



Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel

Quarterly Hearing

Witness: The Minister for Infrastructure

Thursday, 5th March 2026

Hearing Transcript Disclaimer

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Panel:

Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (Chair)

Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South (Vice-Chair)

Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement

Connétable D. Johnson of St. Mary

Witnesses:

Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John, The Minister for Infrastructure

Ms. E. Littlechild, Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport

Mr. T. Dodd, Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure

Mr. T. Daniels, Director, Jersey Property Holdings

[10:00]

Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity (Chair):

Welcome to this public hearing of the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel. Today is 5th March 2026 and this is our last quarterly hearing with the Minister for Infrastructure. I

would just like to draw everyone's attention to the following. This hearing will be filmed and streamed live. The recording and transcript will be published afterwards on the States Assembly website. Please make sure that all electronic devices are switched to silent. We will begin with introductions. My name is Deputy Hilary Jeune and I am the chair of the Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel.

Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South (Vice-Chair):

Deputy Tom Coles, vice-chair.

Deputy A.F. Curtis of St. Clement:

Deputy Alex Curtis, panel member.

Connétable D. Johnson of St. Mary:

Constable David Johnson, panel member.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Andy Jehan, the Constable of St. John, Minister for Infrastructure.

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

Ellen Littlechild, Group Director for Operations, Transport and Sport.

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

Tristen Dodd, Associate Director for Highways, Transport and Infrastructure.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Tim Daniels, Director of Jersey Property Holdings.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. Minister, we have a number of different areas to talk through today, but I am going to kick off with waste. Minister, as you are aware, the panel found, following the review of the budget, that the proposals for a liquid waste charging mechanism are insufficiently developed. You stated that there is work going on in the background where you just need to button down one or 2 things on the terms of reference. Please can you update the panel on the terms of reference for the liquid waste charging proposals?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, the terms of reference are drafted, so initial works have commenced. They were slightly delayed because of the focus on new workstreams around the Public Finances (Jersey) Law and the priority in the first quarter has been around the Investing in Jersey Capital Investment Fund. The work is just about there both for liquid waste and for solid waste. Earlier this week I had a briefing on the solid waste strategy and will be ready to share those documents with you in the coming days or certainly in the next 2 weeks, I should think.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

We have a few questions on solid waste, but on the liquid waste, when do you think we will see the terms of reference? Will anything happen between now and the end of term?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Are we in a position to share that information? Yes, we can share the information. We look forward to sharing that actually because we look forward to feedback to see if we need to change the terms of reference or amend the terms of reference. There is some good work being done and clearly the team have done this 2 or 3 times in the past, so they are not starting from scratch. We have been out and looked at what happens elsewhere. There are, as we have discussed at previous hearings, different options that are available to the Island. So, yes, I will be able to share that with you in the next 10 days, I would think.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Will it be then for the next Minister to take into consultation?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes. We are so close to the wire I do not think that I could launch that and then walk out the door. I think it will be for the next Ministerial team to take forward, but let us not make any bones about it, we have got a hole in the finances going forward. We have identified a liquid waste charge as being one of the ways to close that gap and I have sat in this room and next door many times talking about the need for us to invest in our infrastructure and it is not just a catch phrase. That is a reality, we have to invest. We are doing some really good work, let us not forget the fact. I was up at St. Peters recently looking at the new attenuation tank there. I have been to see the work on the northern sewer extension. It is pretty complex, the work they are doing, but we cannot stop once ... that is going to enable the new affordable homes to come online but we have still got hundreds of existing properties not connected and I will repeat for the last time, we have got Victorian drains running underneath the streets of St. Helier, so they will not last for ever.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Just as an update for the 2 areas that we are seeing being updated, are they are on track? Are they within budget?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, I think slightly ahead on one but not enough ahead to get excited about, so we are on track and on budget. I had people in to see me yesterday. They had been trying to get connected to mains drains for decades and I am excited that in the future that is going to be a real possibility for them and many others like them, so, yes. The work at St. Peters, I do not know if you have been there or not as panel, but it is quite interesting to see the detail of the work and the quality of the work and again it is local contractors, so it is really good to see.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

You mentioned the St. Peters work and the attenuation tank. Can you just confirm where the process is now, a recent update on where they are within the build total of delivering the work?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

They are piling, they are on target. They are basically receiving 2 trucks full of cement each day to pump into the plant, which is on track. They have had incredibly wet weather to deal with, so to remain on track throughout that I think is a testament to the quality of the teams that are involved and the planning that has gone into it. We are clearly working with contractors but our own staff have been involved in the design and the project management, so I pay tribute to all involved.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Moving on to the solid waste strategy, Minister, you have talked about that but is there more of a timeframe to let us know when will the public be able to see the strategy, when is it going to be rolled out?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I think that there are a few questions that I had when I went through the paper with the team, nothing major, but I think we need to explain to people why we need the strategy, the timescales around delivery of that strategy. There is a very wide scope of works involved in that but I should think we will be able to share certainly the draft with you within the next couple of weeks. I would be quite happy to do that.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

For the wider public?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think it will probably be published by the new Ministerial team because, as I say, I do not think it is something that I can do as I walk out the door. I think it is going to be in a good position. We invite feedback from yourselves. I would not expect there would be much further work required but I do think it would be more pertinent for a new Minister to be doing that. I am really disappointed we have not done it, and that is not through the want of trying, but both of them, I think, are good pieces of work.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Understanding that strategy will potentially be launched by a new Minister, you are obviously very much involved in drafting the vision. Could you explain a little bit about what your vision would be of the strategy, what that road map looks like?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not think it is any secret that currently we are processing waste free of charge for commercial entities and it is not sustainable. We have also done a paper on ... I am not sure what the correct term is, fridges, basically. What is it?

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

Cooling appliances.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Cooling appliances. Thank you, Ellen. So cooling appliances. In Europe and U.K. (United Kingdom) there is the W.E.E.E. (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) standards for how you remove electrical appliances and clearly cooling appliances are more complex because of the mechanism. We have got currently commercial fitters who are delivering us with half a dozen cooling appliances, which actually fill a trailer, and costing us thousands of pounds to export and to be processed whereas virtually everywhere else there would be some form of charge for that so that the cooling appliances can be disposed of safely and recycle what can be recycled. We are just finalising that paper as well.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

That will be coming as part of the strategy in the sense that that is quite specific?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think that will be separate to the strategy because we have been out and consulted with the industry. We have also consulted with our colleagues in Customer and Local Services because some people ... we all need fridges, basically, and not everybody can afford a fridge, so we help

some people in the community to purchase a fridge and if there is an increase in the charge to dispose of a fridge then we need to make sure that those people who need support get support.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

That is quite a targeted example of a waste stream that you want to handle. From a legislative perspective, as you are working through the options, you are in charge of certain wastes. Broader solid waste charges is obviously something that has to be explored as part of this. Would you have the mechanisms to currently bring in a charge against, say, cooling appliances under existing mechanisms for the receipt of waste without a States Assembly decision? Is it something that you or the future Minister could have the vires to act on soon?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I believe that the cooling appliances could be brought in by the Minister. It is not a case that we want to charge. We have to find ways of encouraging people to reduce their waste. We have to encourage people to reuse what they have got before they dispose of or recycle. We receive hundreds of televisions, for example. Some jurisdictions might charge you £10 to dispose of a television. We are very mindful that we do not want fly tipping to occur, so we need to be very mindful of that, but equally we need to be mindful of the cost of disposing of those safely and where we can recycle, recycle. I think there has been some good work and I know you have been to La Collette and I am super proud of the team at La Collette. They are doing some great work but what else could we do, and that strategy will look at that. It will look at bring banks, which is something we have discussed in the past. Whether we have a La Collette 2 somewhere else so we reduce the amount of bring banks but we increase what you can take to a second location to try to reduce vehicle movements, all of that is in the strategy document.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Understanding that in the way I am hearing it, Minister, is that the vision is obviously to reduce as much as possible, reuse and then the recycling. Focusing on that recycling, you have stated that you would love to see all 12 parishes have a uniform recycling approach and that the Comité should have a real opportunity to work with the Government to get that in place. Could you describe the nature of that opportunity and how the Comité could go about working with the Government on that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think it is pretty straightforward really.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

