



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Justice

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Community Safety College:
Capital Project Update

2 July 2014

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Committee for Justice

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Paul Givan (Chairperson)
Mr Raymond McCartney (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Sydney Anderson
Mr Stewart Dickson
Mr Tom Elliott
Mr William Humphrey
Mr Seán Lynch
Mr Alban Maginness
Ms Rosaleen McCorley

Witnesses:

Mr Brendan Smyth	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
Ms Rosemary Crawford	Department of Justice
Interim Deputy Chief Constable Alistair Finlay	Police Service of Northern Ireland

The Chairperson: I welcome the interim Deputy Chief Constable, Alistair Finlay, who is chair of the Northern Ireland community safety college programme board; Brendan Smyth from Health Estates; and Rosemary Crawford, who is deputy director of the policing, policy and strategy division in the Department. You are all very welcome to the meeting. As usual, it will be reported by Hansard and published in due course. Alistair, I will hand over to you at this stage. I am sure that members will have some questions.

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Alistair Finlay (Police Service of Northern Ireland): Thank you very much. I will make some introductory remarks, but I will try to keep them fairly short so that you get the maximum opportunity for the business to go where you would like it to go.

We were last with you in March 2014. At that time, we discussed affordability of the overall project and the issues around the preferred bidder. That moved us into a period of reviewing the project after the preferred bidder was unable to hold the price, where the project was going and whether it remained viable. That has been valuable. The eight-week review period was well spent. The findings were positive and they provided the programme board with confidence that the project remains viable and achievable.

The procurement process is live and ongoing, although the programme board, as this moves forward, will, as a matter of course, examine the most effective delivery strategy, depending on events and economics, and the services remaining committed to the project.

The recently completed value engineering exercise identified a potential saving of £22.5 million. We are now going into a period of getting a detailed scheme design process, which takes a further eight weeks. It is part of the development of the project. Assuming that the contract is awarded in June 2015, that will bring the project back within the tolerances of the approved business case.

The proposed changes that will save the £22.5 million are primarily to the design of the buildings and would not in any way change their overall functionality. The vision is to provide world-class training in fit-for-purpose facilities. We have also done some work with the five pre-qualified bidders in the procurement process to ensure that there continues to be sufficient interest in the market to allow the programme to go forward and that it is still a live and effective procurement strategy.

We have commissioned a further piece of work that turns the value engineering, which was high level and looked at where we could make those savings, into detailed design proposals. This will allow the programme board to sign-off and finalise the final design scheme. In parallel with that, work is ongoing on the other conditions of approval attached to the outline business case. Once those steps have been completed, we will need to re-engage with DFP and Treasury — if you recall, a sizable chunk of money is earmarked from Treasury for this — to confirm affordability. Executive approval will be sought before incurring any further substantial spend on the project. The Executive approval and endorsement will be a key factor in ensuring market confidence. We are at the upper end of the margins of keeping the business case within the 10% tolerance that will allow us to deliver this.

Construction inflation, which has been the enemy defeating us so far, is a key issue. If there are any significant delays in the approval processes as they go through the Departments and up to the Executive and suchlike, they will impact on affordability due to construction inflation. It is something that we have to keep in mind with the Department. There is work to be done to ensure that we have secured end-year flexibility and the funding package. We have a number of steps still to go through before we get to the point, as we hope and anticipate, at which we can go back to a contractual sign in June next year and be on site in July, with a 30-month build to complete the programme of works.

That is currently where the programme board is. That is the work it has been undertaking since we last met you. We have some degree of confidence in the programme moving forward. However, there is detailed design work to be done. In particular, approvals need to be sought through the Departments and the Executive in relation to funding and final sign-off.

I will stop here, Chair, to give you and members the opportunity to probe the areas you want to consider in more detail.

The Chairperson: Thank you. You mentioned the 10% margin of tolerance. Remind me of what the business case initially estimated the cost of the project to be.

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: The programme board has reduced the cost to £168.8 million. The business case approval is £157.2 million. That gives us a £3 million margin between the 10% tolerance on the business case of £157.2 million to the £168.8 million, where we currently understand ourselves to be. We are at the margins of that.

The Chairperson: And the Department, obviously, approved the £157 million —

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: Yes.

The Chairperson: So, the additional element will require Executive approval. Talk me through the legal steps that now need to be taken. Can the programme board sign off on the business case without recourse to the Executive, or at what point is Executive approval necessary?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: The Executive, in approving the outline business case, made it a condition that there would be a requirement for final sign-off. That has not changed. The programme has to go back through the Ministers to the Executive for final sign-off before we can proceed to award the contract.

The Chairperson: Where is the difference likely to fall? What Department will be responsible for finding that additional —

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: That would probably have to be worked out with DFP, because that will come into the end-year flexibility piece. It will not require further approvals because it is within the margin of 10% from the £157.2 million; it is within the tolerances that we have approvals for. Notwithstanding that, it still, in any case, would require the Executive to approve it in due course. There is work to be done through two Departments with DFP on the funding package, which comprises the Treasury piece of money — that has been set aside for some time; it stems back to Patten — and the end-year flexibility piece. The Departments are working on the approvals with DFP.

