



**OFFICIAL REPORT**

**OF THE**

**STATES OF GUERNSEY**

**SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT**

**COMMITTEE**

Committee *for the* Environment & Infrastructure  
Public Hearing

**HANSARD**

**Guernsey, Tuesday, 27th February 2024**

**No. 1/2024**

*Further information relating to the Scrutiny Management Committee  
can be found on the official States of Guernsey website at [www.gov.gg/scrutiny](http://www.gov.gg/scrutiny)*

**Members Present:**

*Panel Chair:* Deputy Yvonne Burford – President

Deputy Andrea Dudley-Owen – States’ Member  
Deputy Sasha Kazantseva-Miller – States’ Member

Mr Mark Huntington – Principal Scrutiny Officer

**Business transacted**

Procedural – Remit of the Committee .....3

EVIDENCE OF Deputy Lindsay de Sausmarez, President, Committee *for the* Environment & Infrastructure; Deputy Adrian Gabriel, Vice-President, Committee *for the* Environment & Infrastructure; Mr Damon Hackley, Director of Operations; and Ms Claire Barrett, Director of Infrastructure & Environment.....3

*The Committee adjourned at 3.27 p.m. and resumed at 3.35 p.m.* ..... 17

*The Committee adjourned at 4.31 p.m.* ..... 31

# Scrutiny Management Committee

## Committee *for the* Environment & Infrastructure Public Hearing

*The Committee met at 2.30 p.m.  
in Castel Douzaine Room*

[DEPUTY BURFORD *in the Chair*]

### **Procedural – Remit of the Committee**

**The Chair (Deputy Burford):** Okay, welcome everyone to this Scrutiny Management Committee public hearing session today with the Committee *for the* Environment & Infrastructure. We will be focusing on many of the issues in the Committee's mandate. I am Deputy Yvonne Burford and with me on the Panel is Deputy Kazantseva-Miller and Deputy Dudley-Owen, as well as Scrutiny Principal Officer Mr Mark Huntington.

Following this session, the Scrutiny Management Committee will decide if any further review of activity relating to today's hearing will be undertaken. A *Hansard* transcript will be available on the website in due course. Please be advised this hearing is being live-streamed and a link to the live stream will also be available on the Scrutiny website.

We will take a short comfort break around half-past three so now, if everybody would make sure their mobile phones are set to silent.

### **EVIDENCE OF**

**Deputy Lindsay de Sausmarez, President, Committee *for the* Environment & Infrastructure;  
Deputy Adrian Gabriel, Vice-President, Committee *for the* Environment & Infrastructure;  
Mr Damon Hackley, Director of Operations; and  
Ms Claire Barrett, Director of Environment & Infrastructure**

**The Chair:** I will now turn to our witnesses and would you introduce yourself, please, starting with Mr Hackley.

**Mr Hackley:** Yes. My name is Damon Hackley, Director of Operations for the Economy, Environment, Infrastructure and Culture.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** I am Deputy Lindsay de Sausmarez. I am the President of the Committee *for the* Environment & Infrastructure.

**Deputy Gabriel:** Good afternoon, Panel. My name is Deputy Adrian Gabriel and I am the Vice-President of Environment & Infrastructure Committee.

25 **Ms Barrett:** Good afternoon, I am Claire Barrett. I am the Director of Infrastructure & Environment and advising the Committee on strategy and policy.

**The Chair:** Thank you,

30 Okay, so straight into the questions. Deputy de Sausmarez, in your update statement to the Assembly last September, you talked about the Guernsey Housing Plan that had been published by your Committee and you stated that when it comes to housing provision there are two critical infrastructure dependencies: flood risk mitigation and transport. So we would like to start off on those broader topics of housing, flood risk and transport, beginning with housing.

35 The new President of P&R has stated that housing is his top priority. Do you agree that the success of the Guernsey Housing Plan will depend on whether or not it is adequately resourced, both financially and with suitably qualified staff and, if so, are you confident that this resource will be readily available?

40 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** The answer to the first question within that is certainly yes, of course, it is critical that this work is properly resourced. We have recently increased the resource. I think, famously, we are not blessed with an over-abundance of people within Environment & Infrastructure but we have, with that very objective in mind, worked very hard to increase the resource in the housing policy area and so we have increased the number of people now working on that.

45 Whether that is adequate, I am not confident enough at this point to give you a definitive yes or no, because it is such a huge priority, and because we are still adjusting some of the specifics, getting a better idea of exactly what resource is needed between now and the end of this political term and indeed beyond. It may well be that we may need to ask for further resource, given what an incredible priority it is.

50 **The Chair:** And what level of increase have you had?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** We have taken on two new policy officers to complement the one that we had.

55 **The Chair:** That is with the support of P&R, is it?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Yes. Well, it was budgeted. But yes.

60 **The Chair:** It was in the budget. Thank you.

Success for the Guernsey Housing Plan will also depend upon the commitment and engagement of other bodies with your Committee, including Employment & Social Security, the DPA and Policy & Resources. In your opinion, has this cross-Committee engagement worked well to date or does it need a different structure?

65 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** I think the reason I also serve on ESS was because Deputy Roffey foresaw right at the beginning of this political term that that was a key interdependency and that is why he approached me in the first instance. So I also serve on Employment & Social Security and there is a very obvious overlap between the two.

70 We also have on that Committee a Member of HSC, which is quite important in terms of key worker housing, etc. The question was about whether the cross-Committee working has been effective to date, is that right? I think, to an extent yes. There definitely has been, if anyone reads the Guernsey Housing Plan, it is clear that there are a lot of workstreams in which other Committees are both engaged but particularly in which other Committees lead, ESS and P&R being two of the key ones. The working between ESS and E&I has certainly been very joined up.

There has been a change in the Policy & Resources Committee recently and we are yet to have a meeting specifically on this but we are very keen to do so, precisely so that we can be confident that the new P&R is on that page and is confident with the work streams that they are leading on, because there is a lot that they will be leading on in the Guernsey Housing Plan.

80

**The Chair:** To what extent do you think that success and working across Committees is dependent on one Member being prepared to sit on two of the Committees, however, because that might not always happen.

85

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** I do not think it is dependent; I think it just helps. It is a fact and I think it is a very helpful thing to be able to do and that goes both ways as well. I do not think it is essential by any means but I think in this case it certainly has been an advantage.

90

**The Chair:** Okay. Continuing on the same theme, over the last few years we have seen a significant net increase in the population of the Island. The Guernsey Housing Plan identified around 1,500 units of accommodation need to be provided in the five years from 2023-27 inclusive and this figure is based on a net inward migration of 300 people, much lower than what we have seen recently. The Plan does acknowledge that you will review the States' Strategic Housing Indicator annually but, realistically, do you think we have the capacity to solve the housing crisis at any point in the foreseeable future if the population continues to increase above the estimated 300 net?

95

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Yes, to pick up on a very important point in your question we are of course obliged to review that modelling every year and so we are expecting that modelling to be done around the middle of the year, I believe, and I think that is going to be quite a critical exercise because it will show us the gap between need and delivery, I suppose.

100

To answer your question in the round, I think it would be a mistake to look at the housing crisis as a binary win or lose. It is obviously a spectrum of impacts. It is acute at the moment and anything we can do to help reduce the negative impact is going to obviously be a win. But in terms of meeting the need, if your question was about meeting the need, then I think we can get a lot closer to it than we have been historically.

105

I think one thing that the Guernsey Housing Plan stresses is that there are no quick fixes. So I do think we need to manage expectations in that respect. Neither are there any singular solutions. There are so many interdependencies in this area that it is absolutely essential that we do not just fixate on one or two solutions, particularly ones that might have particular salience or attraction within the public imagination.

110

It is really important that we advance various workstreams simultaneously so that we can take a much more joined up and therefore a much more effective approach.

**The Chair:** So, approaches other than actually building houses, which is the obvious thing?

115

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Yes. The report that underpins the Guernsey Housing Plan actually identifies a whole range of different problems. Supply is one of them but it is by no means the only problem. A lot of them are inter-connected. So you have also got problems, for example, with accessibility.

120

If we just take supply for a moment, it is not even just a question of the number of units, it is a question of whether you can match supply with demand, demand with supply, in terms of the types of different housing and within the different tenures as well. So it is already a much more complex picture than that.

125

But there are also issues around, for example, affordability, around accessibility, around quality of housing, around a whole different range of issues. It is too simplistic to look at it just in terms of supply.

**The Chair:** Finally, though, to what extent do you feel that population is going to be a significant factor in whether we get a handle on this pressing issue?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** I think it is a very significant factor but the fact remains that the States have agreed a strategic population objective, which is basically to grow the Island's population and so that is what we are under States' direction to plan for, whether we like it or not. On a personal level, I actually voted against that, but I was in the minority, and so I am now engaged very much in planning to accommodate that strategic objective.

But I would say again it is not that simple because one of the things that our research has shown is actually one of the things that makes the housing crisis particularly acute is this mismatch in terms of what we need and what we have got and one example I will give is that we actually have very high under-occupancy rates, for example, and so one of the workstreams within the Guernsey Housing Plan is looking at how we might be able to encourage and enable people to what is known as right-size, which means moving up or down in terms of house size according to their need.

We know that actually there are certain barriers to moving and potentially some incentives to reduce those barriers that could be very effective and I think actually that, again, takes some of the pressure off to just produce quite as many new homes. It could actually be part of the solution in helping to ease the negative impacts that the community is currently feeling by making the market work more effectively.