It is not happening yet.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, it is not happening and if I am fortunate enough to return to the States as a Constable then I would like to be involved with the Comité des Connétables because I really liked the report that was produced 2 weeks ago and I think we should pick up that document and run with it because there are so many opportunities. In St. Johns I can tell you that we are just about to move provider and change how we manage our recycling, so we are moving from boxes to bags and that is going to be different for our community but we think it is more efficient. The bags are made from recycled material and they get recycled again. There had been some concern about the use of bags, but it is going to be quicker, it is going to be more efficient for us and hopefully easier for the public to come on board with that scheme.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Within the strategy, Minister, do you also look at ... of course you have mentioned La Collette but there are other recycling processing places also in the private sector that receive recycling. Will you be recommending in the strategy to do a review of how those offerings happen? I have heard, for example, that there are some limitations with the receiving of some of the recycling, which obviously has a knock-on effect back up the chain of how we can recycle.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Clearly if you are recycling product you want that product to be clean so it can be recycled and it is not contaminating other clean product with it. How you receive product and how you process product is really key to ensure that you get the best from that product. We see examples every day where some recycling is contaminated, people not cleaning out bottles or cans and stuff, which is really disappointing when it is so easy to do. It is about educating. It is a bit like the drains where we do a lot of work at Christmas to encourage people not to put their turkey fat in the drains but to dispose of that properly. It is the same if you are cooking sausages, we want you to dispose of the fat appropriately so it does not block up our drains. We have got a lot of work to do when it comes to waste in educating people.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

In that education, are you talking, for example, with Andium to make sure that they are providing the facilities to ensure that their tenants are aware that they do not mix up the different bins because, of course, there is ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think there is work to do, not only with housing providers but also with our colleagues in Planning because when we are planning new builds in particular, particularly communal builds, flats, et cetera, we should ensure that there is sufficient capacity to enable the residents of those units to recycle in

an appropriate manner, but I still think that the biggest opportunity is with businesses. When you look at businesses and how they manage their waste, some of them do it incredibly well and others just throw it all together. We have got to find ways. I talk about a sharper carrot. We have got to find ways of educating and encouraging those people to do that with us.

[10:15]

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

At the last hearing you talked about maybe visiting Newport as a good example. Were you able to visit?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I have not, actually, much to my disappointment. If I do visit Newport it will be in a personal capacity now, because I do not think there is much merit in me going as a Minister just days away from the end of our term. I am keen to go and visit that facility because we should not have to reinvent the wheel. If the wheel is turning, we should quite happily pick it up.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Another small one, you mentioned on the recycling in your parish you were going to replace boxes with bags. Are people going to pay so much per bag?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

No, it is going to be free kerbside collecting. We are going to have 3 locations for you to collect your bags from and only yesterday we discussed whether we will speak to our environmental team to see whether they wanted to volunteer to deliver the bags to people's homes. We did not come to a conclusion yesterday, but the bags will be free and you get 10 bags of each type and then you need to replenish your bags. We are delighted we have got an outlet at Sion, we have got an outlet in the village and obviously the parish hall.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

That comes about from the fact that you perceived the boxes not being used as well as they might?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

This week is recycling week in St. Johns. I think we are the only parish that publishes virtually every month that is recycling week and it is in our parish calendar to say it is recycling week, but we do

not have the level of take-up you would hope to have. So by doing things differently it is an opportunity for us to get out there and encourage people again. I think it has been fairly well received, the change, so we are going to watch this space. Our new provider is much more open, I would suggest, to recycling perhaps than our current provider.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

I think other parishes will watch your space as well.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Minister, we are going to go on to the subject around roads and specifically from me the Draft Road Traffic Law (Drug Driving) (Jersey) Amendment Regulations. Just for a bit of oversight, you have lodged these amendments within the Assembly and you are proposing ... and I have got the right terms of the limit. For P.S.V. (public service vehicle) and Group 2 licence holders it is going to be 2 micrograms per litre of blood and then for regular drivers it will be 5 micrograms of T.H.C. (Tetrahydrocannabinol) per litre of blood. Minister, please can you explain the decision-making process that was followed in relation to setting these prescribed limits of T.H.C.?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have consulted with medical professionals, we have consulted with the university, we have consulted with the local police and a member of Driver and Vehicle Standards and a range of other people, which I think we explained in the briefing that we did with yourselves. I think it is worth noting that following the briefing we did with yourselves, we removed cocaine from the proposed legislation because we are really keen, talking to the police, to get something in for the T.H.C. There are the 2 limits. If you are like me you will probably say it should be zero for everything but we understand that people do legitimately take cannabis for medical reasons. I speak regularly to one of those people who is very concerned about the new legislation and the fact that there is no medical defence. In terms of our discussions and coming up with the levels, the prescribers of medicinal cannabis tell us that if patients are taking their medicinal cannabis as prescribed, not taking more and not taking it more frequently but as prescribed, then the level of the 5 should not be an issue for those people. We have currently had legislation where it is illegal to drive under the influence of drink or drugs and that will still be in place. What we are trying to do is to help ... following our collision reduction strategy is trying to help our enforcement colleagues and I think I said this in the briefing. We do not want to prosecute anyone. That would be our ultimate, not to prosecute anyone. This again is about educating people and encouraging people to be thoughtful in what they are doing so if they are taking cannabis, whether that is prescribed or not, then they consider whether it is safe to drive or not, just as people who have a drink have to make that decision whether it is safe to drive or not. There has been a huge amount of resource and energy expended in the anti-drink driving message

and I think we have got to do something similar with drugs. I think when we had the briefing the police told you that drug driving is more of an issue for them currently than drink driving.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Did you consult at all with any of the disability and inclusion groups? You can be using cannabis for chronic conditions and chronic pain and so this might be their only access to be able to be mobile.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not know if we did.

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

I cannot recall exactly but what we did is we spoke to people who were expert in what would cause impairment in driving, so that means safe to drive. The advice was that the 5 micrograms per litre would be safe and that would reflect the medical defence in the U.K. effectively. We can report back whether there has been specific consultation. The actual objective covers that and that is when people are safe to drive on the road.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

With not having this medical defence, are we not then creating a situation where we are treating recreational users and medical users the same and there is no distinction between one is using cannabis for medical purposes as prescribed but you have people who are using it recreationally and that, as it stands, is actually illegal?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, so it goes back to my point, does it not, about whether you should have zero and then allow people who are on medicinal cannabis to have up to 5. We believe that what we have come up with is a process where by having the 5 for regular drivers and having 2 for professional drivers, we believe that is ... we have looked at other jurisdictions. It is probably easier to follow and allow the medical defence but the big issue for us is T.H.C., drivers who are driving with high levels of T.H.C., and the current situation, the inability ... enabling that is driving today or if this law gets passed, anybody driving that is driving sensibly and safely, there is no reason for them to get stopped and tested. If the police have a concern about somebody's driving they will have the ability to do a roadside test and then should drugs be found to be present, they will go back to police headquarters where a blood sample will be taken just as it is with alcohol.

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

Might I just add to that? There is already, of course, legislation around prohibited substances, so the legislation in the Motor Traffic Law really focuses ... it is a risk-based approach as to what would

cause impairment against driving. That is the legislation that is being brought forward now, so it does not undermine the prohibited substances part of it, which is covered elsewhere.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

There is the point around impairment and driving with a set limit of 5 micrograms for anybody who is not a Class 2 or P.S.V. driver. How does this interact then with somebody who is clearly visibly impaired but actually falls below these limits?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

So if they are visibly impaired and it can be proven they are impaired they would still be driving against the ... they would still be breaking the law because they could be prosecuted for driving under the influence of drink or drugs, is my understanding.

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

That is right, yes. So you are not allowed to ... a police officer has to have due cause and if someone is impaired through whatever substance then there is grounds for prosecution, but this makes it easier to collect the evidence and makes it much more likely for a prosecution to be successful in the case of cannabis, where the police have identified the main risk is.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think it is worth reminding ourselves that we have all got different tolerances to alcohol. Some people appear to be able to drink more alcohol than others, but we have one limit. We do not have a limit for functioning alcoholics. Functioning alcoholics will have to abide by the same limits as people like myself. So the best advice is not to drink and drive.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

You mentioned about the roadside testing. Does the quality of these types of tests fall within your jurisdiction or is it Home Affairs?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

It would be Home Affairs that would administer the law. I think the roadside testing is improving all the time but ultimately it will be a blood test that would deem whether somebody is prosecuted or not, so I do not think we have to be too concerned about the quality of the roadside testing. We are going to buy kits or the police will buy kits that are proven, but nobody will be able to be prosecuted under this legislation from the results of a roadside test. My understanding from the briefing we did with the other 2 panels is that the breathalysers that are used now for alcohol are far more advanced than when they started. You could potentially prosecute from a breathalyser in the future. We heard that in, I think it was, Sweden that they are using A.I. (artificial intelligence) technology to look at

people's eyes to see whether people are impacted by drink or drugs. Technology will continue to improve quickly and what we are trying to do is to get in the drug limits for roadside testing and I think that will go further in the future.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

We have received submissions from the public since this has been lodged to us as Scrutiny and one of those mentioned around other jurisdictions that might be moving away from roadside limits of cannabis to find alternative methods. Do you believe that these regulations coming are going to be flexible enough to adapt to this?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The current proposals would enable the relevant Minister in the future to add limits, to change limits. I have mulled over several times whether that is appropriate or whether it should go to the Assembly. I have been convinced that it is appropriate for a Minister to do that but other people may have a different view.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

Of course, cannabis is not the only medical and recreational drug that is on the market and will create other problems. You mentioned cocaine and obviously cocaine is used in some dental processes and things. We have also got things like opioids and amphetamines. What sort of work has been done down those routes?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I could not honestly tell you but I am aware ... I go back to it is about risk, is it not? The highest risk at the moment is because of the amount of people the police believe to be driving with unacceptable levels of T.H.C. in their blood and that is what we are trying to address in the first instance. As I said just before, the legislation will allow future Ministers to add drugs limits in the future for specific substances, I dare say.

