be looking to use other systems, including A.I.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:

Thank you. The Island generally has a recruitment and retention problem in a number of specific areas. So, are you comfortable with the States of Jersey Police ability to recruit and retrain sufficient officers given workloads?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

I do not think I am comfortable. I do not think there is any department that is comfortable, to use your word. We have to be constantly vigilant on that, on recruitment and particularly retention, because skills and talent is hard to find. So, comfortable, no. It needs to be a constant tension in the system that we are recruiting to the standard, which is very high, we recruit, as I mentioned to the Constable the other day, States of Jersey Police recruits on values and standards and dismisses on values and standards. Those values and standards have to be very high. One thing I will say is

we will not go below those standards. So that makes it that bit harder for us, which means we have to work that bit harder.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:
If demand for policing services outgrows your current workforce capacity, what are the contingency arrangements for making sure service levels do not drop?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:
The Minister has mentioned this already, and it is the first time I have seen this in my experience, that we have an allocation whereby there is a reserve fund that we can legitimately go to if demand begins to outstrip. I have not seen that done before. That is a really sensible way to go forward. I have an enormous amount of reassurance about that, so that when we hit the triggers, if a year ago you could have asked me that question, I am saying I am really not sure, Deputy. Now I am sure that when demand begins to outstrip, we can go to that reserve.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:
I will pass over to the Connétable.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:
I beg your pardon. I did not turn the page. I got so carried away listening. So, what provision has been made within the Proposed Budget to support neighbourhood and community policing? Do you consider current resourcing levels sufficient to maintain a visible community policing presence across the Island?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:
If there is one thing we all know, particularly in this scrutiny panel over the last year, of which, of course, the Minister was once a member, it is that community policing is very important to Islanders. It is very important to the parishes. It is also quite important to Constables. It is an inevitable fact that over the last few years we have had to reduce that number because we have had to work within our budget. Quite thankfully, last year, of course, or earlier this year, we received £240,000 because we felt the need to start moving resource to where our pressure was greatest. Your predecessors are very familiar with this argument because of public protection that we had to put resource in there. As a result of your efforts, of course, we received an additional £240,000, which allowed us to keep the 2 officers who were going to move out of community, back into community, as well as provide us just under £50,000 to the D.F.U. What this does, what the funding for V.A.W.G. does, means I do not have to do that. I do not have to, for want of a better word, raid other areas because pressures are greater. So this means that the happy coincidence, it is not because we have gone through this,

is that it protects community policing because I do not have to shift them to where a demand is becoming very, very great.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Yes, I agree. To support the V.A.W.G. and being on the ground and spotting the signs. To my second supplementary question, I know that the community police at the moment, they do 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., is it something like that, so for the V.A.W.G. piece, would you not agree that they need to be more visible at weekends and in youth clubs and in the evenings, so they spot those children or the domestic arrangements more? Because 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., the children are at school, parents are at work, so is there an argument, do you think, to shifting the shift patterns?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

There is always an argument for shift patterns. Of course, while that is their pattern, they may not work to that pattern if there is a particular pressure. Like all my staff, they are very flexible. If there is a greater need, as we have seen over the last couple of weekends, they flex into that, irrespective of what their shift patterns are. There is of course, and I have shared this with senior colleagues in England and Wales, quite rightly, we are focussing on violence against women and girls. The progress that we have made, collectively the Island has made over the last few years, frankly, is nothing short of remarkable. But there are also other things going on. You know, we have other pressures within the Island to keep people safe, not just about violence against women and girls. So, of course, the pressure that I have to absorb is thinking about where I need to move my resources to other places, which is not violence against women and girls, because it is not the only important thing that we do. I know you will understand that.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Yes, no, absolutely. Thank you very much. What efficiencies or savings are expected to be delivered by the States of Jersey Police during the Budget period by the adoption of A.I., we probably touched on this a little bit, or other measures, and how will you ensure that these do not adversely affect frontline services?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

I say, happily, you may have seen that the Digital Jersey Awards, States of Jersey Police, I am trying to say this without looking smug, but it is not easy. I am very proud. So my team were given an award for the work that they started to do around A.I. States of Jersey Police is a rich place to start looking at how we can make efficiencies using A.I. The challenge we have is to build the resource, the capacity to do it. That is the challenge. That is the bit that my team and I, we are wrestling with into 2027. We have plans for that. Because we are very ambitious, as you have probably seen with the award, we are very ambitious to try this and to work, but also use paths that have also been

walked on, in other words, using the U.K. and other colleagues in England and Wales, so that we are not necessarily being the first, but we do not mind being the second or the third. So I hope that gives an illustration of the confidence that we have, and where we would like to get to. The challenge is building the capacity to be able to do it.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Brilliant, thank you so much. What specific improvements in policing performance, service delivery, or public safety should Islanders expect to see as a result of the proposed investment by 2030?

Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police:

As you will know, Constable, I am asked those sorts of questions by Jersey Police Authority, who have the remit to ensure or challenge myself and my team on whether we are efficient and effective. I meet with them once a quarter, and they challenge me on all of those things, and my senior team. As we have just touched upon on previous answers, the same things that we have put forward to get the additional funding should be the measurements we use into 2027, but probably in the latter part of 2027, as I have already alluded to. So I am very comfortable to be challenged on those things where I have said have gone up. Let us see if those things come down. Let us see if the service is better as a result. Most importantly, the point that the Minister often makes is they are outputs, what are the outcomes? That is what we really want. Yes, we want to see crime going down. Of course we do. So we want to see that Islanders have a very good experience as a result of what we do, whether it is investigation through the criminal justice period or treatment of the victim.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Okay, thank you very much.

Deputy V. Li:

Thank you, Chief Officer, for the summary of the productivity and efficiency. So we hope to see more data we can collect later on to really draw us back to that very important indicator that we have a sufficient public service here. So let us move on to prison and justice infrastructure. Minister, you stated that the prison phase 8 is largely complete and that remaining expenditure relates primarily to boiler replacement works. What future prison infrastructure projects have been identified so far?

Governor, States of Jersey Prison Service:

So, in essence, in 2 key areas, firstly being the maintenance of the prison in a safe and stable condition, and that particularly relates to continuing boiler replacement. A number of the items, such as boilers, are coming to the end of their usable life, and while we do very strict preventative maintenance on those, they do have a lifespan in that regard. So that remains important, and also we are very particular about being efficient and certainly the building management system, which is

in essence a thermostat, in lay language, as it were, again helps us to be efficient and effective in what we do. Also, successive inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, for example, have identified some of the prisoner accommodation that is in need of refurbishment or replacement, and in particular the Care and Separation Unit, which is a segregation unit, and the attached buildings to that are ones that have been identified. We are stress-testing those in terms of could we manage in other ways, and may, subject to approval, consider putting in a bid in the future. But again, it is a need basis as much as anything else that we seek to plan for. You will be aware it is a small jail numerically, but certainly it is a really complex population, so I have to keep the woman prisoners away from the male prisoners, and the younger prisoners away from the older prisoners, et cetera. So, having efficient buildings and an environment does make that much easier. Also really interesting with V.A.W.G., as I said earlier on, we are down the line, as it were, in terms of maybe the next 12 to 18 months, we would expect to see prisoners coming through the court process. Looking at what is happening in other jurisdictions, in particular the U.K., we are making some assumptions, for example, around age-related health issues that will come with often older prisoners. So we are stress-testing our ability to manage those, and looking at not only Jersey health data, but also that in the U.K., and that is influencing what our future plans or bids will be in terms of accommodation. Our role is to discharge the order to the courts in terms of holding prisoners securely, safely, but also decently, and making sure that they have, for example, access to help that matches that in the community. Having wider doors, having doors that can take wheelchairs, cells that can take hospital beds, for example, are things that the U.K., in this case, has seen increase significantly, so we are planning for that. But this is absolutely a needs-based assessment that we are going through at this point in time. But the building, it requires constant maintenance, and that can be quite expensive at times, so we are trying to be very efficient in managing that.

Deputy V. Li:

So, what is the current population against the operational capacity?

Governor, States of Jersey Prison Service:

So the operational capacity of the number of prisons that we can hold is 200 at this point in time. This morning it was 176. We have around 83 per cent occupancy rate, which is very good in that regard. In essence, we have a population reduction strategy and management strategy in place already, which seeks to ensure that prisoners, if they are suitable, are considered for transfer to the U.K., but also we use conditional early release and release on temporary licence, where risk allows, as part of the overall strategy.

Deputy V. Li:

On a small note, is the boiler replacement funded in full?

Governor, States of Jersey Prison Service:

No. We were able to use some remaining money to replace the boilers on a particular wing, which were really imminently about to fail. Other bids, the capital availability going forward will determine that. But we know what they are, we know where they are, we have had the boilers, for example, tested to look at their longevity, and that will affect our bids in terms of that process.

Deputy V. Li:

You talked quite a lot about the longer-term infrastructure need, and what we want to understand is, with the identified future prison infrastructure development or projects, when does the Minister anticipate that to bring forward those further funding requests?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

What we have said is probably everything is being stress-tested, risk-assessed at the moment, and we would probably spend 2027 doing that. When we have a really clear understanding of what we require, that will be put into the capital plan for future budgets. But, again, there is alternative sources of funding, the Criminal Offences Compensation Fund has funded prison refurbishment before, in the same way it has funded projects for the police, so it would not necessarily need to come out of a States of Jersey Budget.

Deputy V. Li:

We talked a lot about V.A.W.G., and we talked about the prediction, so if the V.A.W.G. legislation leads to more and longer custodial sentences, at what point would the capacity be reached?