**The Chair:** So you are saying that there are some people living in houses, which are not necessarily the right size for them, and it is not that they want to stay there, it is that they have too many barriers to not staying there.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Yes, exactly. We know that it can often be very expensive and difficult process, the act of moving. More to the point, they might not be able to find anything suitable. So the absolute classic demographic in this respect is people whose children have grown up and left the family home and they are perhaps getting older, and they do not want to still be living in a family size house that might be difficult to manage. They might want to move somewhere which is more affordable to manage and easier for them to move around in and live independently and as they get older.

Actually, that is great and many of those people do want to move but report to us that they cannot find suitable accommodation to move into that is going to meet their needs both now and thinking a little bit further forward into the future in terms of their future needs and that is why the type of accommodation is also such an important aspect.

**The Chair:** Okay, thank you.  
Deputy Dudley-Owen.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Thank you.

House building in Guernsey is dictated by policies of the Island Development Plan, which is governed by the Strategic Land Use Plan (SLUP). The SLUP states that most development should be undertaken within the main and local centres. Given the current pressures on housing and the need to ramp up housing development in the future and with a nod to what you have just said we need and what we have got, do you believe that the SLUP is still fit for purpose?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Yes, I think it is actually more relevant than ever before and that is partly because it has such a direct bearing on housing affordability, apart from anything else. So I will give, if you do not mind, a really oversimplistic example to illustrate the point. When it comes to infrastructure provision, obviously, all the homes need certain services and infrastructure around them to make sure that they have the services that they need.

It is much more cost effective to provide that infrastructure into an area, which already has that kind of infrastructure. If you were just to put a house in the middle of successive fields all the way along, you could imagine that those infrastructure costs become a lot more expensive a lot more quickly. That is just one tiny example of why the SLUP is very relevant.

But actually more than anything we know that the SLUP is the basis on which we will be able to develop more vibrant and thriving communities because people are closer to the kinds of services and places that they need. So all those community assets, being able to go to the shop to get the things that they need to eat to be able to access the kinds of services, even the social amenities, things like churches or pubs or anything like that, we know it is not Guernsey making this up, this is very widely understood planning policy the world over, that actually a key to economic vibrancy is to make things very accessible. So the SLUP supports that objective and a number of different objectives as well. Obviously in terms of energy efficiency and climate change it is also a key factor.

If I can expand, I might be anticipating a question but please just stop me if I am, where we feel the pinch, typically, is where things have not traditionally been planned terribly well. So I think the SLUP is a really sound basis on which to plan. However, where it has not been implemented terribly well is where, for example, the transport infrastructure has not been sufficient or adequate to really support new, for example, housing, coming forward, and that is one of the things that we are trying to address now.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Staying with that housing point and the SLUP, moving onto a bit of a cascade question here, do you think that the Government's approach to housing this term has been effective, given that we are three years into the term, to date no significant housing developments have been started and, with hindsight what, if anything, could your Committee have done differently?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** I think this States has faced an absolutely unprecedented slew of challenges in respect to, obviously towards the beginning of term we had COVID and all the impacts around that. Interestingly, one of the impacts in direct relation to housing was that many people through lockdown, anecdotally, decided rather than to move house they were going to extend their homes and actually that put constraints on the construction sector, which was already under constraint because of COVID, etc, and obviously since then we have also had precedent in recent history interest rates, which has affected the cost of materials and labour.

So we have faced a slew of extreme challenges. I would say obviously in terms of the Government's role and effectiveness in all of this, the area where Government has the most direct input is in terms of the affordable housing mandate, which of course sits with ESS rather than E&I. E&I's role for general housing is making sure that the broader conditions in which people can bring new housing forward is as effective as possible. But ultimately that is a private market initiative so it is not as directly within our control, where there is a facilitator.

We have had, in fairness to the States, an intense focus on housing for all of this political term. We have, right from the get-go, worked in a very joined up way, in the type that Deputy Burford alluded to in her earlier question. For the first year of this States, or thereabouts, we have the Housing Action Group, it was called, with a very specific focus on making sure that we were working in a joined up way and we were looking across mandates.

I think also this States inherited, in terms of the affordable housing development programme, a lacuna in terms of site availability. So because there was not any land in the pipeline, that set the affordable housing development programme back to square one, if you see what I mean. No matter how much you streamline the planning procedures, and I do have to give credit to the DPA for doing exactly this, it is still going to take time to actually develop bricks and mortar homes for people. So inevitably that programme was going to be affected.

I know that there is a huge amount in the pipeline, much of it for much-needed key worker housing. So I think it was basically an unfortunate confluence of events that really dampened delivery earlier this term.

I think if we just take a little bit more of a step back, prior to 2020, we had been in a very different situation with respect to housing demand because of course up until, I might get the year a little bit wrong here, I think maybe about 2018, our population was actually declining by about 100 a year and so it was a very different scenario and the construction sector had geared itself towards that and then, obviously, with COVID, we saw a very marked change in population and very marked change in some of the drivers, like I mentioned before, so a real focus on home extensions and lots of constraints.

I think other constraints, in terms of large developments, meant that actually in order to bring a large development forward you need a development framework, which is a really sensible thing, because it makes sure that you are using the land or that anyone that is developing the land is using it efficiently and getting the most out of that.

Obviously, those development frameworks take time to develop and so I think that is another very well intentioned thing, a very good thing now we have got them, but that was just a natural brake on the speed at which larger developments were able to come forward, especially when paired with some of the market factors we saw. Not so much pressure to bring housing forward prior to COVID and then a very sudden change just at the point where it was more difficult to deliver that housing.

So we have worked in a very joined up way. I think we have been very proactive. Could I think of anything? I think with the benefit of hindsight you could always do things a bit more differently but I am struggling to think of anything specific that I could recommend to the States or this Committee three years ago.

I hope that answers the question.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** To the last part of the question!

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** The question was could we have done anything differently? I think the answer is quite possibly but I cannot think of anything specific that would have made a very significant difference.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** If you will allow me just one more question in relation to housing, this time just on the Open Market, there have been several reports in the media recently about the increase in Open Market inscriptions and the fee that will be levied on successful applications. What in your view is the primary purpose behind increasing the number of Open Market inscriptions?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** If you will forgive me, I am going to hop back to 2013. Between about 2013 and 2015 there were a series of States' debates, which were all about moving away from the housing licence system, through housing control, to population management. One of the key things with that was, obviously prior to that, population was controlled, for want of a better word, by the States through this proxy of housing licences and that had all sorts of problems associated with it.

So the States, and this is two political terms ago, made some decisions in relation to this new change of direction, and we both know, because we were in the previous political term, that came about through the new Population Management Law. One of the things that did was it took the Open Market Housing Register out of the ... the Housing Authority does not exist any more anyway and that now sits with us. But one of the express intents in that previous, previous political term was, because there had been some decline in the Open Market, that there should be the ability for the Open Market to grow.

That was actually enshrined in the Law that came about or was enacted in 2017 and there is a specific provision within that Law that enables new Open Market inscriptions. That is quite a significant change from the approach that had been in place previously and I do not know how much detail you want. I am happy to provide more detail. Basically, other than some very limited growth, new inscriptions, under the newer policy, there have not been any provision for new inscriptions.



So then when we debated the PIPR, and I really struggle with this acronym, it is the Population Immigration Review Policy – I think– the one we debated in October 2022, that was the one where we agreed our strategic population objective and, as we know, the strategic population objective, was to grow the Island’s population.

Section 9 in that policy letter does talk about how the Open Market plays an important role in that. So if you think about it, the Open Market had been around about the same size for really quite some time. Let us go back to at least the early eighties, and while the rest of the Island’s housing stock had grown, the Open Market had not and there is a further complication in that when we switched to the Population Management regime, we effectively lost a lot of those households. So there had been, in effect, a reduction in the number of Open Market private dwelling households. It gets a bit complicated.

The Law says that we have to have regard to the relevant policies and the relevant policy in the PIPR was that the population needs to grow and the Open Market should play a role in that. That was the decision of the States and so the new inscriptions policy is a way of regulating and controlling that growth because obviously there are acute sensitivities around increasing the size of the Open Market, if it is done in a way that is not well-regulated or controlled and the pace of that and the quantum of that is important. So that is why we have been developing a new inscriptions policy and we have been talking with a lot of stakeholders in order to get a feel for it.

I do have to just say, I do not know what has been reported in the media, but I do have to say we have not finalised that policy yet. We are still in a targeted consultation phase. So we have done a lot of consultation and continue to do consultation ahead of that policy being finalised.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** May I ask a supplementary question?

Do you see this as a significant revenue raising opportunity for the Committee?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** For the Committee, no. Not at all. **(Deputy Dudley-Owen:** For the States?) For the States? That is certainly not its primary objective. The primary objective is a housing one.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Do you see it as an opportunity, then?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** It is an opportunity for income generation, certainly, but that is not its primary driver. The primary focus is around housing and making sure that the market is working as well as possible. Because actually we know that it is not.

We have got some issues, as I mentioned earlier, within general housing, where there is a mismatch between supply and demand, so we know that over the last few decades, in particular, household composition has really changed, so we know that there is a trend towards much smaller households but actually, especially in the Open Market, there is a real dearth of smaller properties to suit those needs and especially to meet the needs of people who might be getting older, etc.

That is one of the things that we want to do, better match supply with demand and make sure that we are, within the very constrained parameters of growing the Open Market, allowing the very controlled expansion of the market, within that we are better meeting the needs of Open Market residents so that we are better matching supply with demand.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Okay, thank you.

