



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Justice

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

January 2021 Monitoring Round: Department
of Justice

17 December 2020

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Paul Givan (Chairperson)
Ms Linda Dillon (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Doug Beattie
Ms Sinéad Bradley
Ms Jemma Dolan
Mr Gordon Dunne
Mr Paul Frew
Ms Emma Rogan
Miss Rachel Woods

Witnesses:

Ms Louise Blair	Department of Justice
Ms Andrea Quail	Department of Justice
Ms Lisa Rocks	Department of Justice

The Chairperson (Mr Givan): From the Department of Justice, I welcome Ms Lisa Rocks, deputy director of the financial services division; Ms Andrea Quail; and Ms Louise Blair. The meeting will be reported by Hansard and a transcript will be published in due course.

Ms Rocks, I will hand over to you to provide us with an update. We will then go to members' questions.

Ms Lisa Rocks (Department of Justice): Thank you, Chair. Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity to update the Committee on the Department's January monitoring round position. I am joined today by Andrea Quail, the head of financial planning strategy and support, and Louise Blair from financial planning strategy and support. We will provide you with an update on where we are in terms of the current financial year as part of the January monitoring round. Before I get into the detail of that, I will talk about the next Budget.

Minister Murphy issued a written ministerial statement on 1 December informing the Assembly of the funding made available for the 2021-22 Budget as notified by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on 30 November 2020. We understand that consideration is now being given to setting a draft Budget, but, at this point, we do not have a draft budget for the Department. Once we know the draft budget, we will want to engage with our spending areas to ask them to update their budgetary impacts based on the draft budget.

Directors attended the Committee on 5 November to discuss the information-gathering exercise that was conducted across the Department. We provided further correspondence in response to Committee queries. By way of an update on information gathering, the Department submitted a

response to the Department of Finance on 27 November in relation to a New Decade, New Approach (NDNA) unique circumstances funding exercise, which was based on the information that was already included in the returns to the future years Budget exercise. Bids were sought that could meet the criteria of supporting community and reconciliation initiatives, to remove barriers, to bring the people of Northern Ireland together and to build a safer, more secure society in Northern Ireland.

The four bids that we included in our response totalled £16 million and were in respect of tackling paramilitarism, the Gillen review of serious sexual offences, additional police officers and speeding up justice, and they were to facilitate the delivery of the NDNA agreement. The Department has not yet received the outcome of that process. Until we have a draft budget, we cannot say much more, but we will come back to the Committee to discuss what the draft budget means to ensure that your views can be considered before the Finance Minister sets final budgets.

I will now turn to the main area for discussion today, which is the January monitoring round — the final monitoring round of the year. It has been a particularly unusual year for budgets where, in each monitoring round, we have provided our best assessment of activity in a COVID-19 environment. This year has been very volatile in terms of being able to forecast our spend, but we have worked across the Department, the five agencies and the eight non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) to monitor the position closely in order to manage the departmental budget.

I will now outline where we are with the Department's resource position. Following the October monitoring round, the Department was holding £2.1 million of funding, mainly for anticipated pressures because of a potential shortfall in court fees and equipment for working from home as a result of COVID-19. There are no longer any pressures on those areas as court business has now increased and, therefore, income has increased, and any costs relating to working from home will be managed within current budgets.

The departmental budget included two ring-fenced elements. The additional COVID-19 funding that was provided by the Executive was ring-fenced and, as part of the January monitoring round exercise, the Department plans to return £4.6 million of that funding. That is mainly as a result of a £4 million easement from the PSNI, which is specifically in relation to PPE, where costs have been less than anticipated, and £500,000 as a result of the increase in courts income. We also plan to return a small element amounting to £318,000 of EU exit funding from the access to justice directorate and the Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service (NICTS) because of a delay in filling posts.

In addition to the funding that was being held and that can now be released, easements were highlighted in the January monitoring round of £7.1 million, meaning that a total of £9.2 million was available for reallocation. Those easements came from a range of areas, mainly as a result of the Courts and Tribunals Service having £2.4 million more in receipts than anticipated; Compensation Services forecasting £1.5 million less in settlements than was previously anticipated; £1 million of other COVID-related easements; and an easement of £700,000 as a result of delays in filling posts. Those easements allowed £8.5 million of funding to be released back to legal aid, where activity was greater than was originally anticipated. Your written briefing refers to a £7.8 million reallocation with a potential to allocate a further £700,000, and that has now been confirmed as required.