[14:15]

Governor, States of Jersey Prison Service:

It is difficult to say with any accuracy. We had forecast an increase into the mid-180s, 190s at this time, but with the population reduction activities we have managed to keep below, 176 has been the highest it has got so far. So that just shows that our processes are effective, that combined with the work that the Minister is already leading on with the courts, et cetera, to reduce the number of people sent to prison in the first place, will help significantly in that regard. Looking at the early release scheme, the early release scheme is not to reduce the population, that is not the point, it is to release people and better integrate them into the community, but it is risk-assessed very tightly to make sure we are only releasing the right people, and those people are managed effectively and safely in the community as part of the integration process and can and will be recalled if there is any breaches of their licence. But we have a range of mechanisms, but it is really difficult to forecast, even with the different models we have been running, it does depend on the effectiveness of V.A.W.G. in relation

to the type of offences. We have looked at the U.K. quite closely because the parallels that I am familiar with are that there was a significant increase in men who were committed into familial sex offences historically in their 60s, 70s and 80s that were getting long sentences, and those prisoners came with lots of issues that we are planning for and testing for now, a range of issues. So, again, the importance of being prepared. Also, through the guidance of our team, we are looking to make sure we have every single space in the jail available for occupation should we need to do so. So there is some slight capacity to go over the 200 should we need to do so, and we are engaging in what is called a target operating model exercise at the moment where we look at every single available space in the prison, and we will then, at a point in the very near future, propose to the Minister that we adjust our operational capacity to introduce some flexibility should we need to in the numbers of prisoners that we hold. That is quite a common phrase for a number of prisons around the world, there is an op cap, as we call it, but also there is 5 to 10 flexibility within the system.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

What evidence demonstrates that additional investment in offender case management will reduce re-offending and improve rehabilitation outcomes?

Governor, States of Jersey Prison Service:

Evidence, firstly case management, effective probation intervention is essential. It is an essential component of rehabilitation. It does work, and it has been part of my career for many years. The evidence really firstly is attitudinal, that the prisoner is supported to both understand their offending, understand the impact of their offending, and understand how their behaviour contributes to that. That face-to-face, one-to-one activity is really essential. Thereafter, it is about supporting the prisoner to engage in activities that would enable them to develop a toolkit of behaviours that stop them getting into that situation in the first place. So, firstly, we test their attitude and behaviour. I am really quite focused on victim awareness, do prisoners understand the impact on their victims, because they are at the forefront of our work, in essence, in rehabilitating prisoners in our care. Subsequently, then, testing them in terms of, in this situation, what would you do? Then giving the opportunity through prisoner behaviour, prison activities, including engagement with family, including engagement with education and work, and then potentially temporary release on licence as well, is an option where we would test their ability to understand, not only what they have learned, but also put that into practice and not re-offend again.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Thank you very much. Is there any data on re-offending, so that you know how many people that you release and how many come back into the system, so that we can measure?

Governor, States of Jersey Prison Service:

Not as comprehensive as we would like, but that is being developed.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Because your data, the data and the K.P.I.s (key performance indicators) that you have mentioned since we have been here.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

We used to regularly produce a reconviction study. I know, because I am the one who used to do it in my previous existence, and we used to do that in collaboration with University of Swansea. So, we did have a very good understanding of which sentences were effective in reducing reconviction, as opposed to re-offending. There is some money put into the V.A.W.G. pot for some reconviction work. We do have the data, but it just requires somebody with the knowledge, skills, and experience to be able to convert that into yet another reconviction study.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Yes, you would agree that that is a really important piece of the puzzle, to know what is working and where your savings are and where your investments are.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

It gives you a really good benchmark, because you look at the effectiveness of sentences, you look at the effectiveness of sentences against the risk of the person and the risk of the prisoner. You would expect a high-risk prisoner to reconvict at a higher rate than a low-risk prisoner. So, they are quite complicated, but nonetheless very interesting.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Yes, I would imagine, yes, and vital.

Governor, States of Jersey Prison Service:

We use lots of intermediate measures of outcome as well, in the sense that, as the Governor, I set the tone for the prison. If you are a resident in my prison, you will be going to work or studying, whether you are retired or otherwise. A prisoner that engages in that regime and makes the best use of their time in custody is probably more likely to not offend on release. Certainly, a case in point being housing, accommodation, absolutely essential, as is contact with family. So, again, prisoners, we work on an enhanced incentive and privilege scheme. If prisoners have contact with their family, which we encourage strongly, then we know that will be a factor that will reduce the risk of reoffending. So, we not only put quite a lot in place to support that, but encourage prisoners through incentives to engage with their family. Lots of Islanders and people around the world serve away from their families. I am really of the view, just because you are locked up does not mean you

cannot be a father, an uncle, or a partner, et cetera. We push that. We motivate prisoners very, very pointedly to engage in those activities and their responsibilities.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:
Yes, it is that human element, is it not, so you do not lose it?