**The Chair:** Thank you.

So let us move onto transport. In the first periodic review of the On-Island Integrated Transport Strategy in December 2019, it stated, ‘To direct the Committee to report back to the States with a second periodic review in 2023.’

Can you tell us when this will be published?

335 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** No, I am afraid I cannot.

One of the things we had not anticipated in 2020, when we published the first periodic review of the Transport Strategy was the pandemic and also actually Brexit, which we were aware of at that time but we did not appreciate quite how much of a resource drain that would be. I know that our staff resources were very significantly impacted by that and that is one of the things that has meant that we have not been able to meet that particular deadline.

340 Damon might be able to tell you. I do not have an answer, but I can commit to getting back to you with that.

345 **Mr Hackley:** We do not have a specific date when we will review that, but we will be reviewing that this term, certainly.

**The Chair:** This term, okay. So in the next year and a bit.

To what extent then, in that case, clearly, we know that P&R in their role where taxes and revenue are concerned, are considering transport measures? Various things have been reported on as possibilities. How will those proposals dovetail with the objectives of the Transport Strategy?

350 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** Very closely and actually I think that is probably a very good reason about why we have not brought the review forward at this point because there is so much work in train at the moment and I can say, actually, with echoes of a previous question that you have asked, there is very close joint working. Certainly, there was, obviously this is something that has spanned the change in the P&R Committee, but the way that we have approached it is to be clear about the fiscal objectives that are required, in terms of revenue raising needed, and also the transport objectives.

360 So those are the fundamental principles that we have been working to to make sure that there is alignment between the two. Because frankly it would be very easy if you were only focused on fiscal objectives to introduce measures that were really effective in raising loads of money but they could have fairly disastrous impacts on your Transport Policy objectives and vice versa, in fact. So we wanted to make sure right from the start that we were very clear about the two sets of objectives and make sure that we are working in a way that we could align them as far as possible.

365 **The Chair:** I will move onto a question now, which really touches on where you were possibly about to go a little bit earlier on when we were talking about housing. One of the solutions the Committee has said it is keen to see developed is shared mobility schemes for new developments. Has the Committee considered developing proposals for such schemes directly or in partnership with the private sector?

375 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** Yes, well there have been lots of conversations about this. I tend to get very enthusiastic about them because, just for the benefit of anyone who does not know what they are, they are a way of potentially improving the affordability of transport by retaining the convenience of access to car travel without it being absolutely necessary to own the vehicle yourself.

380 So there are two main ways that we can think about it. One is in car share, which is where for example car clubs, these are very common in pretty much every other jurisdiction. Basically the concept of that is if you are a member of a car club – it does not have to be a car, it could be vans, etc. – you simply use an app to find an available vehicle and you rent it for that particular journey that you require.

There is also lift share, which is a variation on a theme, which is using people's existing, privately owned transport and just making better use of it. We already lead by example, I hope, within the States, and we have been promoting lift share for commuter purposes. But when it comes to housing, I think car clubs are a particularly valuable tool, potentially because they can save an enormous amount of space.

Data from the UK shows that every car club vehicle actually negates the need for 20 privately owned vehicles. I would not expect that to translate directly, one for one, in Guernsey, but if we can even reduce the need for a few additional private vehicles then that has a significantly positive impact on the amount of space that you can afford to the housing, rather than the parking aspects of the development and so that is why I am very keen that shared mobility is included in plans for housing and indeed more generally and I think it is particularly pertinent for people who live in built up areas, which do not have access to private parking.

Deputy Gabriel can probably speak from better first-hand experience of the sort of headaches around Russian roulette with having to move your car every 23 hours or whatever. That is why shared mobility is, I think, such a potentially important and invaluable tool in enabling more housing.

**The Chair:** How well do you think the people of Guernsey will embrace this?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** I think it is less scary. Because it uses a form of transport that everyone is familiar with, I think it is a less scary proposition to many people, than a completely different mode of transport. For many people, quite understandably, they say, look I am not going to jump on a bike, or I am not going to walk for two miles, and that is absolutely fair enough. But really this is a far less big jump, I suppose, in that respect, and so I think it is a much more doable thing.

Actually we already do have a form of shared mobility in the Island, with the private ... would you call it a private/public, I suppose it is a kind of private/public enterprise partnership between Guernsey Post and you are able to hire out those vans, those vehicles on demand, which is part of the shared mobility proposition. So we already do have a form of it in the Island and I understand that is going very well.

But yes, we have been actively talking with anyone who wants to talk, and I do not have anything to report at this stage, apart from conversations are ongoing.

**The Chair:** So there is no scheme about to be put in action, or anything?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** No, there genuinely is not anything about to be announced but there are lots of conversations ongoing.

**The Chair:** Thank you.  
Deputy Dudley-Owen.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Deputy Gabriel, given the number of cars on-Island, the number of Islanders who use cars on a daily basis, realistically how can your Committee bring about transformational change in the public mindset to overcome increased transport pressures, especially those associated with the planned increase in housing stock in the north of the Island?

**Deputy Gabriel:** In all reality it is about giving people choice. We all appreciate that people do have to move people or things, sometimes multiples. But when that is not the case, we have been investing in our active travel and our mobility hubs. When I say mobility hub, that would be something that we would aspire to, which is a fantastic arrangement.

But as to people's car use, there are other alternatives, and it is about giving people choice. So there is our bus service, which is subsidised, of course, and we are also investing in cycle infrastructure around the Island. Most recently we have put up extra bus shelters and made some improvements to our cycle infrastructure. Whenever we are doing any road resurfacing project or any project that involves resurfacing, we always try to make improvements to the cycle or walking infrastructure as well.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Thank you very much.

Deputy de Sausmarez, in your statement, the recent update Statement, you said we need to throw everything we have got at facilitating that housing in a way that ideally improves rather than negatively impacts quality of life for people already living in the area, with regard to housing in the north of the Island. Is this a realistic statement, given that your Committee suffers from a well-publicised lack of resources?

What can your Committee realistically do to improve the quality of life for existing residents in an already congested area, with limited space where more housing is planned?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** The simple answer is use that space better. Actually just to follow up from your previous question, there is some very interesting data that has come out from the Better Journeys Project, which is a community organisation, one facet of which is actually collecting data on commuter transport and between June 2022 and June 2023, there was actually a 7% reduction in single occupancy car journeys, a 6% reduction in total car journeys overall, a 23% increase in motorcycle use, a 26% increase in bicycle use and a 35% increase in walking. So we are actually already seeing positive change in this respect.

I would say that we set that against a backdrop of a growing population and actually bus journeys are not counted in that because it is quite difficult to count how many people are on a bus when it whizzes past but our bus passenger numbers are also, I am pleased to say, holding up fairly well.

So yes the answer to the question is we are already effecting good change. It is all about using the space a little bit better. We have kind of pivoted, I suppose, our resources, our BAU resources to the area that you talk about, where we are expecting housing to come forward and the kinds of changes that we are planning for include things such as a potential extension to the one-way network, better infrastructure in terms of safe, continuous routes for people walking and people cycling, better bus shelters where they are most needed.

Deputy Gabriel mentioned earlier a mobility hub, which would be an absolute game changer. I know that is something that the Guernsey Development Agency is looking at and we are working with them on. That would give people a really good range of options and a bunch of other things as well so that could be a real game changer if we get a mobility hub or two, ideally one in each of the main centres.

**The Chair:** Could you please just expand on what a mobility hub is for people that might not know?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Delighted to!

A mobility hub, and I do have to stress we are not about to put one in place next year, it is a slightly longer-term aspiration than that, is really a centre of transport options and it is all about, as Deputy Gabriel said, improving people's choice. Because we know that many people in the Island would actually like to travel in different ways, but they feel as though they do not have that as a viable option at the moment.

What a mobility hub typically includes is some private parking. It might be more convenient parking. If you are a resident, for example, that does not have off-street parking at your own residence it may well be that you could have a space in the mobility hub. It is also a centre for shared mobility, so that would be a really convenient base for a car club fleet, for example, and then it would have all sorts of other facilities as well, in terms of electric car charging, secure bike storage, potentially even changing facilities and all sorts of community amenities as well.

When we see these in other places, they typically include a bus exchange. I think depot is not the word I am looking for but a bus terminus or certainly a major hub for buses. And you could have things like a concierge as well. So it is a particularly interesting proposition for people who live in very built up areas that may not have safe places to leave parcels, It can provide a concierge desk for that and you can have storage space, changing facilities, as well as a range of community facilities.

490 But really its overall objective is to provide people with more transport choice, whatever that  
may be, so it is all concentrated in one easily accessible place.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Thank you.

495 Talking about a matter raised in your update as well, taxis, always a matter of interest, you  
mentioned these and I would like to know what has been done to reduce Facebook and Snapchat  
taxis where lifts are offered in return for money.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** As I said, I think actually Deputy Dudley-Owen you asked me a question,  
if I recall correctly exactly on this, and as I said in my answer, the enforcement is of course a matter  
500 for Home Affairs, so that is actually not in E&I's mandate to deal with. But we have made a range  
of improvements to the taxi service and I am pleased to report that those are bearing fruit.

I suppose the most obvious one is we have now introduced our own app and made it mandatory  
for all taxi operators to be affiliated with an app so all taxis in the Island are now bookable through  
phone, web and app, I believe. That has had a really significant impact. We have also made a number  
505 of quite pragmatic changes around reducing barriers to become a taxi driver and various other  
things and Deputy Gabriel is probably better placed to provide more detail.