It is important to set this in context. As part of the original estimates of the impact of COVID-19, we anticipated a much greater impact on the income of courts and had also anticipated legal aid spend to be much lower. Rather than bid to the centre, we sought to try to manage that within the departmental budget, and we took £15 million out of the legal aid budget, based on forecasts at that time, which was at a very early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was extremely difficult to anticipate with much certainty what the impact would be across the justice system, as it was in many areas. The Committee will be aware that we released £3 million of funding back to legal aid as part of the October monitoring round process, and we now need to put a further £8.5 million back in to ensure that the Legal Services Agency has sufficient funding to meet its needs this year. That was the key element of the Department's January monitoring round. The Department of Finance allowed full flexibility as part of the January monitoring round, and, on that basis, this reallocation does not need approval by the Executive. A number of small pressures below de minimis levels remained across a range of spending areas, and those were funded through internal reallocations.

The Committee was previously advised of potential pressures on police overtime and Nightingale courts due to the impact of COVID-19. The current assessment is that those can be managed within existing budgets this year.

Overall, and taking all that into account, the Department leaves the January monitoring round in a break-even position in terms of resource. In terms of capital, easements totalling £3.7 million of funding were identified, mainly as a result of delays in IT projects, the disposal of assets and the cost of the Northern Ireland temporary resting place.

A number of small pressures below de minimis levels across a range of spending areas will be funded through internal reallocations, leaving £3.4 million of funding, which will be returned to the Department of Finance as a reduced requirement as part of the January monitoring round, subject to late changes. Overall, and, again, taking this into account, we leave the January monitoring round in a break-even position in terms of capital.

As part of the January monitoring round, we will update our net cash requirement and increase our annually managed expenditure (AME) budget. It is difficult to assess AME requirements with certainty at this point as they are dependent on a range of factors — for example, valuations by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) in relation to pensions, and provisions based on the year-end position. The Department's January monitoring round position will be reflected in the spring Supplementary Estimates once it has been agreed by the Executive.

I hope that I have provided a useful overview on the Department's financial position. While things are starting to settle, given the continuing uncertainties around COVID-19, it still remains subject to more flux than would normally be the case at this point. We will continue to keep the Committee updated as the position develops.

Thank you for the opportunity to brief you. We very much value the role of the Committee, and we are happy to take questions.

The Chairperson (Mr Givan): Thank you, Lisa, for that overview. It was very helpful. I appreciate that the context in which you are operating is not the norm when it comes to COVID-19 issues and how those have impacted on the Department. I accept that context for some of the decision-making processes and the vulnerability of being precise earlier.

I have just one question about the budget for next year, and, again, I accept that you are still waiting for that. One of the commitments in New Decade, New Approach was to increase police numbers. Is that being factored in to a bid from the Department to start seeing increased numbers of police officers to fulfil that commitment?

Ms Rocks: Yes. That was part of the original submission that we made to Department of Finance on 28 September, so that is certainly part of the bids. Any decisions will then be dependent on the final budget.

The Chairperson (Mr Givan): Just for clarity, that is to increase the numbers by around 500, and there is an issue about how it can be escalated to that practicably. Is it for an additional 100 or 150? Do you have that level of detail at this stage?

Ms Rocks: What I can say is that, by the end of this year, the PSNI was using reduced overtime costs to move to 7,000. I would need to check the detail of the phasing over two to three years to get to the 7,500. As you say, it is hard to deliver that quickly when you take recruitment into account, but I can check what that number is for 2021-22.

The Chairperson (Mr Givan): I would appreciate that. Thank you.

I want to ask about the police settlement for its pay increase in this financial year. I think that they received around 2.5% in GB in September. When will the Department be able to finalise its discussions with the Department of Finance for that to be authorised?

Ms Rocks: I will need to check with sponsor colleagues, but my understanding is that it has been approved.

The Chairperson (Mr Givan): Based on a response that I got from the Minister, I know that it is imminent, so if that has been officially confirmed, I would welcome the information.

Remind me what the de minimis level is for IT capital. How much can be spent without having to go to the centre for approval on capital?

Ms Rocks: The normal process would be £1 million in any one year. You can move less than that around, but we have full flexibility this year so we could move more than that.

The Chairperson (Mr Givan): There is £3.5 million of capital funding that is being returned to DOF. Were there no other projects that could have been funded without returning that to the centre?

Ms Rocks: No. Part of the difficulty there is that we handed back some capital in October, and spending areas are seeing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in procurement and getting people on site. Capital has been slower this year so there was nothing else to which we could have redirected that.