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

I will just add, yes, we did look at other substances. I agree with the Minister's comments about the risk-based approach but at the moment where an officer has due cause to stop a vehicle and they appear to be driving under the influence, then prosecutions can still be brought that way but the new legislation just increases the probability of that prosecution in the case of cannabinoids.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

In the near future would there be an opportunity to amend this to add other drugs?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Would this then come back to the Assembly or would it be ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The current legislation is that the Minister - and I think it is the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs rather than the Minister for Infrastructure - would be able to make changes.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Without going to the States?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I have considered bringing my own amendment to bring it back to the Assembly. I have so far been persuaded not to lodge that amendment but if somebody lodged that kind of amendment I would be quite relaxed.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

The same Ministerial order is where you are talking about adding things like cocaine on to this list?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, my personal view, and again it is a personal view, is that cocaine should be zero, notwithstanding the point you make about it being used in some cases. I am staggered that we even considered having a level.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

One of the other challenges especially around cannabis and T.H.C. is that we know that cannabis is not very well regulated, so we do not know if there is consistent labelling across cannabis products around the risks of driving and prescriptions and the risk of impairment. Again I know this is not your remit but what conversation are you having with the Minister for the Environment and Health around making this clear and transparent?

[10:30]

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Health has been involved in the development of this legislation, officers from Health and officers from Home Affairs as well as our own team. I think there has been a wide variation of considerations

but if people are not sure, then the best advice is for them not to drive. Our collision reduction plan is very clear that we have got a lot of work to do and we see this as one of the priorities to try to help reduce collisions.

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

Just to be clear, in our discussion with medical cannabis prescribers, they do speak to their patients, give them that advice and that is also followed up with written advice with the prescription.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Moving on to traffic roadworks and transport, starting with the works on the northern sewer network upgrade, Minister, what is the latest update on the works compared to when we last spoke and in particular do you have any updates around the involvement of businesses who may be affected or where that will change?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have met with some local businesses. I am really concerned about one of the garages, which is right next to the road where I do not believe they are going to be able to operate while we are digging the road right next to them from a health and safety perspective. I have not had that confirmed personally but I have had anecdotal evidence of that. We have met with businesses. I have met with my colleague the Minister for Sustainable Economic Development. We are looking to see whether or not some kind of payroll support mechanism is achievable. A payroll mechanism would need to have funding, which certainly Infrastructure do not have funding for that. Some businesses are actually benefiting, oddly enough, but we fully understand the pain of some other businesses and we have encouraged people to promote ... we are trying to help businesses promote. The works are on schedule, which is encouraging. The diversions have changed slightly, although I have not changed my way of going through the diversion. There are further works. The next change will be to the southern end of that work, which will see all of us having to go La Grande Route de Mont à l'Abbé, which is a green lane, not a 20 mile an hour green lane. We are looking to put speed monitoring devices in some of those areas. In fact, the Constable of Trinity went on a site visit last Friday. Unfortunately I was unable to join him, but we are looking at ... we have had both Honorary Police and States Police in the area monitoring. We are looking at whether we can introduce some bollards to create a virtual pavement in some areas where the road is wide enough. That would have 2 benefits. It would allow people who walk along that road, and they have got no alternative but to walk along that road, whether to get a bus or to walk their dog, when they come out of their house, but it would also have the benefit of slowing the traffic down if the carriageway is narrower. It is constantly under review and we have got contractors who drive the diversions at least 3 times a day checking on signs, et cetera. They are pretty responsive. In fact, between Christmas and New Year I was delivering calendars down one lane and somebody asked me why there were

not more 20 mile an hour signs. I saw the chap doing his inspection, I stopped him, I asked him if he could put more signs out, because we had asked them the week before, and the signs were there when I got back, so it was pretty impressive. We understand the disruption for people and it is a long disruption but it is a necessary disruption, unfortunately.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Turning to the potential for economic support, payroll, all those, have you got any more substantive ideas as to how that would work? What I would ask is: do you consider that the northern sewer upgrade is sufficiently exceptional to other works, given one could enter, in any decision in trying to help a business now, a risky area where a partial closure ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is part of the challenge and not only the time is a challenge but the distance is a challenge. When you make a diversion, vehicles are a bit like water, they find a way, do they not? It finds a way. If it gets blocked somewhere, then it will go off and find a different way. As I said earlier, some businesses that you do not think would be impacted may be impacted because people change their journeys. So the road outside one of the large garages has not been closed but they have seen significant impact on passing trade, which therefore means that not only do they sell less fuel but they also sell fewer cars. They have been quite innovative in what they are doing in terms of home visits and all that kind of stuff, but if you see something that you like and it is shiny and new you might stop and have a look at that but if you do not go past you are not going to see that shiny and new thing. How far away from the roadworks do you draw your line and what is the timescale? Those are the type of things that the officers are looking at to try to consider but it is very unusual for us to do roadworks for over 12 months in the same area.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Okay. You feel that should a scheme come forward it would be suitably defensible that it is not the norm now that roadworks outside ... you can see I am just trying to understand how you play this through with officers.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, I fully understand that. We do a lot of our roadworks in the school holidays because we know that we have got 20 per cent less traffic on the road in school holidays, so we try to minimise disruption. There is, believe it or not, a lot of planning that goes into the major works and there can be up to 5,000 different pieces of work in a year that take place on our roads and up to 10 per cent of that can be emergency, so it is not planned and we do not know. We do make mistakes. Yesterday I drove down Gloucester Street to find that Seaton Place was closed at the same time that we have got a lane restriction on the Esplanade. It does not make sense to do that work together

whatsoever. I was pleased today when I drove down Gloucester Street that the Esplanade was back to normal. I have asked the team to look at can you put the Heras fencing on wheels so that you cannot do the work during the rush hour and you can bring the fence into the site and then when the rush hour is passed you can then make the area safe for work to carry on. So the team are looking at that for us. We are fully ... the roadworks impact on a lot of people. I pay tribute to the bus drivers, for example, who are doing an amazing job. I was on the bus last Tuesday morning. It is tough for them to drive down some of these narrow lanes and operate but they are keeping ... they are doing a great job, I think.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

One final thing on the northern sewer upgrade was around technology and in our last quarterly hearing you mentioned you might look to trial technology or other devices to capture either traffic movement or where there is non-compliance. Has anything been progressed with regards to monitoring?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I spoke to the lead officer on the drainage team last Friday. As I said, I was not able to make the meeting so I had a call with him and they are actively looking at placing some traffic monitoring devices. I think one or 2 landowners were not keen on placing the devices, from what I can gather, which is disappointing, but I think in general if you go at the rush hour ... and it is not just the roads with diversions on, so people are going ... a lot more people are using Mont Cochon and they are using green lanes to access it, which they would not normally do. They would normally access the main roads. The disruption is not limited to the diversions. I have to give thanks to the Honorary Police who are doing their best. They are volunteers and I am pleased with the support we have also had from the States Police, but we are not out 24/7 monitoring these roads. We have got big signs that tell people: "You could be subject to a fine of up to £1,000 if you ignore it" and people drive past it. I would love to be able to use cameras and prosecute these people, because you would not have to prosecute many people for others to take notice.