**Deputy Gabriel:** At the moment we have got 92 plate holders who are signed up to the taxi app  
and there are at least 250 drivers, as well, using those plates. That has been an increase and to do  
510 that we have relaxed the criteria because we realised it was relatively backwards looking and the  
Taylor Review made a number of recommendations and we have implemented those.

One of those is to remove the knowledge test, as you might like to call it, certainly in London it  
is called that, because there is so much available now. One of the stipulations in removing that is  
that there is an alternative available, that the taxi driver has got access to a link, which is a central  
515 point, someone based there that could help out with directions or alternatively GPS either on a fixed  
or on a device in the vehicle.

We have also made some licence changes as well, where anyone that is coming to us with a D1  
or a D – which is a minibus, or a bus – licence and holds a car licence also gets their car taxi licence  
at the same time when they are renewing their public service vehicle D1 or D licence.

520 **Deputy Dudley-Owen:** And have you seen a return on that investment in the app? What is the  
increase in passenger numbers?

**Deputy Gabriel:** I do not have the figures but certainly there is lots of evidence out there that it  
525 is certainly easier to use. We do see queues at ranks at peak times but the evidence that I have seen  
and people have come up to me and probably other members of the Committee, yes the app is  
working. I do not have the figures but we have a significant hit rate.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** The last figures I saw, I do not know how current these are but they are  
530 not that out of date, they are current within a couple of months, are that we are seeing around 90  
journeys through that app a day. So that is 650-odd journeys a week that probably otherwise would  
not have happened.

Certainly, the feedback that we have had directly from the taxi drivers has been very positive and  
also from tourism, representatives of the tourist industry as well.

535 **Deputy Gabriel:** One of the other aspects I forgot to mention is that you do not have to do a  
specific driving test now to be a taxi driver. If you have a licence, you have a licence, and you apply  
in the same way for a PSV and there is no actual physical driving test because if you have the driving  
licence then that is an accepted criteria now. You do not have to prove that you are capable.

540 **Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Thank you.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** I think the answer is 14,000 or thereabouts journeys have now been taken since the app was launched.

545 **Deputy Dudley-Owen:** And that is an increase in journeys that would not have otherwise happened, is what you said?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** It is difficult to know but that is the presumption because the app is of course a hailing app. It is not a pre-booking app. So one would have thought that the journeys that  
550 need to be pre-booked are still pre-booked. So I cannot say that with absolute confidence but I think it is not an unreasonable assertion or assumption that at least a comfortable slice of those journeys would not otherwise have happened by taxi.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Thank you.  
555

**The Chair:** Right, moving on to flood mitigation, and specifically the Braye du Valle. There have been various media reports about this, linking the risk of flooding at the Bridge and through to the Braye du Valle specifically to difficulties in moving forward on some housing projects, so could you tell us what the latest situation is regarding the progression of flood mitigation around the Bridge  
560 and the Braye du Valle?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** As you all know, because I believe it was actually your Environment Department at the time that first brought forward recommendations on this because it was identified as a priority on the Royal Haskoning Flood Risk Report of 2012, in the previous political  
565 term there had been proposals brought to that Committee.

We could not progress them at that time because there were such question marks hanging around Leale's Yard. At that time that was the main obstruction. So we could not really do anything that might compromise that very significant development or vice versa. Then of course there was the Future Harbours requirements in this political term and again a big question mark over the  
570 Future Harbours requirements.

Just to explain a little bit more about what I mean is, had there been a definitive decision on Future Harbours requirements, that might have involved a breakwater further out of the harbour mouth at St Sampson's, it is quite possible that a flood defence might have been incorporated into that. So we did not want to not bear that in mind.  
575

However, I think now because housing is such a priority and we know that any decision on Future Harbours is some way off and that we seem to have more certainty with Leale's Yard now, we are progressing a flood defence, which will provide adequate protection to give assurance to any developers who want to develop in that area.

580 **The Chair:** So is that going to be an interim solution?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** We have badged it as an interim solution but I think in reality it is probably going to have a design life for 50 years. I might have previously referred to it as an interim solution, really just because it is interim between now and whatever may happen in terms of Future  
585 Harbours. But in reality it will be designed to last the distance and I am sure will be useful for however long it lasts.

**The Chair:** What form is that going to take?

590 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** I am going to hand over to Claire. Are you looking for what it would look like? (**The Chair:** I think so.) Basically a barrier but inland. I will hand over to Claire who has got a far better grasp for the technical details but I can confirm that I did ask the obvious question, which was, can't we just make the harbour walls a bit higher? Engineers slightly put their head in

their hands when you ask that because there are such forces on a load-bearing sea wall like that that it is not just a question of making that wall higher.

So actually the design that we are looking at is slightly inland. It is in the road space but not in a way that is going to significantly impact traffic flow and I will hand over to Claire, Ms Barrett for more details.

**Ms Barrett:** Yes, just to clarify, as Deputy de Sausmarez alluded to before, quite a lot of work had been done previously on this, progressing the detailed design before it got paused effectively because of other States' projects. So it is more a case of picking up where it was previously. There needs to be an update of that detailed design because we now know through the outline planning application for Leale's Yard, where the accesses to Leale's Yard will go, which had not been factored in previously.

It is basically the same design as before. It is not starting from scratch, but it is updating the details on that and implementation, so that is the stage it is at. P&R have recently, just towards the end of, I think it was 2nd February, agreed the principle of decoupling the funding from the Leale's Yard project, so that this can move ahead in advance of any discussions around the principle of investing in Leale's Yard, recognising that actually it has far wider impact. Although it is very important to Leale's Yard, it has got a much wider impact for other developments, not least housing developments, existing housing and infrastructure that is in the area. So E&I are advancing that now and it is actually moving into the operational phase.

**The Chair:** I think the general public probably would quite like perhaps if you could paint a picture of what it is actually going to look like. I certainly seem to remember, and I would stand to be corrected, when the original report came out in the last but one Assembly, there was some talk at that stage of a five-foot high barrier along the Bridge and I think that alarmed everybody because that is this high.

What will it look like?

**Ms Barrett:** Subject obviously to the detailed design update, but if it carries on as previous, it is a low wall, probably a planted wall, no more than knee-height and actually it probably could be lower, but it becomes a trip hazard. There is merit in it being like a planted wall, which effectively runs across the Bridge frontage, pretty much where the line is between the parking area and where the two lines of traffic are, so pretty much where there is a barrier already, but it is making it a solid barrier that then you can put gates in the gaps, effectively.

The previous design is still appropriate, but it was done around raising the roundabout, which did not work quite as well in terms of the resilience to the flooding but now the access to Leale's Yard is a four-way signalised junction so it needs a redesign around that, which actually is potentially cheaper but certainly more effective.

**The Chair:** When would you imagine the physical work would start on building this?

**Ms Barrett:** At the moment we need to do an update on the detailed design. There needs to be a fairly high-level outline business case done so that we can get the funding and then, as soon as the detailed design can be done and that is agreed, it is straight into implementation. I think everyone is really conscious that they do not want to hold up housing sites, let alone what might happen on Leale's Yard.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** May I ask a supplementary?

**The Chair:** Please do.

645 **Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Just about cost. What is the spend to date on the project. I am not sure if you are able to carry forward from the previous term before the work was stopped and how much is it envisaged that the structure will cost, including project management?

650 **Ms Barrett:** In terms of costs previously, I do not know what the AECOM report cost previously, the design work that was done. In terms of now, the funding that was in the Finance & Investment Plan, so it was wrapped up in Leale's Yard, but actually £2.1 million is the estimated cost for the detailed design work and the implementation.

655 **Deputy Dudley-Owen:** So that is the building of the wall and the design of the wall and the project management of the entire project across the Bridge? (**Ms Barrett:** Yes.) Does that include the raising of the roundabout as well?

660 **Ms Barrett:** No because it would be the signalised junction. The signalised junction is actually being negotiated as part of the planning covenants to do with the Leale's Yard development.

665 **The Chair:** Just one more question before we take a very short break. There has been some scepticism expressed in certain areas about the need for flood defences, relating specifically in the quoted 100 likelihood of the inundation of the Braye du Valle. Could you explain the risk factors because I think this has created a great deal of confusion so perhaps that would be an opportunity for you to do that.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** I think there are two main aspects that need to be understood when it comes to evaluating risk. One is probability and the other is impact. So it is really a matrix of those two factors.

670 The DPA, when they asked for a flood risk assessment to be done, stipulated that the parameter for that should be 1 in 100; i.e. in any given year there is a 1% probability that this might occur. So we are talking a very low probability. However, the other factor is should that probability materialise, what would the impact be and if that impact is high then that obviously affects how you react to that risk.

675 If it is a very low probability and a very low impact that is not necessarily a risk that you need to throw the kitchen sink at. If it is a very high probability and a very high impact you obviously need to act in emergency fashion and if it is what we have got, which is very low probability but high impact that it is obviously a risk that needs to be mitigated, given as Claire said earlier, the fact that irrespective of any new developments that are coming forward, we already have a significant number of private dwellings, commercial properties and critical infrastructure that we do want to protect adequately.

680 **The Chair:** I read in the *Press* recently something about this, because I find this quite interesting, this risk assessment, and what it seemed to say – and please either explain or correct me if I am wrong here – is that the planning at the moment is the 1%, the one in 100, but that is as we stand here in 2024 and later on, in 10, 15, 20 years, that risk changes. Is that because of climate change, so that in 20 years' time, that risk has increased because maybe sea levels have changed or whatever it is. Is that how it works and, if not, can you tell me how?