The Chairperson (Mr Givan): OK. It would have been difficult to have predicted how much could have been surrendered back to the centre in the previous monitoring round. It is always preferable for a Department to release it as soon as possible in order to reallocate the money elsewhere. Was there any way that the money that is being returned to the centre could have been released earlier than the January monitoring round?

Ms Rocks: I do not think so. As part of regular processes, we challenge all spending areas. Those questions were asked throughout the year, particularly in the areas of bigger capital spend — police and prisons in particular. We have done all that we could to identify it, and I do not think that we could have identified it any sooner.

The Chairperson (Mr Givan): OK. Thank you, Lisa. I will take members' questions.

Ms Dillon: Thank you very much for the briefing, Lisa. I missed one part, and you may well have covered it. Your briefing, which was very clear and concise, answered a number of my questions.

A sum of £0.3 million relating to Brexit was returned. What was that originally intended for, and why could it not be spent? You may have already covered that issue, but I was trying to take notes on the previous bits that I missed.

Ms Rocks: The money was for staffing for access to justice in courts where there had been a delay in filling posts. At the minute, it is quite difficult to fill posts. That was flushed out as an easement.

Ms Dillon: OK. Obviously, there is a delay, but could consideration not be given to the fact that those posts will still have to be filled?

Ms Rocks: Absolutely, yes. It is still our intention to fill those posts going into 2021-22.

Ms Dillon: The Chair talked about the possibility of money being moved around. Could money that was returned have been used to address the courts backlog?

Ms Rocks: It is fair to say — Louise will keep me right — that, as the volume of activity has increased, we are still not up to full capacity in the courts. We hope to open Nightingale court facilities to try to clear as much of the backlog as possible. Although court sites are open, they still have to accommodate social distancing, which makes it more difficult.

Ms Dillon: You are saying that finance will not fix the problem; it is a different issue.

Ms Rocks: Yes.

Ms Dillon: OK. Fair enough.

Mr Dunne: Thank you for the briefing, Lisa. I am looking at an annex from a previous budget briefing. My understanding is that, for this financial year, to help with the impact of COVID, the Prison Service was getting £11.5 million, the Courts and Tribunals Service was getting £12.1 million, the Police Service was getting £13 million, and the cost of PPE was £11 million. You told us that the Courts and Tribunals Service returned £2.4 million. Did that come out of the £12.1 million?

Ms Rocks: Yes, it did. However, I would need to check the detail of the previous briefing.

Mr Dunne: Is the £2.4 million from this financial year?

Ms Rocks: Yes.

Mr Dunne: Does that mean up to the end of March, all being well?

Ms Rocks: Yes.

Mr Dunne: According to the figures that I am looking at, the Police Service planned to take £13 million, and it is returning £4.6 million. Is that right?

Ms Rocks: The Police Service is returning £4 million for PPE as part of this monitoring round because PPE was ring-fenced.

Mr Dunne: Yes. The annex states:

"Pressures in maintaining critical services; increased costs from contractors; and an increase to the levels of untaken annual leave as a result of the pandemic".

Will other PSNI funding come back? Thankfully, the pandemic never developed that much over the year because of the controls that were in place. Are there likely to be other savings from across the various areas?

Ms Rocks: Not at this point. We challenged all areas. As recently as this week, we had conversations with the PSNI about its forecast year-end position. At this point, we do not anticipate any more. That is not to say that it will not come out between now and March, but, at this point, based on the most recent estimate, there is nothing further to forecast.

Mr Dunne: There were estimated costs of £11.5 million for the Prison Service. Is that money fully committed to the end of March?

Ms Louise Blair (Department of Justice): The Prison Service believes that it has sufficient funding until the end of the year. However, given the environment in which it is operating and until we know the outworkings and how things develop after Christmas, we will just have to keep that under review. However, the Prison Service believes that it will have sufficient funding for this financial year.

Mr Dunne: Yes. Is it right that these are all extra costs over and above our normal budgets?

Ms Blair: That is right, yes.

Ms Rocks: Are you working from the figures in the Audit Office report?

Mr Dunne: No. This is annex 1 of a paper that you presented possibly three or six months ago, which, thankfully, I kept in my file.

Ms Rocks: OK.

Mr Dunne: I can certainly get you a copy of it. It is a summary of the various:

"activities in excess of £1 million in response to COVID-19".

It states that the cost of COVID-19-related activities would be £54.8 million in this financial year. I take it that it will cost less than £54.8 million for the Department to meet the requirements of COVID. Is that fair?