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

I think just 2 more things is 75 per cent of roadworks take place off peak, so they do not affect that peak hour traffic. The other part of it is that we work closely with Planning to try to ensure that fields that are brought forward for development are aligned with infrastructure with the carrying capacity. The roadworks are to do with the carrying capacity of the infrastructure, so you do need to have that carrying capacity if you are going to do development, provide affordable housing and the like.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Okay. We will move on to buses, Minister, and we will start by looking at the recent importation of 22 new buses in December by LibertyBus. The 2025 bus operator contract looked at a road map to decarbonisation as part of the bid and we did ask the Minister for the Environment about buses on a number of facts and he expressed, in some ways, a bit of disappointment that the level of new buses at this point were diesel and not fully electrified like some of the fleet. Could you provide a bit of information as to the conversation with LibertyBus about the recent latest fleet of diesel buses?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The bus service, which is something I use regularly, has got to be sustainable and we are not talking about dirty old diesel engines. We are talking about modern diesel engines. We have got huge benefits from the technology. The Euro 6 engine is far cleaner than the buses they are replacing. Yes, they are running on diesel but it is far cleaner than the vehicles. The cost of an electric bus is significantly greater than the cost of a diesel bus and the challenge for fleet operators in Jersey, and I speak from a lot of experience here, is the lack of mileage that vehicles do in Jersey to generate the savings from not burning fossil fuels to make them viable. What that means is if you spent £100 a week on fuel in a conventional vehicle and you were only spending £20 on electric or whatever, you have got £80 to play with. In Jersey the distance is not great enough to generate that kind of a saving, so we are aspirational to get more electric vehicles but the fleet needed upgrading and we are looking to bring in additional vehicles, electric vehicles in the future. I do not know if you have ridden on one of the new buses but they are much more comfortable. The seats are like a coach. We have got fantastic visual displays and audio displays, so you cannot get lost even in the dark now. You are told where your bus is, so that is really good, although it does have challenges with the diversions, I have to say. We were moving away from Surville cemetery the other day and the sign said it was at Surville cemetery, but in general it is a great improvement and I hope that customers are enjoying their ride on these new vehicles, notwithstanding they are not electric but they are practical. I am really pleased with them and colleagues from the D.V.S. (Driver and Vehicle Standards) went to the factory to see them being built and they were very complimentary about the quality of the build. I know, talking to the operator only last week, that they are pleased with the initial result.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Okay, so you are happy with the cost benefit of Euro 6 diesels compared to ... the viability. Right now that is the right balance.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Absolutely. It did not come as a surprise to us because it was part of the plan.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Okay. Staying on costs, Minister, the price of buses, not the bus itself but the ticket price, it has been noted that it has moved now from £2.55 to £2.75 for a single bus ticket. Child fares have moved from £1.27 by card to £1.40. We also spoke to the Minister for the Environment about his responsibility for driving greater active transport, shared transport, through planning policy. Could you comment on this recent rise and how you feel that reflects broader Government policy and how that works alongside our wider ambition?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think for the first time since they have been operating LibertyBus, I encouraged them to advertise the value of the bus compared to the cost of parking in Jersey. Previous Ministers had not been keen to do that because it means we are losing revenue from car parks, but I think we have got a commitment to drive people to alternative transport and buses is a good way of doing that. I am not sure of the numbers off the top of my head but it is something like £60 for a monthly pass, so if you use the bus every day it is £1 each way if you are using it once a day. It is really good value compared to paying £8 a day for parking, for example.

[10:45]

We have to make sure that the bus company is sustainable and viable; 44 per cent of people that ride on the bus do not pay. You can get a bus pass before you are a pensioner because we still give out bus passes at 65, so that is an area that needs to be looked at. We also need to consider whether or not we limit the times that some concessionary fares use the bus. We have got people commuting to and from work on concessionary fares and sometimes fare-paying passengers cannot get on the bus because the bus is full. It is always a balance and I think what we have got is a very good operator with new fleet and the key things are comfort, convenience and cost. The comfort with the new buses investment and the refurbishment of some of their existing buses is a good thing. The convenience, we see the work that we are doing will cause a lot of inconvenience with the western bus gateway but no pain and no gain because that will take 3, 4, 5 minutes off some journeys and if you have got 70 people sat on a bus, that is a fantastic benefit. The cost I think is still excellent value for money.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

In our querying to you today we are not criticising the operator. We are just looking to explore the rationale behind the decisions being made. Your example of a season pass shows a stark difference but an interesting hurdle for the average person testing the water of the bus, changing their habits, goes from £1 a day if you are using it twice for work to £5.50.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think there is quite a bit of work on the fare structure because I think that the monthly passes and the annual pass, which is something like £500 a year, is incredible value. Some businesses, our colleagues at Eco, encourage some businesses to work with their staff so they can pay monthly but the business buys the annual ticket. The staff member has money taken out of their wages, so they pay monthly and they benefit from a terrific rate on the buses. Even if you do pay the full price for a bus, it is still cheaper than our parking rates and our parking rates in Jersey are very low. I think it is great value. I am keen for the bus company to do more marketing, whether they offer somebody a trial week or something, and we are looking at a whole range of initiatives. We have seen ridership on the town hopper bus service double since we came into office 2 years ago, double the ridership, and there is still lots of capacity on the hopper bus, which enables residents and visitors to get around St. Helier. We have to try to encourage more people to use the bus and we have just got to ... there is a lot more work. Believe you me, I have put the bus company through hoops. They came to see me 3 times before I agreed to their price rise and officers will assure you that they were not just given an easy ride, but we have to have a viable bus service, it has got to be sustainable. We want them to invest in rolling stock, new rolling stock, maintain and enhance their existing rolling stock. The concessionary fares are a great story, are they not, when you have got almost half the people on a bus do not pay? That is fantastic.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

It depends on which side of the concessionary fare you are.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

You and I, Deputy, are paying for that, are we not, because we are paying customers? It is great. In my community, if you get the bus on a Friday or Saturday night it tends to be more senior members of our community, if I can say that, who are enjoying that opportunity to use their bus passes.

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

Can I just add a little bit of context? I agree with everything that the Minister said. It is important to remember how we got to where we are. When LibertyBus came in in 2013, nearly all the fares were cash fares and that slowed down boarding, reduced reliability and had costs with the cash handling. A good thing to do was to encourage people to go to contactless, whether it be a debit card or an AvanchiCard, because that increases the reliability of the bus service. The cost of inflation since then has gone up by 56 per cent. The cost of a monthly pass has only gone up by 19 per cent. It has been held artificially low to encourage that transfer.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

What has the increase been on regular fares? So 19 per cent on that seasonal has created a very ...

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

On the monthly, which is one of the most popular products.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

On, let us say, the standard method of payment of a fare now would be contactless. I would not say that is the AvanchiCard. It would not be cash. What has been the increase compared to 2013, because 19 is a great number to hear for that compared to 56 per cent but ...

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

For regular bus travellers, the monthly pass is the most popular because it adds that value. You can travel twice a day. It is unlimited during the month and so that is why I quoted that one. I do not have the figure for just using your debit card but, again, that has been held artificially low to encourage that transfer to electronic payments, so it would be below the inflation point.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We can share that.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

If you could, because I think a lot of people are looking at this latest increase, which is 20p on £2.75, so that is a 7.5, 8 per cent increase at a time when inflation is sitting under 3.5. It is clearly a large increase. If this was a government-provided service we would be looking at having an exemption for 2.5 per cent over, more than 2.5 per cent, and that is just where the questioning is coming from and I hope that feedback is landing. It is considered a significant increase.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Believe you me, I had to take some convincing that the fares should increase by the level they did increase and I was convinced, and that was not in the initial meeting. We had 2 or 3 meetings to discuss. I do think we and our colleagues at the bus company have got to focus on the value that we provide because it is a terrific service, and I think it is tomorrow and Monday people can go to the bus station for consultation on the summer service. If you look at their results, their net promoter score in terms of the service they provide, they are incredibly good. Any organisation would be proud to have that net promoter score.

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

A last point, the cost of bus travel has stayed below the cost of motoring and parking and all those other alternatives, so it does provide really good value.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Turning to the western bus gateway, Minister, could you provide an update on the works to deliver this and the timeframe before we dive into a bit more about what it is going to actually do?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The western bus gateway, I am not aware that it is behind schedule. I think it is on schedule and I think not only is it going to be efficient and effective, it is also going to enhance that area of St. Helier.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

For the benefit of those listening in, what is the schedule again, so we get that?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I have to look my left to ask Tristen.

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

The completion date of all the works, that is including all the traffic light works that have to be done, is October.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Okay, and that is within budget still?

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

Yes.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Okay, October.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Just to confirm, will the Avenue be closed for general ...