690 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** That is my understanding. I stand to be corrected by Claire or Damon, But I think that the specific factors that are likely to be affect the risk, we are talking here about inundation, so this is overtopping of a sea defence and the factors that influence that are tide height and we know in Guernsey occasionally we get very high tides and if certain environmental conditions are also present then obviously your risk also increases for inundation.



695 So I think because we know that climate change is likely to bring an increase in frequency and severity of storm events and also a sea level rise, I think those are the pertinent factors that are likely to increase the risk as time goes on.

**The Chair:** Okay, that is fine. Thank you very much. We will just take a brief break. If we could  
700 start back here just after half-past, please?  
Thank you.

*The Committee adjourned at 3.27 p.m.  
and resumed at 3.35 p.m.*

**The Chair:** Okay, thank you everybody we will continue now.  
Deputy Kazantseva-Miller.

705 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Thanks, Deputy Burford.

The 2021 States' Accounts show that about £10 million of major/minor capital spend could be attributed directly to the Committee, including coastal defences, road resurfacing, transport, infrastructure, Alderney Breakwater and other projects. This represented 14% of total approved  
710 capital expenditure. Are you comfortable with those levels of capital spend attributable to the Committee's functions and responsibilities, or do you think this number is low compared to what we should be spending on various infrastructure line items attributable to the E&I mandate?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** I think the first thing to note is that infrastructure is not an end in its  
715 own right. It is there to facilitate other things. So it does not matter what you are thinking of. You do not put wind turbines – I know we have not built any of those in 2021 but that is an infrastructure that we are looking at – you do not put those in the sea just for the sake of it. You do it in order to meet your objectives around electricity resilience and supply and all the rest of it.

The same with things like coastal defence. You do it for a good reason. In some respects, the  
720 amount you are spending on it is a relatively, it is a proxy but it is not always the most useful proxy. The quickest way of spending an awful lot more on coastal defences, for example, would be to do it really badly and we know this because when we have had to work reactively on coastal defences, those cost literally about 10 times as much as the proactive programme that we have in place.

It gets quite complicated. So how it works in terms of the capital expenditure is we tend to have  
725 programmes, which span multiple years, and there has to be some flex and agility to be able to adapt to circumstances. What happens is, for example on coastal defences, there is an evidence base that is used to inform the programme of works that spans several years. I think it is either three or four years for coastal defences and that is weighted according to need.

However, if there is a big storm event or something, and priorities need to shift, then priorities  
730 shift accordingly. So there is a degree of flex within that programme and obviously sometimes new needs arise. But I would say we spend, for example, around £3 million on roads, including proactive maintenance in the form of road resurfacing. Also reactive maintenance in the form of potholes, various sorts of improvements in relation to dropped kerbs. Deputy Gabriel mentioned earlier we always take advantage of roads resurfacing works to make sure we can widen pavements where we  
735 can and make sure they are more accessible and improve the infrastructure around people walking and riding bikes and catching buses.

So we spend about £3 million a year on that but that again is part of a much bigger programme and there is a degree of flex in that. Also I think it is proportionate because again we could spend a lot more money by doing it badly and not being proactive, but we have got something like 260  
740 miles' worth of roads in linear fashion and I was trying to figure this out a little bit earlier but if you put them all end to end and stretch them out, it would take us up to around Manchester. So it is quite a lot of roads to look after.

It really is important that we get value for money. I think that is the central answer to your question. I do not think that the amount that we spend in isolation of any other factor is in any way a good indication of whether that is enough or insufficient. I think you have to look at what needs to be done and whether you are getting value for money in the process and I am certainly confident that we are getting good value for money in terms of many of our capital projects.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** I appreciate that we do not want to just build for the sake of building. The States' fiscal framework dictates that the Government should be spending up to 2% of GDP on capital investment and given that infrastructure forms a key part of the Capital Investment Programme, how does the Committee really see its role and responsibilities in meeting that specific target?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** The Committee's role and our responsibilities in terms of infrastructure in many aspects is related to that strategic level. In some aspects it is also related to the operation or the implementation level. But I think generally it is about making sure that we are joining the dots. Infrastructure is there to facilitate and enable other, more important things, and it is about making sure that it does so and then making sure that policies align wherever possible.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** That leads well to my next question, which is one of the responsibilities of the Committee is to advise the States and to develop and implement policies on infrastructure, including but not limited to water, waste water, the Ports and the Airport. Given that two major policies, the Future Harbours requirements and the Airport runway, were developed by other Committees this political term, do you consider that your mandate in relation to the I in E&I is not clear and that the discharge of this mandate is not consistently applied across the States?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** No, I think it made sense. In terms of the Future Harbours requirements and the Airport master-planning exercise, the things that you are referring to, we were very involved in the development of those and we were very involved, quite rightly, at a strategic level rather than the nuts and bolts operational level, which would not be an appropriate application of our mandate.

I think those pieces of work were good examples of very joined up working cross-Committee. We had an awful lot of input into both of those, so I think that was successful. I would also point to the policy letter that we are currently developing on the future of Les Vardes, which is another example of strategic decision-making in relation to infrastructure around, in that case, inert waste and water. So we have to look at the highest levels of strategy around that and how the infrastructure can support any objectives in those respects.

Again that is another example of policy areas where we are taking that strategic lead and involving, where appropriate, other Committees or organisations, on the more operational aspects or any operational aspects that affect them. I suppose one that pertains to both you and I is the fibre rollout.

The business case for fibre rollout, that was led by Economic Development because obviously it is very much in the mandate of Economic Development but because the implementation of that programme has got infrastructure impacts and relates to various operational areas of our mandate as well, that is why both you and I sit on the oversight board for that particular project. So I think that is a good example of cross-Committee working and I think our role is very much around the Strategy. It just so happens that in some instances we are also involved in the operational aspects.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Just drawing back on the Airport runway project, which was very much led by Economic Development, actually one of the Resolutions was that it should, in future discussions about runway extensions, be moved either to STSB or E&I so I think it is very pertinent in terms of where should infrastructure lay. But given the consistent under-investment in capital and infrastructure over the years, do you think that this has anything to do with the current

Machinery of Government and that including 'I' in the remit of a Committee like E&I, which has a limited budget and resources, is the right thing to do?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** No, I do not think the budget for E&I has got anything to do with that whatsoever because all the major infrastructure comes out of capital budget, which is independent to the Committee revenue budget, so I think that is a total red herring. It is a really useful thing to include with Environment & Infrastructure because I think if we were to go to a system like we had previously, you have them pitted against each other and that is a disaster. You put one versus the other you have your environmental policy objectives and your infrastructure policy objectives and they do battle and one of them wins. By extension one of them loses.

So actually it is a stroke of genius to put them under the same mandate because you have to find a compromise where those policy objectives are aligned as much as possible. It is very much like the piece of work we were talking about earlier with P&R, where fiscal policy objects can very easily overshadow any other kind of policy objectives and actually making sure that, from the get-go, you are taking all the relevant policy objectives into account should make for much better policy making at the end of the day.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Moving onto an example of an infrastructure project, there have been talks about developing a fixed link, in the form of a tunnel to France or to Jersey for a number of years and Jersey announced last year that they will be undertaking a feasibility study. A presentation with experts from the Faroe Islands and the British Tunnelling Society is planned by Guernsey Chamber in March. What does the Committee think about the idea of developing a fixed link to France and Jersey and has the Committee been involved in any discussions to take this project forward?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** I am so sorry, you could not have got a worse panel for this, because both Deputy Gabriel and I are recused from any discussions on this point because we both have partners who are in some way, shape or form, involved. I am afraid neither of us are in a position to be able to answer.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Would officers be able to contribute anything to this question.

**Mr Hackley:** It is probably a political question but for me it goes far beyond just an infrastructure project. I think there is a cultural dimension to it. Does Guernsey want to be more linked up with the rest of the world than it is at the moment? I think it is a discussion at a more strategic level than the practicalities of providing some infrastructure at the moment, for me.

**Ms Barrett:** I would say, as a strategist, I would back that up really. It is easy to jump to solutions but actually something that big, in terms of infrastructure, needs some work around it to determine why we would be doing it in the first place.

**The Chair:** Thank you.  
Deputy Dudley-Owen.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** I would like to talk about energy now. We have recently approved the Electricity Strategy and obviously you spoke about this in your update Statement in September as well. I would like to ask why was the Renewable Energy Commission established under the 2010 Law, which sought to progress work on lease of blocks of seabed to marine renewable energy operators, why has this been disbanded and how is the Renewable Energy Commission proposed recently in the Electricity Strategy different to this existing body? If you could clarify some of these, thanks.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Do you mind if I ask you to clarify the question? What is it you think was disbanded?

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** We have an existing Renewable Energy Commission.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** No, I do not think we do.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** There is no Renewable Energy Commission?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** No. That is why we are in the process of drafting a policy letter, as per one of the Resolutions of the Electricity Strategy. We are going to be bringing back relatively soon a policy letter on the establishment of a Renewable Energy Commission, which will do exactly what you alluded to in your question but we have not previously had one.

The provision around that process, the high level details were set out in the Law of 2010, I think it was, but there was no commission set up. That is one of the bits that need to be enacted, if you like. The legal provisions are set out in the Law but in order to make that workable, we need to be able to go through the details, we need to actually set up a Renewable Energy Commission and that is why we will be returning to the States with proposals for exactly that in the relatively near future.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** So can you tell me what the renewable energy organisation is that is publicised on a website with the same name?