Ms Rocks: It is. I am just looking back. The £54.8 million comes from the Audit Office report. At that time, the forecast spend was £49.7 million in 2020-21 because it covered the two years. It is important to recognise that as a point in time. At the last point, we thought that the costs were in and around £46 million. As part of the year end, we will need to go back and assess what those costs have been. We had originally assessed that there would be £51.8 million, but they reduced because of police overtime

and further reductions in prisons. We also know that courts income has come down. It took account of working time directive costs and was able to reallocate easements. The costs have come down mainly as a result of courts income. We will revisit the matter at the year end. That report was at a point in time.

Mr Dunne: OK. Thank you.

Project Dignity was initially estimated to cost £4.9 million. Are we still incurring costs in maintaining that facility?

Ms Rocks: Andrea has some costs for the temporary resting place.

Ms Andrea Quail (Department of Justice): The resource cost for 2020-21 for the temporary resting place will be in the region of £1 million. Capital costs for 2020-21 are expected to be in the region of £3.5 million.

Mr Dunne: For Project Dignity?

Ms Quail: Yes.

Mr Dunne: Is that included in, or over and above, the £4.9 million?

Ms Rocks: No. The original estimate to build the Northern Ireland temporary resting place was about £4 million, and that reduced. There are then the ongoing running costs. In this year, the running costs are estimated to be about £1 million. As Andrea said, those are due to reduce into 2020-21. The final costs will depend on what requirement there is to use the facility.

Mr Dunne: It sounds excessive for a facility that, thankfully, was never used and we trust never will be used.

Pressures in respect of pay and price are mentioned. We are talking £20 million for next year, and it jumps up to £42 million the following year; obviously, these are estimates under pressures. Can you clarify why we are jumping from £20 million to £42 million? Is that for additional police officers, as talked about?

Ms Rocks: I presume that that is the case because it is the only significant increase in pay. However, it is important to recognise that it will now be a one-year budget and that decisions on 2022-23 will be based on what is affordable as part of the 2021-22 budget.

Mr Dunne: OK. For transformation, next year's planned cost is £11.8 million, and it drops to £4.2 million in the third year. What is transformation?

Ms Rocks: The most significant element is PSNI digital. It is the outworking of the strategic outline cases (SOCs) that we had talked about. The three areas are police officer numbers, digital and IT, and £11.3 million of that £11.8 million relates to digital. The majority of the investment will be made in year 1. However, again, it will be a one-year budget, so what the latter years look like depends on what is affordable in 2021-22.

Mr Dunne: Is this digital a new IT system for the PSNI?

Ms Rocks: It is a whole range of areas, as I understand it. It is not just one IT system but a whole range of digital investment by the PSNI. Further detail of that will be teased out as part of its outline business case (OBC). At this point, the PSNI has submitted and had approved the strategic outline case, which sets out the strategic direction. The OBC will tease out further detail.

Mr Dunne: OK. Thanks very much.

Mr Frew: Thank you very much for your presentation. I take you to the paragraph on your budget for 2021-22. I know that we had all hoped for multi-year budgets. What percentage of work have you completed on the budget for 2021-22? When does that need to go to the Department of Finance for ratification or approval?

Ms Rocks: What went to DOF for 2021-22 was what we submitted at the end of September, which was the basis of our oral briefing on 5 November. We have continued to refine that in the background. DOF is using that as the basis of the budgetary recommendations that it will make. The Department has continued to seek to refine those significant pressures. If there is not a lot of money available in next year's budget, the most difficult decisions will be around the prioritisation that will need to be done to live within budget.

Mr Frew: What date have you been given by the Department of Finance for when that will be solidified so that you will know?

Ms Rocks: I feel like working in finance is an emotional roller coaster. We keep thinking that we will get a draft budget pre Christmas. We anticipated that we may have a budget at this point, but that is not the case. We await further news from the Department of Finance.

Mr Frew: OK. Thank you for that.

I mentioned multi-year budgets, and, somewhat hopefully, "Table 1 — Pressures" sets out a three-year budget. Gordon asked about "Pay & Price" in that table. I want to ask about the "Other" pressures. I know that such tables always have a budget line for "Other", but £19 million or £20 million seems substantial. Can that be broken down in any way to give us more detail of what "Other" constitutes?