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

It depends on the phase. We have just cleared the Avenue, so that has reopened again now, but when we come to do some of the cabling works for the traffic lights later on in the year, yes, it will have to be. There will be restrictions at certain points during the works to enable us to undertake certain activities.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Over the course of the publication of the western bus gateway from 2022, 2023 onwards there has been a discussion around the savings in time it will have for the bus. What is the current perspective

as to what this delivers in savings for buses? Has there been a change or refinement in the expected benefits over the course of it?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think you can read in publications, as I have, anywhere between 2 and 5 minutes per bus. I think it really depends on the day and the time and the season. We know that the eastern solution, by allowing buses to go in front of the Pomme d'Or Hotel and access the tunnel, has saved significant time, particularly at peak times, and we believe the same will be true for the western bus gateway. I think the fact that several taxi drivers have asked me if they will be able to use it as well would indicate that they are aware of the congestion at certain times of the day. I am not minded to allow the taxis to use it but I am considering the Bel Royal. This will be news to my officers but I am considering the request for Bel Royal, for taxis to be able to use that bus lane, which we see is very common use around the U.K. and Europe where buses and taxis share a lane.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

I am sure most of us have experienced it but we have also seen the concerns of the fact that there was back-up, there is quite a lot of traffic from that closure that we have seen. Were any lessons learnt that could possibly, the next time it is closed, help to reduce this?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, of course there is and I think you will see, as I saw today, the first time we did work on the Esplanade element of that we closed ... you could not turn left into the Esplanade and yet traffic could head west along the Esplanade. I went one lunchtime during a States sitting with officers to have a look and to explain my view where they could keep the eastern operation open and close the road for western, which would have far less impact on people. We have learnt from that, done that, and as I mentioned earlier, I personally think that if we put that Heras fencing on wheels we could just roll it out after the rush hour so that people can work in a safe manner and then roll it back at the end of the day so that traffic in the evening can circulate more freely. It is easy for me to say. I am not the engineer and I am waiting for feedback from officers as to how feasible that is or is not, but I do think there are solutions.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

A general point from me. Going back to that route, as a matter of course do the engineers look at aligning the traffic lights? My personal experience is that they do not synchronise enough.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes, they do. We have got a team of people ... I say a team, we have got some officers who do that and I understood that the sequencing had been changed for the roadworks but perhaps not.

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

We do change the priority and we tweak it and we have got great knowledge. The issue is, and it goes back to when I spoke before about carrying capacity, that infrastructure from the tunnel, that part there, is at its limit, so it only takes a small change to have a big increase in congestion. The difference between summer holiday traffic and normal traffic is about 15 per cent but it is about a 50 per cent increase in congestion because it is close to that tipping point. The solution is making the bus service more reliable, getting more people on the buses. You cannot build your way out of travel capacity. That has been shown elsewhere. So if you look at it strategically, the only solution we have really got is to get the travel active and bus travel.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

My general question is when you do any sort of roadworks whether there is the alignment of lights, because there were times when it was a snarl because ...

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

Yes, we always do, but it is always important also to look where you are getting people. So if you are just getting them through one section to join another traffic jam further on, then you are not actually decreasing the journey time, so you have to look at the network as a whole.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

A good example of that is somebody wrote to me and suggested that the centre lane in Gloucester Street, you should be able to turn left and right, and I thought that was a great idea, but officers ... it took a while for me to understand but officers explained to me that what you are doing, Minister, is you are going from one jam to another jam. You are not actually gaining anything, and so it was safer to leave the 2 lanes going right and one lane going left. I got it eventually, did I not, Tristen?

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

Yes.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

We will wrap up on buses in just a minute but on the western bus gate, you mentioned, Minister, there is 2 to 5 minutes potential improvement depending on the time of day. Have we published any impact on other road users by the fact that this introduces a further set of signalling to allow the buses through?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, the buses will cross when the pedestrians are crossing, so there should not be delays. If you look at our transport hierarchy, then we are trying to get more on people active travel and buses and fewer people relying on their cars. Interestingly, I was at the School Council event yesterday. I was there to talk about Fort Regent but they gave some feedback about previous School Council sessions and they were talking about transport and buses, so it was really quite interesting.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Deputy Coles I think has a question.

Deputy T.A. Coles:

You are saying that the bus gateway is going to work on the pedestrian signalling, but which side of the ... which lane? Obviously you have got the westbound traffic. That stops when traffic comes out of Gloucester Street but the eastbound pedestrian crossing is when people are not coming out of Gloucester Street but people will be coming eastbound from the Avenue. That has to be an additional stop point.

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

I will not go into the timing of the traffic lights but it has been calculated out by the traffic engineers to work in what we call the inter-green, which is the time with the pedestrian crossings. The other important thing to remember is you will have less demand on the crossing over to the La Frégate stop because people will no longer have to cross the road to get to that bus stop and that is a very heavily used stop, so people will gravitate to the new one at the bottom of Gloucester Street. That also reduces demand further downstream.

[11:00]

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I would note that there is probably a communication exercise on that because I think there has been a lot of public media comments. Whether they realise that there are opportunities to integrate, not compete with the network, would probably be something that would be worthwhile sharing.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is fair feedback, Deputy.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Lastly on the buses, a general question about improvements. Are there any other improvements planned for the network at the moment?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We are always looking to improve.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Any specific ones that are in the pipeline to change or amend the network to improve the service?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

As I have said earlier in the hearing, we have got the consultation on the summer timetable but that takes ... I think it is the end of this week and early next week, is it not, that that takes place? But we see lots of the routes now that operate what used to be the summer timetable throughout the year, which is terrific. The consistency of buses and the frequency is really key. We have got the number 10 which everybody I spoke to thought was a great idea but it has had very disappointing usage to date. I had 2 people to see me last night. The lady came in holding the number 10 bus thing. I said: "Have you used that?" "No," she said, "I did not know about it." So we have got more work to do.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Moving off buses and on to something raised by a member of the public to the panel, which is age restrictions on motor licences, in particular, the concern that we are currently restricting the age of applying for a moped licence to 16. Noted that this is not the same in all jurisdictions and Guernsey. So under your tenure, Minister, and the operation of business as usual, has there been any consideration to the current age restrictions on moped users?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

In a word, no.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Okay.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I have ... I am aware that in Alderney, you would be able to ride a motorbike at 14, when I was growing up.

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

Without a helmet.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Without a helmet. The one area that I am really disappointed that we have not progressed while I have been Minister is S-Pedelecs. That is electric bikes that can do more than 15 miles an hour. I have seen this work successfully in other jurisdictions where the rider has to have insurance, the rider has to wear a helmet and the bike has to have a number plate. I am so disappointed. I thought that was such a quick win to introduce and it has not happened for whatever reason, but I am not aware of any demand, for want of a better description, for us to lower the age of people to ride mopeds. What I am pleased about is the work we are doing with schools around safety, particularly motorcycles. We have met the road safety people and we are spending more time in educational settings talking to them about the importance safe motoring, particularly motorcycling.

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

Can I just add a little bit on to that in terms of risk? The division data we have got shows 16 to 18 year-olds are the people who have the highest number ... are the most at risk on 2 wheels. I think reducing it to 15 would further increase the number of casualties in those age groups.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

And 14? You would say further still, in your mind?

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

To be able to travel at those speeds ... it is just physics and the capability of the human body to take those impacts where people lose control due to lack of experience.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

I am curious on that concept of risk and permissiveness in the system. How, Minister, you have been presented or otherwise ... whether what we have across our whole licensing system for motor vehicles is fit for purpose. One thing that I draw attention to is, in 2021, the U.K. made more permissive the towing capacity for trailers from 750 kilograms. They reversed the decision on that for B and E class licences. Do you get any updates to stay abreast of the latest changes and whether we have options in Jersey?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think we have done that, have we not? I recently signed some Ministerial decisions for towing trailers and also for minibus use, if it is not for hire. A lot of us would have got a minibus licence when we passed our driving test. Guernsey have done this for some time. When I went to Guernsey 12 months ago, I was talking to their Minister or the head of their committee, who told me what they were doing for minibuses. I believe that we have recently changed that; whether it has come in or not, I do not know.