**Mr Hackley:** In 2008 there was a shadow committee set up, which was renamed to avoid any conflict with the new Renewable Energy Commission.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Thank you very much. That is exactly what I wanted to know. Thank you.

Just moving on from that, thank you for clarifying that, renewable energy resources come at a significant cost to individual households, which can be prohibitive, such as installing heat pumps and solar panels. Does the Committee or wider Government have wider plans to assist in this regard?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** First of all I would challenge the premise because I think it is probably fair to say that if you are retrofitting an existing building with certain things, like a heat pump or solar panels, then yes there is a capital outlay cost associated with that and balanced against that is savings on the energy bills, etc. So I think it is true to say that if you are retrofitting a house then there is a degree of capital expenditure.

But I would say in terms of new bills, it is not necessarily much of a differential if you are building it to a different spec and indeed that is why building standards are very important because ultimately the people living in those homes are the ones that are going to be paying the energy bills and there is an advantage to them in being able to make the most of those kinds of measures, including some renewable energy generation forms, like solar panels.

We are currently undertaking a piece of work called The Pathway to Net Zero, which was a bit of work that very frustratingly was delayed by the news that we could not draw down funds ahead of the debate of the GWP, which of course was originally supposed to be debated in June and July, then September, then October, then December. I think we finally got around to debating it in January or February.

Anyway, I am pleased to report that actually prior to debating that, we eventually did get agreement from P&R to progress that very important bit of work. Those are exactly the kinds of things that that report will look at and that will be the basis of any recommendations that the Committee will make to the States with respect to specific potential interventions.

So basically, we know what we are aiming to do in terms of our net zero targets and the pathway work is about how we might best get there and that will help inform the kinds of measures and initiatives that will help the community in that respect as well.

900 **Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Just in short, are there any plans to assist in this regard?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Yes, but I cannot give you the details because it has not yet been –

905 **Mr Hackley:** One of the 28 workstreams of the Guernsey Housing Plan, scheduled to commence this year, is to explore funding for that and present.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Thank you.

910 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Can I ask a supplementary on that? My understanding is that one of the key barriers for households to adopt renewable energy and more energy efficient means, such as air source heat pumps, solar panels, etc, is the inability right now, today, to connect to the grid, because it would not take, on certain streets, whatever the load. How big of a barrier is it right now and are you shown any metrics that Guernsey Electricity tracks in terms of the disapproval rate of such applications to Guernsey Electricity to connect to the grid by the households?

915 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** It is certainly a real constraint. What I would say is I do not know of any metrics, but I think it is a localised issue. So I think it very much depends on which part of the network is being talked about and that is why it will be a much more salient factor in some areas than others. So in some areas there will be no problem whatsoever and in some areas there will be a problem. So I am not sure there will be a metric that will actually capture the data that you are looking for because I think it is not uniform.

920 However, it is a known constraint. It is a constraint that we as a Committee have been very focused on for the last couple of years and we have assurances, not least from the STSB, who we know are also very focused on this, as shareholder for Guernsey Electricity, that Guernsey Electricity is indeed tackling this very issue. So that is all to do with increasing the capacity and the resilience of the local grid.

925 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Would the Committee undertake, together with STSB and Guernsey Electricity to potentially publish some of this information, because households that might be planning to connect and undertake renovations on their house would not know that they might be constrained? Is that something that might be of relevance to the public domain?

930 **Mr Hackley:** Potentially. It is important to know there are different types of renewables or low energy options available and certainly a heat pump is low energy and may not be as constrained as other high density, high uses of electricity. There are constraints on the system, certainly the low voltage distribution network, the heat pumps may not provide that much of a draw on it.

**The Chair:** Deputy Dudley-Owen, do you want to continue?

940 **Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Yes, we are moving onto conversations about the Blue Economy. I wanted to ask whether you feel that valuable time has been lost this term working on strategies and plans rather than some possible easy wins of designating in-shore no fish zones to protect nurseries, using successful templates from other island marine habitats?

945 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** Other island marine habitats know what those habitats are and I think the answer to your question is yes, time has been wasted, but I think that was very much a function of not being able to progress work that we otherwise would have liked to progress because

obviously we hit the buffers at a States-wide level in terms of progressing GWP priorities and I think the Blue Economy Support Plan was one of the things that I would have liked to have seen more progress on had it not been for that.

But yes, it is really important that we do things in an evidence based way and understanding what our natural assets are is a really important first step so the whole marine atlas, in terms of what is where, what we have actually got in our territorial waters is an essential piece of work.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Thank you.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Moving onto the climate change policy, in the 2020 climate change policy letter and action plan it was agreed to impose a legal requirement for annual statements by the Committee *for the* Environment & Infrastructure for all emissions for scope one, direct on-Island emissions; scope two, imported electricity emissions; and scope three, emissions relating to exported waste and off-Island travel, with effect from the end of 2021. Could you confirm the Committee has been able to publish such statements in the last two years?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** We have been able to report on all of our scope one emissions, that is carried out by a company called Aether. Scope two and scope three emissions we have not yet reported but actually that is something that now we have got the Paris Agreement extended to us, I believe that reporting will be tied into that.

So we have been investigating what it would take to comply with the Paris Agreement and I think the reporting aspect, the reporting requirements have been a big part of that. So I expect that we will be able to report on scope two and scope three emissions in due course and I am just looking to see if either of the officers have got any further information to add on that point? No.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** In due course – this year, next year?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Yes, we would like to be able to report on them as soon as we can. It would have been a bit of a silly exercise to report on them in a way that does not align with the requirements of the Paris Agreement, the Paris Accord. So I think it did make sense to do things in that order.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** In the same policy letter, it was agreed that Guernsey's policy on the importation and sale of the internal combustion engine vehicles would be aligned to that of the UK, which at that point was 2035, or earlier if it was brought forward. The UK consequently brought its ban forward to 2030, only for that to be recently reversed back to 2035. What is the Committee's current plan in relation to phasing out ICEVs?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** You are quite right, that is a very accurate history. There was actually more rollercoaster action before that because when we first drafted the climate change policy letter the target date was 2040. Then, I think by the time it was published, it became 2035 and then it moved to 2030, etc.

Basically before the Committee makes any decisions around that, we want to consult with relevant stakeholders, not least the local industry because one of the original rationales, if that is a word, for that policy was because our supply chains are so connected with UK supply chains, so I think we do want to undertake a consultation with relevant stakeholders before making a decision on that and also that will be a part of the pathway to net zero work.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Given that we are five years into the climate policy plan and if the 2030 deadline would have been just around the corner, are we not really behind setting some kind of targets for the local economy?

1000 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** That is what the pathway to net zero work is all about and why we wanted to progress it quite some time ago and it is why it has been so frustrating that it has been delayed.

1005 **Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Can you briefly outline what infrastructure requirements will need to be in place to support the phasing out of ICEVs and has the Committee started to plan for these infrastructure changes?

1010 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** Yes, we absolutely have started to plan for that because actually, irrespective of any target, there has been a significant increase in the uptake of electric and hybrid vehicles and I think, off the top of my head, around a quarter of all newly registered vehicles are now electric and/or hybrid.

1015 So, irrespective of any target, that is something that we need to plan for. I should also say that we are talking about private vehicles in the main here, because when it comes to heavier vehicles, those are not included in the UK's target, nor ours, because obviously that technology is not quite at the same place as car technology.

1020 The first thing I should say, actually, is that I think it would also be a mistake to assume that we just want to replace like for like. We are actually seeing an overall reduction in the number of vehicles that are registered newly every year, so there is already a decline in car ownership. Obviously, there is a cumulative impact, which leads to an increase overall, but fewer cars are registered per year. That is a downward trend.

I think Scotland, certainly, have got a target of very much decreasing their overall number of car journeys. Now car journeys is not the same as vehicles but the basic point is I do not think you necessarily want to plan for there being exactly the same number of electric vehicles in circulation as there are now.

1025 We know that our data is not very accurate in terms of cars in circulation so I think one of the first things we need to do is get a better understanding of vehicles that are in circulation. It would also be useful if we had some sort of mechanism to encourage people to de-register and scrap vehicles that are no longer in use because at the moment there is not very much incentive to do so.

In terms –

1030

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Can I just focus you on the question. What requirements do we need in terms of infrastructure to support the phasing?

1035 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** What I am saying is that overall you probably do not want to plan for a like for like replacement of internal combustion engine vehicles with electric vehicles. In terms of the infrastructure requirements you need to make sure there is charging infrastructure available and when you are talking about charging infrastructure you need to be focused on domestic charging and you need to be focused on commercial charging.

1040 For example, if you were looking at an electric fleet or if you were looking at electric buses, that is a different charging infrastructure than would be required for domestic and then in terms of domestic you need to make sure that you are looking at both infrastructure related to people's private properties and publicly accessible infrastructure.

1045 As per the question that Deputy Kazantseva-Miller asked, actually charges are a bigger drain on the network, they are more difficult. Certainly the non-fast chargers – my technical jargon escapes me – I think the non-fast chargers are okay but for superfast chargers, they are the things that create more of an impact.

1050 So there are different aspects to it. There is publicly accessible charging infrastructure, which is something that obviously we have already started rolling out and that is a programme that continues to expand. There is private or domestic infrastructure and that is something that is largely accommodation through, for example, planning process and Guernsey Electricity and then there is potential for any States' fleet, which is the other aspect and there has actually been a really big

programme in terms of decarbonising the States' fleet and that involves electric vehicles replacing internal combustion engine vehicles as well as the kind of rationalisation that I referred to at the start of my answer.