Ms Rocks: Yes, we can do that. I can give you a few of the bigger areas now. The challenge is always in trying to create something meaningful for the Department of Finance to understand the key areas. The money is spread across the core Department, five agencies and eight NDPBs. Although £20 million looks like a big figure, it is spread across a range of organisations. I will pull out the bigger ones: £4.8 million is for the Courts and Tribunals Service, and much of that relates to staffing; £3 million relates to legal aid; £1 million relates to staffing; and £1.2 million relates to victims and witnesses. That leaves a balance of in and around £9 million across all those organisations.

Mr Frew: OK. Thank you very much.

May I ask you about the COVID-19 budget line? Remind me how much the Department spent on COVID-19 this year.

Ms Rocks: We need to go back and revisit how much we have spent on COVID-19. Our early assessment was £52 million, which has continued to drop. Some of the spend on COVID will be diverted from other normal areas of spend, so we will need to go back and capture that as part of the year-end process.

Mr Frew: Do you feel confident in putting £36 million on that COVID-19 line at this time? Will you explain exactly what that will be spent on? Surely, it cannot all be PPE.

Ms Rocks: No, it is not all PPE. When you refer to £36 million, I assume that you are talking about the future year forecast.

Mr Frew: Yes, sorry. It is in "Table 1 — Pressures".

Ms Rocks: I do not have it in front of me, but I think that the main element is about £12 million for the Prison Service, which is for a combination of social-distancing measures and PPE. That was £11.1 million. The PSNI is £8.7 million, which, again, was for social distancing, PPE and some IT. We still forecast a £5 million income shortfall for the Courts Service, but, in setting the budget, we will need to revisit that now that we know that court activity has increased. Some £9 million relates to the Legal Services Agency. We will also need to revisit that in the context of what we have learned from the January monitoring round process, which is that activity has been much greater. At the time, we anticipated a period of catch-up next year, so we might see those costs come down quite a lot. Our submission also mentioned that this was, and had the potential to be, the worst-case scenario, given that it is difficult to forecast what will happen in future waves of COVID.

Mr Frew: Yes, I understand the crystal ball gazing aspect of it, and we all have sympathy with you in that regard.

I understand the courts scenario, where there will be a loss of income, but not so much when the activity is purely operational, as is the case for the Prison Service and even the police. When you talk about social distancing, I take it that you mean materials for physical barrier apparatus. If that is the case, surely one spend was enough to implement the measures. Why would we need money for social distancing in the future?

Ms Rocks: I hope that Louise will keep me right. My understanding is that an element of that relates to the social distancing of prisoners in cells, which is an ongoing issue.

Ms Blair: Absolutely. There is also an additional cost of staffing the additional accommodation that has been opened to ensure that prisoners are in single cells due to the obvious issues with COVID.

Mr Frew: OK. That explains it. Thank you very much.

Miss Woods: Thank you for your presentation. A lot of my questions have been answered, but I want to follow on from what Gordon asked about the temporary resting place at Kinnegar. You might have mentioned it and I did not catch it, but how much is the bid for next year?

Ms Rocks: No bid has been made for the temporary resting place. We were able to capitalise some of the equipment, so the running costs for next year are, as Andrea pointed out, about £300,000. We have not made a bid. It will be de minimis.

Miss Woods: OK. My understanding is that it will still close in 2022 and that there has not been any movement on the sale of the land. Are there ongoing conversations about the future of the land? If it is to be sold on, when will a decision need to be made on when the running costs stop?

Ms Rocks: I will have to defer to my colleagues in the relevant area and come back to you, Rachel.

Miss Woods: No problem. Thank you.

You mentioned that bids totalling around £16 million had been made in relation to the Gillen review, tackling paramilitarism, speeding up justice and providing additional PSNI numbers, which were all commitments in New Decade, New Approach. Are those the departmental priorities for 2021?

Ms Rocks: No. The request in the exercise was to capture things that were under the banner of NDNA. It was a case of pulling out the elements of the existing bids that fitted under that heading.

Miss Woods: OK. Is there any indication of what the priorities will be for the Department next year?

Ms Rocks: In the context of what the Budget will be, it is really difficult to say. The Budget figures that the Finance Minister announced do not seem to show that a significant amount of funding will be available. Significant prioritisation will need to be done.

Miss Woods: Has an agreement been signed with Belfast City Council and Laganside on the Nightingale courts, and, if so, when will they open? What is the budget for them?

Ms Blair: I am not sure of the date, Rachel. We have to check that. We expect the running costs for this financial year to be just over £0.5 million for the Nightingale facilities, both in Belfast and the regional facility. There is a small amount of capital — £50,000. For next year, we are considering what the requirements might be for social distancing, for example, and the need to extend any of that.