Governor, States of Jersey Prison Service:
Absolutely.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:
Okay, thank you. How will you ensure collective coordination between the Prison Service, Probation Service, courts, and community support agencies to maximise the impact of this investment?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
A lot of that will be handled through the Criminal Justice Systems Board at a strategic level. But at an operational level, you have the Criminal Justice Working Group, which is chaired by the Attorney General. There are representatives of all the agencies sitting around that. They do deliver against this investment. But also from a community perspective, we have the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Harm Partnership, which will capture really the victim focus on that.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:
Okay, thank you. So, what measurable improvements and rehabilitation, resettlement, and re-offending rates should the panel expect to see by the end of 2027? I suppose that will be dependent on the data that you are able to collect.

Deputy V. Li:
So the reconviction study, is the budget sitting in V.A.W.G., and then that is going to be commissioned by ...

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
Sitting in the B.A.S.C. (Building a Safer Community) stuff I think.

Deputy V. Li:
Then that would be one of the measurable data that we can use.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
But also the Probation Service have quite a comprehensive dataset, which shows the success of probation orders and success of community service. That is published by them once a year. I sit

on the board as an ex-officio Member of that to make sure that we have that working. Again, I do need to say the relationship between the Probation Service and the Prison Service is very, very good indeed, which in the past has not been so good. In the distant past, I should say, distant past. But a very good relationship and close working. So, where offenders are seen through the pathway, if you like, so there is lots of joint working, which is very, very good.

Governor, States of Jersey Prison Service:

The prison is a community within a community. I, as a single agency, can imprison people with the level of professionalism and ease that one would expect. But in terms of reduced reoffending, it is a community Island approach. I am very clear with my team that we are an open door in the sense to partner agencies, charities, communities, probation, et cetera, and create an environment where rehabilitation can take place. Much of that work will be done in custody before the person is released in that circumstance. But in that sense, we are an open door and support very much our colleagues working with us and us working with them as well, because we cannot do it on our own.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Much more cost-effective way of working, is it not, for the Island?

Governor, States of Jersey Prison Service:

Yes. The level of expertise on the Island in terms of charities, community projects is outstanding. So we are really grateful for the contribution that they can support in the work we do as combined agencies.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Thank you very much.

Deputy V. Li:

When we, as a panel, we visited the prison last time, it was the feeling of the community within the community that really strikes us. That is what we felt the service that you and your team has been providing is.

Governor, States of Jersey Prison Service:

There is lots of examples. A very recent small example, I like stealth learning. My general rule is if you come into my prison, you are going to learn whether you like it or not. One way or another, I will get to you, whether that is audible books on national prison radio or the arrangement we just signed up for with Jersey Library Service. The librarians will come in and work with prisoners in the library, et cetera, but also that broadens access to all the books and all the facilities that the Jersey Library Service has. Also, they can buy books cheaper than we can. So again, it is a saving area.

It is such an important partnership that a library in the prison is often quite a central hub that prisoners want to access and we want them to access. It covers every range of, whether it is level one reading all the way through to open university activities. Really important. But that partnership is the key in making this a really effective service.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Thank you. My last question, we have probably touched on that with regards to contingency arraignments. If the current forecast of the prison places are exceeded, obviously that is going to spill into the rehabilitation programme. But I should imagine it all feeds into the same bit. If you have too many prisoners, you have to rehabilitate more than you have capacity for. So I suppose that all ...

Governor, States of Jersey Prison Service:

Yes, it is a really good question. The very simple principle is that resource follows risk. What we do is we sequence through our sentence planning team which prisoners need interventions and the type of intervention at what point. So, for example, prisoners with a longer sentence are going to need interventions at different points in time. Prisoners with probably shorter ones, there will be more focus on community contact, attitudinal behaviour change, but also then accommodation and preparation for release. So we do sequence that, which gives us flexibility then to move that resource around to meet the highest risk at the most important time in the prisoner's sentence.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Thank you. So, the Probation Service highlighted the uncertainty around the resource implications of mandatory post-custodial supervision. Are you satisfied that the 2 additional probation officer posts currently planned will be sufficient to meet the expected demand?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, I very recently had a conversation with the Chief Probation Officer about that. As I say, I sit on the probation board as an ex-officio member. This post-custodial supervision Law has been hanging around for a very, very long time. So the resource implication has always been well understood. Again, we would not implement the Law without making sure that the necessary resources were put in place.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Okay. Then also the Probation Service identified increasing workload pressures with the Family Court Advisory Service and indicated that additional resources may be required from 2027. How are you assured that the current budget allocations are sufficient to meet the future demand and maintain the service standards?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, we have factored in the Family Court practitioners in the full funding, but also we have the Hannah Markham review coming up as well. I am just having a look through the papers. We have definitely ...