1055 Again, this is why it is relevant, we do not assume that it is a like for like internal combustion engine vehicle, replaced by EV. You have to assume that there are some efficiency gains in that process as well.

1060 **Deputy Dudley-Owen:** I understand.  
Deputy Gabriel.

1065 **Deputy Gabriel:** You are also assuming that the replacement will be an electric or battery vehicle. There are other fuel services available or could come on stream. We are talking in the future. Hydrogen could be a suitable power source and could be mainstream and that is a whole different ball game of storing and transporting that as well because it can be volatile as well, as fuel is, liquid fuel at the moment. It could be that we go down that road or the industry goes down that route and that is what Deputy de Sausmarez was talking about earlier. It is not necessarily how we prepare it is what the industry does because of our supply chain.

1070 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** And also –

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Sorry, I just want to move on now.  
Deputy Gabriel, do you think that the Bailiwick can afford to make the necessary changes to achieve the requirements of the Paris Agreement and is this a realistic proposal in the timeframe agreed?  
1075

1080 **Deputy Gabriel:** Can we afford not to is more the question, I think. It is a case of having to adapt and having to do it because the extension of the Paris Agreement brings many more benefits. A lot of our financial services rely on us being signed up to the Paris Agreement. A lot of our trade agreements with outside bodies and other jurisdictions rely on us signing up to the Paris Agreement.

1085 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** And in terms of the practical impacts, we know from economic analysis the world over that actually the earlier you can implement some of these measures the better the economic advantage. There is no no-cost alternative. Not acting has got significant cost and actually even though there are going to be some costs associated with meeting net zero targets and those will be fleshed out when we get our Pathway to Net Zero report and bring those recommendations forward, I think it is almost certain that it will be much more effective than not acting because that is what the macroeconomics tells us from around the world.

1090 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Okay, we want to move onto the Dairy questions. We are currently subsidising the Dairy on an annual basis and the Committee will be undertaking the review of the Dairy this year, with a budget of £925,000 allocated by the Government Work Plan. Would you be able to give us an update of where the review is and whether you will be using the whole budget allocation for that?  
1095

1100 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** The budget allocation was very much a thing; I will give you an update of where we are with that work. We are working on the policy letter so I am afraid I am not going to be able to go into very much detail about what the recommendations will be, but we are hoping, I will probably get into trouble for putting a date on it, I will be honest, we are hoping that we will be able to bring that policy letter to the States for debate this side of the summer recess.

The budget allocation was done at a time before we really had a refined idea of the recommendations so I think it was an estimate informed with the available information at that time



but I would not like to commit to that being sufficient or insufficient or over-generous or anything like that because I am afraid we are not yet at the stage where we have refined the policy recommendations in a way that would allow us to model it accurately. So it is a best guess estimate at the moment.

But if you just look at the very high level financials, we have gone from a situation where there used to be an awful lot more States' support going into that sector and that was very drastically reduced over a number of years so I think it is, if you take a very high level look at it, it makes sense that, in order to make it sustainable economically, going forward, it is likely to involve more financial input.

Indeed, when you look at our dairy sector compared with farming sectors elsewhere our levels of support are very low by comparison.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Just trying to join some dots between the conversations we had on housing and also dairy and agricultural areas. One of the barriers to development is often considered to be the availability of sites and how much land is currently ring-fenced for agricultural use, especially within the Agricultural Priority Areas. Will the Dairy review include scoping and forecasting how much land use should continue to be allocated for Dairy use?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Yes, land availability was one of the primary aspects of the scope of that report. It is really important that we understand that and it is also really important that we understand that in the complexity it is not just about a number, it is about where it is and how joined up it is. One of the main challenges, I think we are probably all aware with the dairy sector that dairy farmers face, is actually we have very small fields.

The overall number is slightly irrelevant – well it is not irrelevant – but it is more nuanced than just the overall number because we have got very small fields and they are very fragmented and actually some of the efficiency of the dairy sector is constrained by factors like that but, yes, land availability and actually security of tenure and things like that are fundamental to the future of the sector going forward. So yes, that will form a big part of the review.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** The dairy industry funding model is currently linked to the production of milk, even though farmers provide other services such as countryside and hedgerow management. Different countries have implemented and are trialling alternative funding models where farmers are rewarded for the different services they provide, such as biodiversity enhancement, carbon sequestration and flood protection.

Does the current review plan to look into alternative funding models available to ensure that we have a more sustainable dairy industry and an holistic approach?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Yes, the kinds of things that you have mentioned were exactly the things that we included in the scope of the review. I think the one clarification that I would make, which I think affects the premise of your question, is the funding at the moment is not just predicated on milk. There is already a biodiversity element to that but we would be the first to admit that that is something that needs to be improved and needs to be more closely linked to Aether System Services, that the sort of broad name for the kinds of things that you are alluding to. So yes, I think, is the short answer.

**Deputy Gabriel:** It is not just about getting the best price for the farmers for their milk as well. Like you said, they do contribute so much more to our biodiversity and the make-up of Guernsey and also a tiny bit in tourism and also awareness of Guernsey worldwide, with the breed being exported, we have got our farm services as well, export bull semen straws.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** A lot of focus is given to dairy farming. The mandate of responsibility of the Committee is to develop and implement policies relating to *inter alia* sustainability of food.

What efforts have been made to reverse a significant decline in agriculture and food production locally, by the Committee?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Over what time period are you talking?

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** This term.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** This term there has been a significant decline in food production in the Island.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Sorry, I am asking what efforts have been made by the Committee?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** My question relates to your question. Over what period are you talking about a significant decline in food production?

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Over decades.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Yes. So actually our mandate relates to food security, which is about the availability of food. Whilst obviously it would always be good to improve the resilience of food security we would never look at it through the isolated lens of food produced on-Island. So actually our mandate is around food security. There is an awful lot of planning that went in around Brexit and COVID in relation to that. A huge amount of work that looked at our food security. The Island has not been self-sufficient in terms of its food production for, I do not know but, I would suspect possibly thousands of years.

Certainly, we know that during the War, when we were not able to get food imported, the Island, which was a smaller population in this time, nearly starved. And that was when every scrap of land that could be turned over to food production was. I think we have to be realistic about the fact we are not going to be self-sustaining in terms of growing our own food –

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** I have not mentioned the word self-sustaining, what I asked is what efforts have been made to reverse a decline in agriculture and food production?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Yes, I know but I am struggling to understand what the decline in agriculture has been. So over the course of this term there has been a reduction in the number of dairy farmers but that has not necessarily led to a massive reduction in headage of cattle. So I am trying to understand the decline that you talk about, I am trying to understand what decline specifically you are referring to.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** So you do not think there has been a decline?

**Deputy Gabriel:** One of the specific actions that we have done through the Nature Commission, in supporting the Strategy for Nature, and one of their objectives, is to develop and launch a Growing Together campaign, I am reading here, to promote a nature-friendly planning and food hub cultivation scheme, which also is extended to the agriculture sector.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** That is very helpful, thank you.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** The reason that that is important is because I think it is really important, when you talk about agriculture, are you talking about commercial agriculture because actually the far bigger productivity, interestingly, seems to come from things like allotment growing and that I think is a really interesting and important facet to all of this.

I think it is a mistake to look at it purely through the lens of agriculture. Yes, I think there was a loss of a pumpkin grower but whether that had a significant impact on our local food production I am not sure. That is why I am trying to understand the premise of your question because I do not know, certainly over this political term if we start at 2020 and we take us to where we are now, I do not think there has been a marked reduction in food growing over that period.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Can I just say in this political term we have had a real increase in the number of cannabis growers, which had overtaken some of the greenhouse production, some of the small production of peppers but also tomatoes and produce like that. So certainly I have seen a reduction in very small commercial, hobbyist growers that might have been selling on hedges. I think that is what we are referring to, rather than necessarily Dairy production.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** There have been vineries that have gone out of family usage that have now been developed into properties... not growing tomatoes, aubergines, that sort of thing, there has been a marked reduction. Potatoes are no longer grown to the extent that they used to be. Obviously, whether or not that is on the Committee's radar, which obviously Deputy Gabriel has said that it is, to an extent, that is what I was seeking.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** How much of that is on Economic Development's mandate though? Because there is a split between agriculture and horticulture and horticulture is obviously Economic Development.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** Can I just bring in Deputy Gabriel. He is looking at me.

**Deputy Gabriel:** Just to clarify that. It is a Committee ... of the Nature Commission.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Also there have been lots of community initiatives in the reverse. I am very aware of, for example, initiatives around Edible Guernsey and various things like that. There are various community initiatives but certainly I think the Committee has agreed that support for local community initiatives that include food growing are really beneficial.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Can I continue on the topic of food, but in relation to food waste? The current Waste Management Plan, which is something which is within the Committee's mandate dictates that the method for food disposal should be export by anaerobic digestion. Has the Committee been involved or explored other methods of food disposal, which could be more on-Island and producing secondary products such as compost or fertiliser?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Gosh, I have been involved in waste for a very long time. The current method is the result of a huge amount of work that has gone in, in terms of the tender process, and the tender process, which I believe has been run recently but I do not think the results are yet out, is being run by the STSB and we have strategic input into that. They take account of higher-level strategic considerations and I know that we have expressed to them our willingness to see more locally based solutions. So I know that those have been very carefully included in any tender arrangements.