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

D.V.S. monitor what is happening elsewhere, in the U.K. in particular, because our driving licences are exchangeable, so we try to keep them as comparable as possible.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The important thing is that the changes that we have made is for on-Island, so you could not go to another jurisdiction and drive a trailer but you could drive it locally. That is based on the risk ... you are limited here to 40 miles an hour or 30 miles an hour with a trailer. We can get you the information on that.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

These recent changes that you have just been ... to relax the towing capacity, at the same time, did you consider the U.K. position on moped licences for those who have car licences, where they just require a C.B.T. (compulsory basic training) to drive that whereas over here we require ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I was not asked to consider that.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

You were not asked about that one.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

If we look at age and driving, I am probably more concerned about some of the senior members of our community that can get a licence for 10 years and their health sadly may deteriorate over that period of time. I am watching with interest where regular eye testing, for example, is being introduced. Again, based on a risk process, there is probably more merit in looking at whether we test some of our more senior citizens for driving. We have got people driving in their 90s beautifully. Is that not great and to be encouraged? But equally, the hardest job - and I am sure David would concur - a Constable has is removing somebody's driving licence. Sadly, at times, we have to do that far too often. There is merit in looking at that again. Again, it brings costs to people. I do not think, locally, we have necessarily got the data that suggests it is an issue but it is something that needs a watching brief.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

If you could share those Ministerial decisions, we would appreciate it.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

On to a different subject, which is gas infrastructure. A few quick questions on that. It has been reported in media recently that suspected gas leak reporting by Islanders has increased by 600 per cent since 2020. Are you seeing a corresponding increase in instance of road closures or diversions as a result of those concerns expressed by others?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There has been great progress made with Island Energy in terms of their compliance to the requirements for roadworks, notification, signage, et cetera. One of our team, Warwick, has done a great piece of work with that organisation to improve things. We have mentioned at this panel before, we introduced our own monitoring because we have staff who go into the drain to clear the sausage fat, as I mentioned earlier, and other fat from drains. So before we go into a drain, we will test. At the moment, there is a lower risk because there is so much volume going through the drains due to the high amount of rain we have had recently, but once that subsides, we will start to introduce our random testing again. The results of the random testing ... we had some pinch points which Island Energy have resolved, but we will probably bring back random testing ourselves on their network.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

That partially answers our next question about mitigation measures.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Probably 2 years ago, we found ourselves in a position where with the concerns that were being raised with the high instances, we started to do our own monitoring. When we put staff underground, it is a risky place for people to be so we have to make sure that it is safe for them. So as a matter of course we would test before we put anybody underground and that will continue. I do think they are working hard to improve their infrastructure. We get frustrated if we get drive up Mont Félard, the amount of times that road has been closed. I think they have replaced about 800 metres of network up there over a period of time. The other thing we are trying to do, and some utilities do this better than others, is to advertise which utility is doing the work, because I get the blame for everything. I have got broad shoulders but if it is the electric company, we should say ... they are probably one of the best to say that they are doing the work. The other utilities ... we are trying to encourage if there is traffic lights, that we know which utility is doing the work. We have to invest more in our infrastructure, I repeatedly say, not just as a Government, but our utilities have to invest as well.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Going back to your own monitoring, are you satisfied that you are fully acquainted with the whole network, not just the current pipelines but disused ones which may not ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

There are 2 points there, are there not? The challenge that the local supplier has had is not necessarily the mains work, it is the supply to homes and blocks of houses. Our network is probably more in line with the mains rather than individual homes. I think they are making progress in that area. We have got a Ministerial group that looks at gas. We have all got a heightened awareness, obviously, after what has happened on the Island. So I think some of those increased reporting has been because of the heightened awareness. I think there has been good progress made.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

When you refer to the Ministerial group, do you mean the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs as the primary responsibility? What liaison do you have with him?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs, the Chief Minister, the Minister for the Environment and myself meet on probably a quarterly basis and review gas.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Minister, on that point, at the moment we have recently amended the gas law so that must have been part of your discussions. Are there any specific areas of future work that will be handed over to the next Council of Ministers in this area?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The next Council of Ministers, my advice to them would be to continue to have the Gas Ministerial Group. As I said, I think good progress has been made. I do not think we can afford to be complacent so we need to keep watching brief, would be my personal view.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Moving on then, if I may, to the public realm. It was in January 2026, Minister, when we had a private briefing from you. K.P.I.s (key performance indicators) as far as updates on progress in relation to the works since then?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have just been talking about a large part of the work at the moment, which is the western bus gateway. I stopped on my way to the hearing this morning to poke my head, as I often do, into the works on Broad Street. The street furniture is arriving imminently. I am looking around me. I do not know if it is on the Island but it is on its way. We are due to plant a couple of trees in Broad Street and the works in Broad Street should be completed by the end of this month. I think it is going

to be great. I really do think it is going to great. The next phase is we may ... I am not sure when we are going to do it. We are going to remove the tree outside the Blue Note and plonk it in the park at Plémont Bay. We want to remove the apple crusher. I have told officers it can not be removed until I know where it is going. It is not going to go into storage. We have got some exciting plans for one of our local parks, which is coming up to a major anniversary in the near future. We would like to plant a small orchard and have a feature on the local cider industry. It would be appropriate to put it in there. So watch this space, I would say.

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

Also, in terms of trees, we are planting 6 more trees on the western bus gateway. In the South West Town Masterplan, part of that was to be the gateway feature in St. Helier. We are helping to contribute to that with the International Finance Centre as that gets developed.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The interesting thing ... I do not know if you have seen. I thought we were putting soakaways in when I saw the product. Tristen will be able to explain this but when we are planting trees, we are putting in a device that will allow the trees to grow without disturbing the pavement and the road and anything else and the utilities. What is that called?

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

Interesting, I cannot remember the product name, I would need a landscape architect to tell me that. It is about planting trees in ground but in such a way that they do not harm the utility apparatus and the rest of the infrastructure.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

So the quite mature tree at the Blue Note will be removed but then there will be more trees.

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

Yes.

[11:15]

The Minister for Infrastructure:

If you look at the tree at the Blue Note, that is breaking up pavement and also impacting on drains, our drains and private drains, so we have to do something with it. We have found a location at the Country Park at Pont Marquet. It is just about the timing so that we are not planting it in August, for obvious reasons.

Associate Director, Highways, Transport and Infrastructure:

But we will have more trees rather than less by the end of this.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The thing is you would have seen that in the drawings. The other thing I am hoping is going to happen very soon, it is an ongoing discussion, is the pollarding of the existing trees in Broad Street. Now is the time, if it is not too late already, to be doing that.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Back in January you addressed representatives from across construction and engineering sectors at the I.C.E. (Island Construction Engineering) programme that included investments in public realm improvements. Can you identify any outcomes since then?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The I.C.E. programme, we briefed members and we then did a subsequent briefing to some of the consultants, so the professional services from the construction industry, about the framework agreement. That was well received and we are trying to make it easier for businesses. Once they have registered with us, they do not have to do it every time they want to bid for some work, we have got the main information on board. I hope that dialogue continues with industry going forward. I think it is important to give them confidence, particularly to train new staff and to invest in equipment that they can see the pipeline, not only for the Government, but also our arm's length organisations.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

As we are nearing election time, I recall the last election, the construction industry were anxious to give presentations to forthcoming States Members about what they perceived as a lack of knowledge as to forward planning so they could gear up for it. The I.C.E. programme gives them what they want, does it?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I am sure they would like more, but what the I.C.E. programme does is it gives the industry how confident we are in terms of investing. I think we call it readiness now rather than confidence; so the readiness of each of the programmes. I think it has been well received by the industry. That readiness will change as plans get passed. The planning committee meets in 2 weeks' time, and we will know if some of our projects are passed or not passed. So we will be able to turn the dial up or down because we will know whether we can invest or not invest.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Minister, something around public realm we have not touched on for a while is some of the parks, for example. I know Millbrook Park, for example, is something that you have been working on. Do you see that timeframe is still there?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I had hoped that the pump track at Millbrook would be opening about now, because we are in March. I am hopeful it will be open by the end of June. We have had terrific encouragement from the community towards that. We have worked with the donor of the land, we have worked with the neighbours at the church on the programme, and I think I have got a site visit with the Constable of St. Lawrence to explain what we are trying to do there. But Trees for Life has worked with us, and we have planted some trees recently. We have worked with the Battle of Flowers, for example, to ensure that floats can still access the large green area between the day parade and the night parade. They have done a trial run by taking a float in the proposed paths, and we have made some slight amendments to the paths after that trial. So, yes, we are quite encouraged. I love Millbrook Park, I think it is one of our jewels in our crown, but we have got a number. Winston Churchill Park is terrific. We have invested heavily at Coronation Park and at Millennium Park in play equipment, but the green areas, and the fact that we do things like the week of music in Coronation Park ... I do not know if I have to declare an interest because I quite like to go into one or 2 of those events. It is terrific.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

You were mentioning a number of parks, and they fall into whether it is in the parish's responsibility or the government responsibilities, and I have been contacted recently about St. Andrews Park because their playground was closed quite a while ago and said it would open and it has not, or it keeps opening and closing.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I can say with a fair degree of confidence that is a parish park as opposed to a government park.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

So it is something to raise with St. Helier?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Yes. They have had issues, I think, with the zip wire there and other things, but as it is somewhere that I go and walk my dog occasionally, I am fairly familiar with it ... on a lead.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

You have read our report already. Let us switch yet again on the subject of P.F.A.S. (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances). Following publication of the Government's interim response to P.F.A.S. Scientific Advisory Panel recommendations in report 4, are you able to provide, please, more information about what considerations you have given to date on the management of biosolids in relation to P.F.A.S.?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I do not think I have got that information in front of me. I am going to have to hand over to somebody. Is that going to be you, Ellen?