Miss Woods: Obviously, that would form part of any bid for next year's budget.

Ms Blair: It will depend on how they have been able to manage the requirements for this year and whether they have been able to manage them within existing allocations. It also depends on the scale of it.

Ms Rocks: I should add that COVID expenditure might be treated separately from the budget, so it might be a part of our COVID bids.

Miss Woods: Thank you. I have two interlinked questions. You mentioned the £3.7 million of funding for capital to be spent on IT and the delay in filling posts, which has caused some finance to be returned. If the posts are to be filled next year, and the PSNI and the Department intend to upgrade their IT, do those items form part of bids for next year? Will they form part of next year's budget?

Ms Rocks: The £318,000, which was returned on EU exit, was part of non-protocol funding, so we hope to secure EU funding. However, we have to prioritise depending on the funding available. The capital has been given back, and, when we set the capital budgets, those areas will have to prioritise within their capital envelope.

Ms S Bradley: Most areas have been covered. Linda and Rachel touched on recruitment, and the figures of £1.5 million and £700,000 were referred to. What started out — am I right? — as EU exit money is being flushed out through the system as an easement. I want to get that clear before I move on to my next question.

Ms Rocks: Are you talking about the £318,000 and £315,000?

Ms S Bradley: A figure of £700,000 was referred to, and there was another figure for the recruitment that did not happen. Did that start out as Brexit money and was then captured as an easement? I could not follow the thread of that.

Ms Rocks: I am trying to find the £0.7 million to which you refer. We gave an additional £0.7 million to the Legal Services Agency. In the money handed back, the main elements were PPE for the police and the £318,000 of EU exit money.

Ms S Bradley: I will revisit that. I was not following that thread. I know that I quoted the figure of £700,000, but I could not figure out where that started from.

Most things have been covered, but I am conscious that we have a quite a heavy legislative programme for the remainder of this mandate. It is becoming evident that partners across the justice sector will have costs associated with the delivery of, for example, the Domestic Abuse Bill. I am not saying that its financial impact will be of the same degree as those in New Decade, New Approach, but are you satisfied that the legislative programme is captured in your forecasts for the years ahead? Have all partners who are submitting bids for their anticipated costs fully embraced the legislative programme that is in front of us?

Ms Rocks: That should be the case, because part of the normal process is that the areas developing that legislative programme go through a process that involves an economic appraisal. At that point, they highlight whether there are affordability issues. Finance is then alerted as to whether bids are required.

Ms Rogan: Some of my questions have been answered. You mentioned that it is hoped that the Nightingale courts will clear the backlog of cases. Was any thought given to having a Nightingale court in any area other than Belfast city centre, such as west of the Bann, Derry or that sort of direction?

Ms Rocks: I could not honestly say. We would have to check that out and come back to you.

Ms Blair: I understand from what courts have advised me that there is a regional facility in Banbridge, but there is nothing else other than what is in Belfast. We need to confirm that with the courts.

Ms Rogan: You touched on this, but will you explain to me again why there has been no bid in relation to the Nightingale courts?

Ms Blair: The Courts and Tribunals Service was able to fund the costs from other savings during the year, such as savings in juror expenses and so on. It has not had to seek additional funding for that.

Mr Dunne: The Chief Constable has been very keen to rationalise and invest in the estate structure of the PSNI. What long-term plans are there for capital schemes and major investment in the PSNI estate?

Ms Rocks: The PSNI has developed its strategic outline case for the estate, which looks at that and sets out the funding required at that level. It will be teased out in detail in the OBC, but, again, that will depend on what funding is available.

Mr Dunne: Are you aware of long-term plans for major changes in the estate management?

Ms Rocks: Some of the change is set out in a strategic outline case, but further detail will be in the OBC.

Mr Dunne: So, it is early days for that?

Ms Rocks: Absolutely.

Ms Dillon: The Policing Board probably has substantially more information in relation to Gordon's questions. You could get your members on the Policing Board to ask for that. The board's committees tend to go into quite a bit of detail on that kind of stuff. They have quite detailed information that the Department is probably not across at all. You would certainly get it from the Policing Board committees.

Mr Dunne: OK. Thank you.

The Chairperson (Mr Givan): Lisa, I thank you and your team for taking the time to be with the Committee today. Hopefully, you will get some kind of a break over Christmas.

Ms Rocks: Hopefully.

The Chairperson (Mr Givan): I wish you well.

Ms Dillon: Happy Christmas.

Ms Rocks: Thank you.

The Chairperson (Mr Givan): Thank you. Take care.