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:

I do not think there is anything specific in there for probation. So, J.F.C.A.S. (Jersey Family Court Advisory Service) funding sits under Probation. I do not think there was anything specific in there for J.F.C.A.S. But again, Probation can follow the non-ministerial route to apply for funding. We brought them into the overall V.A.W.G. approach for all the good reasons we talked about earlier, but that does not mean their door to ask is closed.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes. Clearly, there is now a Family Justice Council that both I sit on and the Chief Officer sits on as well. That has only been in existence for about a year or so, but taking strategic overview of family justice matters. We will be monitoring the recommendation of the Laws Review as well. So again, it will come for future funding bids if it is considered necessary.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Thank you.

[14:30]

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:

So, moving on to emergency services and operational resilience. In terms of infrastructure, there is a new fire and rescue headquarters proposed. So the Budget seems to indicate in 2027, half a million pounds and going up to just over £2 million the following year, just over £4 million in 2029, and £8.39 million in 2030. So, can we just go through what are the key milestones through those years for that expenditure, and when would the Minister expect the project to be fully operational?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Again, as you have alluded to, there is 3 key enabling projects that need to be delivered. The first project includes the Western Fire Station. So you have extension and amendments. We also need to decamp the site for the Sea Cadets building in order to commence any building on that particular site. So you have half a million pounds profile, as you mentioned, for 2027. That amount is allocated to, we are going to bring work to R.I.B.A. (Royal Institute of British Architects Plan of Work) 3 for Western Fire Station. So that will be the feasibility, the design, the ground surveys, pre-planning

application advice, the planning application, et cetera. That work will provide the key information for a full business case, which will seek funds for 2028 to 2029 when the procurement and the building stages would take place. So we are not going to see anything next year, it is going to be a good couple of years. Also, it will bring us to R.I.B.A. 2 for the main Rouge Bouillon site, which again, feasibility, design, ground surveys, demolition surveys, again to provide the key information for the business case. We are hoping that we will seek funds for 2028 for the pre-planning and then funds for 2029 and 2030 for the demolition project. But that activity can only start once the Sea Cadets have vacated the building.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:
So, in terms of these numbers, are they effectively provisional? We are not yet sure what things like construction costs, inflation risk, and whatever is.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
Exactly, as we have seen with the Sexual Assault Referral Centre, you can make a very good guess, but with everything that is happening, it could be more than that. We do not know.

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:
Do you want me to just pick up on that?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
Yes, please do.

Chief Officer, Justice and Home Affairs:
The numbers, other than for 2027, are based on the legacy project, capital project for Fire and Rescue, which was originally a joint Ambulance and Fire and Rescue H.Q. (Headquarters). They are simply a placeholder. Once the work the Minister has described is done, we will be able to put a proper costing into the long-term capital plan process of what developing a new … it will be a standalone Fire and Rescue Headquarters only now. Ambulance will be developed separately. We will be able to put that properly through the long-term capital plan. That does take us to a number of years on before we see a new fire station. Something in the region of 2033 to 2035 for completion.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:
What measurable improvements in emergency response capability would we be likely to see as a result of having a dedicated Fire and Rescue Headquarters?

Chief Fire Officer, States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service:

Well, yes, we are in a 100-and-something year-old building and it keeps on providing us with gifts that only a 100-and-something year-old building can provide. It takes an awful lot of effort and cost to keep the building going at the moment through support from my colleagues in Jersey Property Holdings. We are replacing boilers, replacing electrical intakes, which are very old, repairing roofs because we are not that storm-proof either. One of the really, really important things that it should do if we design it well is provide better facilities for decontamination of equipment and structural firefighting P.P.E. (personal protective equipment). There are lots of different P.P.E. ensembles in Fire and Rescue Service, but one of them is structure firefighting where an awful lot of contaminants are placed on the wearers of that P.P.E. You need really careful management of where that P.P.E. comes in, how it is treated, very specialist kit, special washing machines, drying units, all of the bits and pieces and you need green zones and red zones and you must have barriers between them, otherwise you are bringing those contaminants into the operational environment and an office environment as well - it is all one place - and that is a very bad thing.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Where the waste goes as well from that.

Chief Fire Officer, States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service:

Where the waste goes as well. That would be a very bad thing because the World Health Organization in 2022 placed firefighting in the top tier of hazardous occupations. It is an occupation which is considered carcinogenic to humans. It is a cancer-causing occupation, bladder cancer being one of the very high rates. For a long time, there was an acknowledgement of high rates, but there was not a causal connection, but that evidence is improving all the time. That would be an example of the sorts of things that we know, so we are able to be more safe and provide better facilities for firefighters in that way. The other thing is at the moment, for example, there are increased costs and it is just incremental over time but we have to modify our fire engines to fit within the doors of a listed building because the openings are not big enough, so they have the roof cut into so that one of the ladders can sit closer down. All sorts of bits and pieces like that. There are an awful lot of compromises. The building has a significant amount of managed asbestos in it at the moment. Yes, there are all sorts of things from a building which is 110 years-old, perhaps, and certainly has been occupied as the Fire and Rescue Headquarters since the mid-1950s. There would be an awful lot of things. It is in the right place. From a response times perspective, it is in the optimum location, but with Fire and Rescue Services' stations and facilities and training centres, ground floor space is always the challenge because we are very space hungry at the ground floor level.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:

Moving on to the operational side of things, in the Budget we have investment for workforce capacity, equipment, training, P.P.E. and that rises from £439,000 in 2027 up to about £1.6 million in 2029. Bearing in mind the risks that were raised in the Comptroller and Auditor General's report, it might seem counterintuitive that the spending increases going forward rather than is frontloaded, given the risks that were being identified. Is there an explanation as to why it is the other way around?