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

Yes. Our solid waste team and liquid waste team have been part of the P.F.A.S. Steering Group. We do test for our enhanced treated sludge and it has worked, so obviously there is some review of that, and it meets the standards. We are comfortable at the moment of where and what we are putting on to land.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

The standards are international standards rather than Jersey standards?

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

Yes.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Internationally, are those being looked at, like the water standards? I know that they are being looked at as well internationally to see whether there is a need to change. Is it about the same?

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

That will be the conversations that we are having with those steering groups. At the moment, we are making sure that we are doing the testing of those sludges. I am sure that that will advance as we have further discussions as we gather more data in the future on that side.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

You talk as in that working group is dialled into the discussions internationally about the standards?

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

Yes.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We have seen a reduction in the P.F.A.S. recorded in the biosolids produced at Bellozanne because we have stopped receiving effluent from the airport, and we have seen the reduction of two-thirds of P.F.A.S. Although the P.F.A.S. levels were low before, they are lower now, and therefore that impacts on the biosolids that are a byproduct of what we receive in. We measure the water as it comes in and as it goes out. We measure the water at First Tower, the sewage treatment works. The team are more well versed than when I started 2 years ago in P.F.A.S., and that kind of thing, which I am aware of.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

I have a few general questions around this. In relation to the Island's investment in infrastructure generally to manage P.F.A.S. exposure, what options are there, or are you considering further options as to how we better manage it?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think that question is probably better aimed at the people that manage our water rather than our waste because it is a subject that we are going to be debating in the Assembly in the coming days about P.F.A.S., and the levels of P.F.A.S., and the targets that we set for P.F.A.S. We manage the outputs, when the water has been used generally, then it comes to us, but we are monitoring that much more closely, more frequently, and since we have stopped receiving the water from the airport, we have seen a significant improvement.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Again, it is the same question really. What considerations can you give, or are you giving, or are able to give regarding managing the level in the future as regards to your long-term planning?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, I think it is more about the water that we produce. Let us not forget that P.F.A.S. is found in food and a whole range of things, and water is just one element of that. As I said, we had low levels of P.F.A.S. at the sewage treatment works and that has reduced by two-thirds since we stopped receiving water from the airport. So, I think that is good. We cannot stop monitoring. We need to continue to monitor. We also need to monitor the soil that we receive at La Collette, and that work is underway. The levels on the Island are generally lower than what is deemed to be acceptable levels, and it is what target do we set for the future?

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Monitoring generally, is that what you just said, is that the responsibility, in your view, of Jersey Water rather than yourselves?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, it is probably more to do with the Environment Department and the Regulation Department. They are the people, rather than the Infrastructure Department.

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

Yes. Although we have got a monitoring regime. As the Minister has mentioned, we have a number of areas that we monitor on a monthly basis.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Minister, you have said several times that stopping the water, that has reduced the amount, but where does that water then go, as it has to go somewhere else? If we are stopping intake into Bellozanne, I am just wondering if that means it is reduced everywhere else, or if there has to be found another way ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

They did have a licence to pump some of that water through the foul sewer network, and that licence has been suspended, I understand. I will have to go to my team to ask what ... it is a good question, but I do not know the answer.

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

That is a question for Ports of Jersey. We can come back to you on that side.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Yes, thank you, and where to go. I suppose the next one is a discussion probably to be had about the infrastructure that we have been discussing with the Minister for the Environment as well that would have to be put in place if the new drinking water standard comes in and what the byproduct waste of that could be. Potentially the byproduct of reducing P.F.A.S. in our drinking water system could have ... whatever it is, whether there is activated carbon or something, there could be a byproduct of that that collects that P.F.A.S. Where does that go?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Ultimately, if waste is created, it will end up with us under licence. I would need to come back to you on that. I do not know the technical answer to that.

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

I think that steering group is looking at those options. Depending again what measure gets agreed, what would be and how would we treat that waste, and I think that is all being reviewed at the moment. There are different options being considered.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

So that would be part of that discussion?

Group Director, Operations, Transport and Sport:

Yes.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

We have got the standard that can be put in place whether we have a technology decided or not, but when the technology is being discussed about how to do that, the waste product will be discussed?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

If we consider our current waste streams, some of our waste is exported under licence. Whether the byproduct from the P.F.A.S. treatment is one of those products that can be exported under licence or whether that has got to go into a cell, as we sit here today I do not know the answer to that question, but it is a question we are going to have to find the answer to.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Now it will be on Jersey Property Holdings. That is the last question area for the Minister. During our standalone public hearing on the topic of Jersey Property Holdings in October, the panel was informed in relation to leases of public land and facilities that as leases come up, we have tried to get everybody on to that level playing field and that is a process that we will take quite a piece of time. Are you able to update the panel about how the work is to achieve this level playing field in relation to leasing of public land and facilities and how it has progressed?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

As we have said previously, as each lease comes to the end of its time, then we look at putting it on to the level playing field and that is going to take some time to work through because we have got leases and licences of various lengths, but the team are doing some good stuff. I was with a couple of members of the team on Monday afternoon in the east of the Island looking at some land that we are involved with. I have to say, I am pleased with the progress we have made in Property Holdings, notwithstanding some of the challenges we have had, over the last 2 years, one of the areas we have made a good improvement, and we have made improvements in a number of areas. I do think the team at Property Holdings have risen to the challenge, and there are many challenges, and I said before in the States Assembly we have got 48 property experts and me, and the team have to deal with that and different interventions.

[11:30]

Tim and I visited a school recently and we surprised the head teacher when we reminded them of the service level agreement that we have with schools. So, it is ongoing. I think Property Holdings has been moved from Treasury to Infrastructure. If I leave a report when I go out of the door, I would suggest that an Assistant Chief Minister looks after Property Holdings, including all the property from Education, and probably sits as an Assistant Minister in both Education and Infrastructure so that things can be even more co-ordinated going forward. But the officers do some good stuff. We read in the paper this week, I think it was, about La Motte Street and co-ordinating the arm's length organisations. I was trying to do that in 2018 when I was chair of Jersey Business, because there is a lot of synergies to that. For the last 15 months, Tim and the team have been trying to get some of those arm's length organisations to take up the office space at Jubilee Wharf. That is one of our properties that is fit for purpose. The La Motte Street properties would need significant investment, but we have struggled because of the different lengths of contracts and leases people have got. Some organisations like their "independence", but I think there is great opportunity to bring some of them. We have had some success, but not as quickly or as much success as we would like in that area.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Jubilee Wharf is now full, so it is no longer an outgoing to the department.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

That is full of A.L.O.s (arm's length organisations)?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

There are some A.L.O.s. There are also some wider uses with the Bailiff's Chambers as well.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Would that be then explored in the future as well to see if that can be even more optimised and whether there is a carrot ...

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Exactly. It continues to be a priority, and there is some work at the moment from the Health estate in terms of the development of Overdale and the rest of the estate, what is going to happen at Kensington and Gloucester Street, and what the implications then are for the other properties around town, how we could consolidate the estate and either realise capital gains or use those properties constructively.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. The panel have talked about before in other hearings and in the Assembly that there has been 2 recent tendering processes that have taken place, for example the Lido and Les Creux. Have there been any lessons learned from those tendering processes?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Of course there has, and I think we are always learning. There was a lot of emphasis placed on Jurat Olsen's report. I suggest people to read paragraph 55 of that report, because I think that was the most telling paragraph in the whole document. I am delighted that Jersey Business have succeeded in getting both parties to agree terms so we can move forward, so we can lodge on 168 and hopefully new tenants can get into Havre des Pas. I foresee Havre des Pas being much more of a community asset going forward. I am really encouraged by the vision, and I am excited by that.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

But what specific lessons could be poured into other tendering, because both of them have taken a long time as well?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

They have. They are complex and that is the challenge we had. They are different. Les Creux, we have got a very, very long lease on that land, but we do not own the land. Therefore, we have to liaise with the owner of the land about any changes we may or may not want to do. So that takes time. When you are dealing with volunteers and people who are well intended and have got good ideas, you have got to give them the best opportunity to deliver. From my learning from Havre des Pas, we had external support and we should have run the external support from start to finish. I have said that before, and that is not a criticism of the people in the department. The people in the department have worked incredibly hard in incredibly difficult circumstances. That, again, was recognised by Jurat Olsen in his report. I am pleased that the initial preferred party for Les Creux, also in their letter to us, recognise the efforts of the team at Jersey Property Holdings. Going forward perhaps more surety in what we are looking for, and we should be perhaps stricter. We allowed one group to participate who claimed they were a charity. They were not a charity, and we allowed that process to go forward. That caused some confusion. I think perhaps we should be a little bit stricter with processes, would probably be my observation.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