But at the moment the current arrangements were considered to be the most viable because that was what the tender process arrived at. It was a very detailed process. It was not one that the Committee led on but, yes, the Committee is of course supportive of anything that could lead to local benefits. But again I would say these things are often very nuanced and where there are benefits on the one hand there are often disbenefits on the other.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** I appreciate looking at the tender process is one side of the story but the Waste Management Plan, which is what dictates the overall plan of how we should be

1260 disposing of waste right now just says one thing, it is export by anaerobic digestion. Would the President agree that perhaps it is now out of date, and it should become more flexible to explore alternative methods of food disposal?

1265 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** But I do not think it is not flexible enough. The Waste Management Plan is something that can and would be renewed and reviewed in due course, but I do not think it is inflexible in that if a tender arrangement came forward that was a locally based solution then that could be accommodated. So I do not think it is a constraint at the moment on those technologies being used.

1270 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** The tender process has tried to take over the whole of the waste disposal stream so how can the Waste Management Plan enable innovation and trials with alternative solutions?

1275 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** Well, (a) it does not block it at the moment and (b) in the new contract, there is specifically a provision that enables innovation and trials of that order in a way that does not undermine the overall commercial implications or indeed policy objectives. So actually there is already a clause being built into the new contract around exactly that. But I do not think it is prohibited by the current arrangements. That is my understanding, anyway, that if a different technology, one that was on-Island and used a different method, if that did come forward and did well in the tender assessment then that could be implemented.

1280 **Deputy Gabriel:** There is a specific requirement, as well, around processing and the issuing of a waste management licence, for example, the processing of specifically food waste is not a very neighbour-friendly activity and there are also different types of food waste as well. Pre-consumer, which is not sold, or post-consumer, which is after we have eaten it and everything else that goes with it, and the actual procession.

There is also going to be a residue, as well. Some people do not appreciate that because it cannot necessarily be processed and then what do you do with that residue?

1290 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** And there are very stringent laws around food waste that really have to be adhered to because they have a direct impact on, for example, our ability to secure free trade agreements. They are scrutinised so we would have to adhere to the legislation around food waste, so I think that is probably one of the most fundamental considerations.

1295 It is quite right that those rules are stringent because it is potentially very hazardous to the environment and human health, if not handled appropriately. So I think that is probably the most important consideration in all of this. But yes, we are supportive of innovation.

**The Chair:** Deputy Dudley-Owen.

1300 **Deputy Dudley-Owen:** I wanted to just ask a question around coastal defences. In your update Statement in September, I remember that was greeted with quite some joy from one of our colleagues, Deputy Vermeulen, when you gave news about the steps around the Cow's Horn area. But since then we have had a significant storm and that was on 1st November. Did the Bailiwick's coastal defences suffer damage as a result of that storm and subsequent storms that have happened since?

1305 If so, how is the Committee progressing with the required remedial work? What is the budget available to your Committee and is there sufficient skill on-Island to complete the work or are we going to have to import labour?

1310 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** Brilliant questions. I might need to ask you to remind me of them as we go through. I will try to deal with them. Do let me know if I miss any.

**Deputy Dudley-Owen:** I would like Deputy Gabriel to contribute if he is able.

1315 **Deputy Gabriel:** Certainly. While perhaps Deputy de Sausmarez collects her thoughts, the budget available to us annually for coastal projects or repairs is £1.125 million.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** That is in capital. We have also got a revenue budget of £258,000; I think.

1320

**Deputy Gabriel:** So that is for our capital projects, which is primarily re-pointing. Right back at the start of the hearing we were asked about the efficiency of using the money well and we know that acting proactively and based on our remediation programme and the waiting limit involved we get decent bang for our buck.

1325 I am confident from the information I see that we have got good, skilled stonemasons on our Island.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** But not very many of them, so that is a key constraint! We are constrained by the available skilled labour. It is obviously a very important skill to have right when you are talking about coastal defences. I think actually it is also worth making the distinction between sea defences and land management. The Cow's Horn, which you referred to in your question, is not actually a coastal defence, although it is very close geographically to the coast. That is obviously a landslip event that was caused by the conditions at the time.

1330 Because it is a structural issue, in terms of the structural integrity of the land, it is very important we get the right geotechnical expertise involved in securing it, in order to replace the steps. It is never as simple as just cutting back in some steps. Obviously, there were various other considerations. We consulted with P&R and Economic Development, etc.

1340 But yes we have got a budget and again it is a case – I think I alluded to this earlier – we do have £1.12 million *per annum* for coastal defences but as I explained earlier there is a degree of flex in that. Initially, when we put forward the capital, that is a minor capital project, it is a programme that spans a number of years – four years, I think – and that is all predicated on surveys of our current coastal defences, and that is something we work with the engineers and the States' Property Unit.

1345 Everything is weighted according to its importance, in terms of how much needs to be done. So the programme is designed like that but you are quite right to identify that storm events come along and sometimes those priorities have to change and I do give credit both to our own team, on coastal defences, but also to the engineers at SPU, who I know worked flat out after a storm to go around and survey all of the defences and make sure that they understand the current state in order to reprioritise, as necessary.

1350 I think as Deputy Gabriel alluded to, because we take a very proactive approach we do save an awful lot more than were we to sit back and wait for things to go wrong and then try and fix them, which is a very costly exercise. So I think there was a distinct shift, which I believe Deputy Burford can take some credit for because I think that happened in about 2014-15 and we now have a much more proactive approach to coastal defences, which does deliver much better value for money.

1355 So I would say that the key constraints, we could always do more with more, are around the availability of local, skilled resource and we are obviously always keen to recruit from that local pool and so I think that is one of the potential constraints but there is not an awful lot we can do about that. But I think that is a well-run programme and I think it does the job that we need to do.

Did we miss any of your questions, there were quite a few?

1360 **Deputy Dudley-Owen:** No, I think you have covered those.

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Thanks.

**Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Shall I try the final few?

1365 We talked about the ambitious house building programme that is likely to happen. Hopefully, it  
will happen in Guernsey over the next five years. The public realm could suffer from that and the  
States of Guernsey owns large tracts of land, which could possibly be better used and managed for  
and by our community. One such area is around Victoria Avenue and the Chateau des Marais. Has  
the Committee undertaken any work that would increase and improve the availability of public  
1370 amenity spaces in that specific location or across the Island?

**Deputy de Sausmarez:** Yes, and this is something that is not at a stage where I can go into any  
detail but I can assure you that those conversations absolutely are happening and, critically, they  
involve the Nature Commission, because of course that has been set up and that is exactly the kind  
1375 of thing that it is looking at doing and involves various other organisations, third sector  
organisations, because that is another one of its roles and abilities, to co-ordinate those kinds of  
conversations.

We have also obviously got the Biodiversity Partnership Group, which is a sort of umbrella  
organisation of third sector, environmental organisations, just to make sure there is visibility across  
1380 the sector, I suppose, and to make sure that people and efforts are being as co-ordinated as  
possible.

But, yes, I agree with you, the kind of social amenity value is really important. As well as being  
important for environmental reasons and various eco system services, like you referred to earlier in  
terms of flood mitigation, and also in terms of housing. We all recognise the need for more housing  
1385 but I think the two factors that get people very worked up and understandably so are transport  
network constraints and the loss of green and open spaces.

It is absolutely fundamental. It just so happens both of those are in our mandate and we are  
absolutely keen to progress anything that can improve those particular things, especially in areas  
where there is even more development taking place.

1390 **The Chair:** Thank you.

Do you just want to finish off on the last ones on the Development Agency and then we will  
wrap it up.

1395 **Deputy Kazantseva-Miller:** Just a few questions on the Development Agency. Guernsey  
Development Agency was set up last year to progress development objectives along the east coast  
of Guernsey. E&I has a seat on the Political Oversight Board. Do you think the GDA has the right  
resources and set up to take it forward with the work it is mandated to do?

1400 **Deputy de Sausmarez:** I think it is important to recognise that there are two distinct phases,  
with respect to the Guernsey Development Agency. The current phase, they cannot move mountains  
because, as you will know very well being a Member of the DPA, there are the Harbour Action Area  
local planning briefs and they have got a key role to play in that. They are acting as an important  
conduit. They are going around, I know, talking to a lot of different stakeholders and playing a very  
1405 active and useful part in collating that feedback. So they are having significant input into that local  
planning brief process.

Once the local planning briefs have been agreed, that is the second phase where they should be  
able to implement an awful lot more, but I know from my involvement in that oversight group that  
they have not been sitting on their laurels. They have been incredibly active in getting out there and  
1410 talking with stakeholders and getting their ducks in a row.

But I think we do need to manage expectations because of the phase that we are in at the  
moment. They are not actually able to implement radical changes, but I can say that I know they  
are focused on implementing some things anyway, within the parameters of what they are able to  
do, ahead of those local planning briefs.

1415 But I think there are two distinct phases while the planning briefs are being developed and once we have got the planning briefs in place and once the LPBs are agreed that is a totally different phase where we should see implementation accelerate.  
Thank you.

1420 **The Chair:** I think we have come to our time allocated now so I would just like to thank all the witnesses for coming today and for increasing the public awareness of the work of the Committee *for the Environment & Infrastructure*.

Our next hearing is going to be on 11th April with the Policy & Resources Committee and that will also be held here at the Castel Douzaine Room. So that is all I have to say. Thank you very much  
1425 and the meeting is now closed.

*The Committee adjourned at 4.31 p.m.*