Chief Fire Officer, States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service:

Deliverability. I think we touched on it earlier on with some of the conversations about accessing talent and potential. Our delivery time scale, we would not know what to do and could not cope with that number of new firefighters. Firefighters typically … we have an apprenticeship scheme. It is called the Qualified Firefighter Programme. Just like Robin was saying earlier on, from the moment that you decide that you want some more people to the moment when they are operationally available and riding fire engines, it is about a year. Then it is about 4 years after that before they become competent and qualified in the role of a firefighter. With so many different disciplines, we have possibly the widest skillset in the British Isles here for each individual firefighter. In fact, I would say probably the widest skillset. It takes a long time to get them to that point and that requires an awful lot of support from their colleagues on their watches, on their teams and their leadership teams and there are only a few of them. Of course, they have everybody else to keep competent and then deliver the day job as well or the night job or whatever it is. It is a phasing thing. That is not unhelpful from a financial perspective but, to your point, because it does not shock load the system either and provides colleagues across Government who are working out how to balance the books all of the time to absorb and understand the impact of that. We are taking people on in batches. We have 8 new joiners in January, which was agreed in the 2026 Budget. Then we will have another 8 new joiners all coming in at entry level, so firefighters in January 2028. Then we will take on 4 new firefighters in January 2029. It is listed in the Budget and the investment case as crew commanders because we will then promote because we will have built enough for each watch to have one more crew and each crew needs a commander.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:

Okay, and sticking with the C. & A.G. (Comptroller and Auditor General) report from March, a recommendation was that there was urgency around key digital projects intended to mitigate extreme risks and it should be reassessed. What progress has been made in implementing this recommendation? Minister, are you assured that the projects remain on track and that risks are acceptable?

Chief Fire Officer, States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service:

If I give you an example of a particular project, mobile data, so that is the availability of risk critical information that firefighters can obtain. It has got to be live in the fire engines and with tablet devices,

but of course, it has got to be secure and all the other things that go with it. It cannot just be any old device. That was originally scheduled and planned to be delivered in 2025. We now expect that to be delivered by the end of Q.1 (quarter 1) 2027. It is just a real challenge. Of course, we operate in an environment where there is one Digital Services function, but - and I know you have heard this one before - they are not providing to one business or one company. They are providing to an entire nation's worth of infrastructure and so we have to get in that queue. Ultimately, we are behind the curve on there. I think we have made some recovery from where we were on the timescales, but it will come in a bit late. We have an interim solution in place at the moment, but we are hoping for end of Q.1 2027. That would be an example. We have pushed through and we have managed to make some headway - and some good headway - on software around mobilising and alerting people because, of course, 70 of our firefighters are not there most of the time. They are on-call firefighters - it used to be called retained - so they work for another employer most of the time. They come in from work or home when we call them and only when we call them. We need really strong, resilient mobilising arrangements to alert people from the control centre all the way through the system to people getting alerted and coming in quickly. We have made some progress on there, but overall, it is slightly behind schedule, I would say. Part of our operating environment is that our Digital Services colleagues in particular have an awful lot to do for an awful lot of people, and we are part of that environment, I think.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:
Are you comfortable with the risk profile within that service and how it is being managed?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
I am comfortable with that. I mean I share the Chief Officer's frustration over the capacity of Digital Services to deliver things that would have a great impact on the public, but we are where we are with that situation. I know recently there has been a bit of a rejigging of priorities across Digital Services to link to Island risk and I think that is entirely appropriate so I am hoping that our … because of the risks that we carry in emergency services, they will be a little closer to the top of the Digital Services list.

Chief Fire Officer, States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service:
There is a significant amount on them. I think we do have a little sympathy for their plight.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:
Trying to digitise the whole of Government and then prioritise. Yes, it is tough.

Chief Fire Officer, States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service:
There is significant demand and we appreciate that.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:
And have the skills to.

Chief Fire Officer, States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service:
It is part of the environment. We cannot expect special treatment, if you like, but risk based, I think, is sensible. Yes.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:
Yes.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:
Thank you.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:
It is interesting again that we touch on skills because you are saying 4 years to be fully trained, so your retention in that is key because you do not want to lose anybody at 2 years, 3 years because then it is like Snakes and Ladders. You have to start and invest all over again, so recruitment and retention is an expensive part. That is why people are such an expensive part of budgets.