In this last States sitting you talked about the preferred bidder not going forward in Les Creux. What happens after that with the process? You did not talk about that. Does it refer to a specific process?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We shortlisted to 2, and, so, we are in discussions with the party that was the second bidder in that process. Before we get too far down the road with them we have to liaise with the owner of the land, because if planning applications are required, we need to make sure that the owner is happy with us making such an application, rather than us getting further down the road with the second party and then find out the owner is not happy with what we want to do. That has been delayed due to absence off Island. I am hoping that we can get that up and running pretty quickly.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. In our specific hearing on this subject, you stated that you received fortnightly updates on any empty properties we have and that: "I get the update. I get the value of the events, and we can start to see things from a commercial aspect." Can you provide any observations of trends related to empty public properties since October, and has this changed since you have been more focused?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, it is not just since October. Since I came into office we have done that fortnightly update and we have seen properties that were empty for a long period of time that are now active, and probably properties are empty at times because of departments' wishes or needs. We have released some properties. I think we had a property go through court recently at Caroldene, which would have been subject to a 168.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Yes. There are some minor technical issues on the drainage that we are resolving.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That is due to transfer soon. I believe it is a good discipline. If you are in a commercial world, that is something you would do because it is an asset. What is the cost of that asset? What is the value of that asset? Do you need that asset or would you release it? I think it is a fairly good discipline. We have got an officer-led team, which I forget the name of the group. Tim, you will remind me of it.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

The Corporate Property Management Board.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

That meets frequently. As I have said, I would suggest that if there is an Assistant Chief Minister that looks after property that they probably attend that board. So I think there has been focus. We

are not the finished article. It is really difficult when you have got people who use a facility that believe they own the facility 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and that is not the case.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Minister, you talked, for example, about La Motte Street, which of course went out for expression of interest, but if you could give an update maybe because that is one of the properties ...

The Minister for Infrastructure:

The tender closes lunchtime tomorrow, I think. So we will have more information hopefully tomorrow.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Great. Well, we will look forward to seeing that. Turning to schools, and you have talked about it in the past, not only about these links that you have had these contracts with the schools but, of course, the focus on maintenance, been focusing on fire and fire safety in schools, and we talked about that during the budget process as well. You talked about that we are still doing a lot of work and we have to mitigate in some premises where we have not completed the work yet. Are you able to give an update on fire safety works in the schools?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, where we have not done physical work, we have got mitigation in place. So we would have additional members of staff who are there as fire safety wardens. Is that what you call them?

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Yes. It is a combination of an act of observation to mitigate against the outbreak of fire but also to make sure that fire loading and the use of the premises is orientated more to a more safety aspect. But also we have gone to the Treasury to seek additional funds this year so that we can accelerate the works that the Minister was referring to, so that we can reduce the burden on the school's operational activities and allow them to concentrate on teaching rather than being part-time firemen.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think it is fair to say that the legislation and the understanding of fire is always increasing. We get more information, so what was acceptable 20 years ago is not acceptable today. Some of these buildings when they were built, were built and passed all the criteria. The criteria changes and what we are trying to do is have best practice in all of our public buildings.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

We have written to you, Minister, in the past about also how to prioritise more general maintenance in schools, and we have heard ... recently we have just had a submission about Les Quennevais

and the roof. Apparently there is, from the storm, substantial damage to the roof but I am wondering where that priority is. How does that prioritisation work?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

My understanding from that is ... I have had similar correspondence and I have had assurances that there is no water ingress, that the works were due to take place last week.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

Yes. I believe the works have taken place, but they were prioritised. There was no water ingress. The site was made safe and we were focusing on activities where there were leaks, where there was sort of ongoing damage that we needed to address. So there is an active prioritisation. As the Minister has said in the past, our resources are limited and it does require difficult decisions to be made.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. Finally, Minister, you said in our last hearing, we are looking at what we can do with Andium to help us manage our properties, our homes that we have on our books, because they are experts in changing tenants and receiving rents, and maintenance, et cetera. Have you progressed with this work? Is it complete? What can you provide an update on?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

We were due to receive some people from another department into Property Holdings, and I have said: "Let us not do that until we understand the benefits and the alternatives in that work." I do not believe it has been completed.

Director, Jersey Property Holdings:

I think the policy in terms of the specifically key worker accommodation and how the various departments within the government provide key worker accommodation, the balance between the occupier and the department and who pays continues to be a bit of a challenge. There are a number of different models depending on which department and whereabouts in the department you work. That sort of policy work is still ongoing, but we continue to plan how we would outsource key worker accommodation.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. I suppose my last question on this is something ... because we have touched on Jersey Property Holdings since the beginning of our hearings together and our specific focused hearing. Minister, coming to the end of your experience as the Minister for Infrastructure at the moment, apart

from you have talked about an Assistant Minister specifically focused on this, is there anything wider that probably is underway that needs to be finalised or could be commenced?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think there should be an Assistant Chief Minister, so reporting to the Chief Minister, because you need to have the support. It is a terrific asset for us, the property that we have. There are opportunities, I believe, to work with both Andium and S.o.J.D.C. (States of Jersey Development Company), as we are doing with Fort Regent, for example. We have spent so much time on what you would expect to be minor things, and Havre des Pas is an example of that, but it is not minor to the people involved, but the time that is consumed from the department is totally off the scale compared to issuing a new lease. It is unfortunate that has prevented other work from being completed.

[11:45]

But I would be making the recommendation that an Assistant Chief Minister heads up the property and, as I said earlier, sits on both as an Assistant Education Minister and Assistant Infrastructure Minister, and I think that is possibly a way to go forward. That person would have the time and the bandwidth to look at alternative models and getting even better utilisation of our existing estate, because certainly I have not had the capacity to do that.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Do you envisage in that wish a great connection, collaboration with Ports of Jersey, for instance, on property matters?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, my personal view is that Ports of Jersey should be operating ports and not property development. We have got the S.o.J.D.C. as a government arm's length organisation to develop property, but I will reiterate that is a personal view.

The Connétable of St. Mary:

Has that been discussed at a Ministerial level?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

I think we have differing views at Ministerial levels. I understand that Ports of Jersey have got to generate funds to operate the ports, and clearly they see property as one way of doing that.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you. Well, Minister, we have come to the end of our main questions, and something that we have asked our other 2 Ministers that we scrutinise is looking back over your term, is there anything that has been the most challenging for you, lessons learnt, and what would you advise the incoming Minister for Infrastructure?

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Not to look at social media would be my advice to the incoming Minister, because it will not be me. It has played havoc with myself, with my family. Some of the accusations made by people who should know better is, quite frankly, irresponsible. It has led me to take personal legal advice, it has cost me sleepless nights, it has impacted on my health, and I am weary as I come to the end of my time. There is a fantastic team of officers, some of who are sitting here today, others you have met. A fantastic team of officers who absolutely need to be challenged, but they deserve our support. I was quite heartened today to read in the newspaper that a candidate who has declared today has put ageing infrastructure as one of the key things that should be done. So I am going to leave infrastructure, I believe, with a higher profile than when I arrived. I will take that as a success. There are lots of things I would have loved to have done. I would not rule out being an Assistant Minister in Infrastructure because I think it is a terrific area, a terrific team to work with. But I can tell you that I have had people in my office, explain to them the impacts their words on social media have had, and then they go on and continue to do that. I think it is going to put off existing Members, it will put off potential candidates, and it is so disappointing. So, that would be my key advice to the next Minister for Infrastructure. Having said that, I think we have achieved quite a lot. The team are fantastic. I could not speak highly enough, and that is not just the officers that you see, but the people on the front line. We saw in Storm Goretti, lessons learned from Ciarán, the interactive map that is done by the dedicated public servants of this Island, we saw with all of the heavy rain ... I was in Madeira. I read 2 emails when I was in Madeira because they were advising of the real genuine concerns on the railway walk where we have gas and main sewers running down there, and the person sat to my left went on his way home, stood for hours in the rain to ensure that the things got done. The dedication of these people is phenomenal, and I pay tribute to them because people do not see that. People think of our officers as being overpaid and lazy. Well, let me tell you, we have got officers who are totally, totally committed right across the department, and I am proud of them all.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you, Minister. We have come to our end at a time, so I just want to say thank you so much for attending our hearings and also for the officers as well for all the support, both within the briefings that you have given us and also, of course, during the hearing and support to the Minister.

The Minister for Infrastructure:

Well, and thank you as well, because you have been challenging, but you have been engaged, and you have taken time to go and look at things first hand. I hope the next panel does the same. Thank you.

Deputy H.L. Jeune:

Thank you.

[11:50]