Chief Fire Officer, States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service:
Like Robin, we are 92, 93 per cent.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:
Yes, I understand that. That is really challenging. How many additional firefighters or special staff or emergency planning personnel will be funded through this investment though? What recruitment assumptions underpin the allocation and what risks arise if those assumptions are not realised?

Chief Fire Officer, States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service:
The emergency planning roles fortunately… obviously the business case was for the 2026 to 2029 and now we are in the 2027 to 2030. Some of that work was already done, and some of those approvals were already made by the Assembly in the Budget 2026. The business case was for 3 assistant emergency planning officers, so will take the complement up to a team of 4.5. This is an Island emergency planning function. It does not do emergency planning for the Fire and Rescue Service. It just happens to exist in the Fire and Rescue Service. We host them, they are part of the team. So that is done and they are all in place and we are really pleased about that, and they are delivering very, very good work and very effectively as well. Then we have, ultimately, it is an uplift over 3 years of 20 firefighters, so 16 in the rank of firefighter and 4 crew commanders. Each of the

4 24/7 watches … of course we have 168 hours a week and we divide that by 4, so everybody is on a 42 hour a week contract and they provide 2 crews each watch. There are only ever 2 crews on duty and what we are saying for all sorts of operational risk reasons is that that should be 3 crews, and so 20 people will create 3 crews on each watch. Basically, we just split them up into 5s. When we do the business case work, and of course it is like a Treasury 5 case model, there is kind of a people case within there, so we have mapped and monitored that and then we are looking at 3 non-uniform, so civilian roles as well.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:
What a task.

Chief Fire Officer, States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service:
Yes.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:
Because the F.R.S.A. (Fire and Rescue Service Association) identified recruitment, retention, training and occupational health as key risks over the next 4 years, which of these areas represents the greatest risk to service resilience and how does the proposed Budget specifically address it?

Chief Fire Officer, States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service:
I think the service budget … we have set up the target for recruiting those people and the budget will allow us to recruit those people. If you take it at the most simple level, that budget will pay for those people. We know how much they cost and that kind of thing. That bit I am fairly reassured by. The retention is better now. The retention has always been extremely good with whole-time contracts with people who just work full-time as firefighters. Retention historically with the on-call system was much harder because of course we are just part of their working life. We cannot claim their working life. They have lots of other things … work-life balance is a different conversation these days of course and that is very good too, their family commitments and of course their primary employment as well. We are so grateful to Island employers for allowing their colleagues to come and work with us. Some of them are self-employed as well and there are consequences that go with that.

[14:45]

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:
It works like the R.N.L.I. (Royal National Lifeboat institution), I would imagine.

Chief Fire Officer, States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service:

A little bit, yes. However, we do pay our on-call firefighters, and we did an awful lot of hard work between 2022 and 2024 to review the pay and reward and conditions of service arrangements. I think that we have provided a much better overall total reward package. I think that is a much better offering and so we are seeing good retention, but again, there is a risk in there and we have to continually manage that, making the role rewarding as well as rewarded. That is really important. Then the occupational health thing, I think, is really important. That goes back to the Tier 1 W.H.O. (World Health Organization) classification essentially. I am aware, I think the F.R.S.A. have talked about the health concordat, which the previous Health Secretary in the U.K. mentioned before he became the Defence Secretary. Yes, that is an important one and an interesting one. Of course, that is in the U.K. context, and I completely accept what they are saying there and I do not disagree with them at all. That said, in the U.K., that is a Health initiated and Health funded and Health provided thing. It is not a budget that is going into local fire and rescue services, which are differently governed in the Fire and Rescue Service. They are not going into there. They are not going into M.H.C.L.G. (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government), which is the sponsoring department. It is going from Health, and we have not seen how that is going to play out yet. In fact, we have not seen any confirmation of it yet. I think that is a really good move because the evidence is there that upstream screening is vital.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Those 70 that you have on call, surely some of them must be part of your talent pool.

Chief Fire Officer, States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service:

Yes, we are really lucky that we are able to bring some of those people. Of course, we are familiar with them, they are familiar with us as well, which is really important, and we intentionally blur the lines between on call … I mean, they are professional firefighters. They are just on call, that is it. We cannot train them in the wide range of things either, we have to limit. We just could not do it, but that is really good and that does form part of the talent pipeline. We are really pleased about that. Of course, it is great when we get people coming in with different experiences at different age ranges as well. That is brilliant because of course that just enriches our workforce experience as well.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Life skills, yes. Yes, excellent. Thank you. The proposed Budget states that this investment will mitigate the corporate risk relating to fire and rescue capacity and capability. What measurable improvements does the Minister expect to see by 2029 and how will success be assessed?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

I think this just brings us up to the standard that we should be at. It makes us better, as has been identified from numerous reports. I think just having a successful recruitment is outcome enough in itself.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:
Yes, I would agree with that. Thank you. The proposed Budget provides an additional £290,000 for the Emergency Service Control Centre in 2027 on top of the £458,000 already approved, so bringing the total investment to £748,000. What specific improvements will this funding deliver in the emergency call handling, dispatch capability and operational resilience?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
The focus on the investment for both 2026 and 2027 is about stabilising and strengthening the existing E.S.C.C. (Emergency Service Control Centre) model, specifically reduction in immediate operational risk and creating a proper pathway towards long-term transformation of that particular unit. It has moved away from the immediate separation of the control room functions and strengthening the model of everybody working together and improving the strategic objective, which was about improving the speed and accuracy and the resilience of the service.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:
Thank you.

Deputy V. Li:
The Emergency Service Control Centre continues to be identified as a corporate risk. If the control centre system or site fail, is there a backup site and business continuity arrangement?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
Yes, there is a business continuity arrangement over the Emergency Services Control Room, yes.

Deputy V. Li:
Also, the Chief Fire Officer just talked about the digital projects that you were talking about. Are they funded or not?

Chief Fire Officer, States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service:
The funding in the proposed Budget 2027 will enable us to deliver and complete our mobile data solution. We have a specialist fire safety software as well. It is a community fire risk management information system. It is for our team of protection officers, fire engineers, enforcers, and people that do that kind of audit and compliance and enforcement work. They need that because we hold

an awful lot of building intelligence, intelligence about the built environment in Jersey, both for our own safety, but also for our enforcement activity as well.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:

Minister, in your response to the Panel, you said that the current Emergency Powers and Planning (Jersey) Law 1990 reflects a very different risk environment. What are the most significant shortcomings in the current legislation and how would changes strengthen Jersey's ability to respond to modern threats, such as cyber-attacks, infrastructure failures and, dare I say it, drones?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

I think the first part of your sentence there is entirely accurate, is it not? When that law came about, it was in completely different times and things have changed hugely. We need a law that is now fit for purpose. We are just in the process of updating our Jersey Emergency Risk Register. Our Emergency Risk Register tends to follow what has been on the National Emergency Risk Register and drones were not on that one either. I think what is important for me is to develop an enabling law around resilience but allow flexibility within that to respond to emerging situations. I want to say my rum spell, do I not? We do not know what we do not know and I guess that was the issue with the drones over the weekend.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:

And in terms of bringing future legislation to the Assembly in 2027, are there specific funding resource elements that you think will need to be allocated to such changes to the law?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, there are. I have 3 priorities and the top one is resilience, without any shadow of a doubt. Yes, resources are there and we are optimistic that we will bring that to the Assembly during 2027.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:

But already funded.

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, we are funded. Yes.

Deputy C.J. Rebindaine:

Your response refers to a whole wide approach to resilience and emergency planning. What new responsibilities, if any, are expected to fall on Government departments, critical infrastructure providers and emergency responders under such proposed resilience framework?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

I think that the whole point of the framework is that it will be a community-wide framework. Resilience will not necessarily just fall on to the emergency services, but what it will do as well is allow the Government, probably through the Emergencies Council, to impose certain powers on institutions to deliver specific information.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Thank you. Minister, are you confident that the Sea Cadets headquarters can be delivered within the approved budget and time frame? What are the principal risks to the delivery?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Yes, I am confident. We have allocated some more money. Again, this is one of the things that has been going on for a very long time. We need to move the Sea Cadets into new accommodation in order for the dominoes to fall around the creation of the new fire service. I think I am right in saying that a site has been identified, although it is not in the public domain, but I meet quarterly with the Sea Cadets to keep them up to date about the progress. I am confident that construction work can commence in 2028 on their new building.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Brilliant. The proposed Budget allocates £199,000 in 2027, £1.364 million in 2028, £866,000 in the 2029 and £71,000 in 2030 for the headquarters projects. What is driving this expenditure profile and what key milestones are expected to be delivered each year?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

The current status and timeline are really around the pre-planning advice being undertaken in quarter 4 of 2026, with a view to commence up to planning application and procurement in 2027 with construction work. It is just that phased investment throughout the period of building, a bit like we have described with the sexual assault referral centre.

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Yes, okay. Thank you very much.

Deputy V. Li:

What specific benefits will this new Sea Cadets headquarter deliver for young people and the wider community?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:

Well, at the moment they are stuck in the old police station. What we will be giving them is a fit for purpose building, which again will meet all our outcomes around investing in our young people. I see the Sea Cadets as a quite important pathway into uniformed services, but also liaison with the U.K. armed forces, et cetera, et cetera. I mean they limited how many members they can take because of the capacity that they have at the moment.

Deputy V. Li:
Assuming that the new headquarters is going to open on the time that you anticipated, will it be shared with the schools or further education or any other uniformed organisation to widen its usage?

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs:
Yes, absolutely. That is one of the things that we have talked to them about. When it is not being used for the Sea Cadets, it should be used as a community facility.

Deputy V. Li:
Thank you, Minister. I think that is the end of the questions for today. Thank you, Officers, for your time this afternoon and for the written responses that you provided ahead of this hearing, and now I close the hearing. Thank you.

[14:55]