The Chairperson: As regards the core functionality of the college, what is the programme board's view, having identified another £22.5 million, of being able to achieve what it set out to achieve?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: The work done to take that cost out does not change the functionality in any way. The master plan of the buildings on the site remains the same. We have taken out one building, the hub building, which was a central point where the reception was going to be, where the other parts of the college would gravitate towards, and around which people would circulate. Its function as a separate building has been incorporated into one of the other buildings. A number of big items have reduced the overall cost, the biggest being the initial design. It is one of those things: if you had not seen the initial design, compared to what you have now, you would not know the difference, because what has been designed now is a modern, fit-for-purpose further education college.

Previously, there was a design that included a particular type of roof and overarching canopies. Although there are three principal services working on this, and more coming in from the Justice Department, policing is a big chunk. The buildings are designed to policing standards and recognise the potential threat against them. So, they are being built with blast protection. The roofs and overlapping canopies were designed to provide some of that blast protection by maximising light flow. Taking away the reinforced roofs and canopies in that particular design, and the way in which the canopies linked the buildings, made a significant saving. The buildings will be redesigned, slightly. They will still have the same protection, but the initial design, which involved a lot of glass and light coming in, will be re-engineered with plainer, brick-finished walls, modern, smaller windows and an increased interior lighting design to provide the light that, previously, was going to be provided by what were described as "ocplets" — big circles in the canopies that bring light into the various buildings. Taking away that design feature but maintaining the functionality and meeting the same standard has saved the bulk of the money that is in there.

We have also been able to look at the number of classrooms and work through the usage, so some of them have fallen off. We have been able to downscale them. There has also been a review of the accommodation block. That review has meant that we have been able to reduce the width of each study/bedroom by 75 centimetres. When you extrapolate that across the number of bedrooms, there is a significant reduction in the overall size of the building that you need. All of those measures, put together, add up to the £22.5 million value engineering exercise to retain the functionality and all the training capability that was in the original design.

The Chairperson: Finally from me; does this have any implication for the current companies that were selected to be put on the tender list?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: Brendan would be best placed to answer that.

Mr Brendan Smyth (Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety): To assure us and give us confidence that there was still interest in the project, we had plenary sessions with each of the bidders subsequent to our last meeting. We got confidence. There is a range of views. Some are more eager than others to continue in the procurement, but we got confidence from the meetings that there was substantial interest in it and enough to ensure a value-for-money procurement exercise.

Given the passage of time and the movements in the Northern Ireland construction industry there may be some readjustment within some of the consortia. This is not unusual; it is something that happens fairly regularly. People will potentially adjust some of the partners in their supply chain. That is something that we will take into account. Given the feedback that we had from the plenary sessions with the bidders, we are confident that there is sufficient interest to generate a competition at the end of this. The competition is still being run under the initial Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) procurement notice. That is still valid.

The Chairperson: The last time we spoke, Gilbert Ash was identified as the preferred bidder, but, obviously, that had not been signed off. Is that still the case?

Mr Smyth: It was a consortia of FCC and Gilbert Ash that called itself FCG. It is one of the companies that have indicated that they still have an interest in the competition.

The Chairperson: Is it —

Mr Smyth: It is not the preferred bidder. The preferred bidder status is no longer relevant.

The Chairperson: OK, but it is still one of the — I think there were five.

Mr Smyth: Five bidders were selected. It is one of the parties that have indicated that they are still interested.

Mr McCartney: Thank you very much for your presentation. I want to preface my remarks. I know that you are involved in a very complex piece of work, so I just want to make a few observations. Is someone from the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD) monitoring the process so that we can learn from the mistakes made in the first part of the exercise and not have them in the second?

Mr Smyth: Health Estates acts as the centre of procurement expertise (COPE) for the project. We are giving advice and guidance to the project team on the procurement. We are cognisant of what happened and the environment we are in, which has changed significantly from when the competition started. We also have regular engagement with CPD, in fact, we are going to become part of it later this year. We will feed that through, and the lessons learned will be embodied in future competitions and in the project as it progresses.

Mr McCartney: I am not asking for a precise list, but is there a set of guidelines that guide people so that, if something happens, it is flagged up at the appropriate time? In your last presentation, I think there was general acceptance that some of the mistakes made could have been detected and acted on earlier.

Mr Smyth: The last time around, we felt particularly let down by elements of the design team, and we discussed that in some detail at the last meeting. We have increased confidence in the design team. There has been a considerable change to its structure, governance and personnel. This has given us increased confidence that what is happening now is much more robust, and the whole programme board have increased confidence in it.

Mr McCartney: Do you have, if you like, warning signals so that, when you see them, you will react?

Mr Smyth: We have them and we look at them on an ongoing basis.

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: If I may come in. Due to timing rather than the individual project, we have greater awareness of the major construction market in Northern Ireland, the changes that have taken place within it over recent years and where its principal markets are, which are predominantly in the south-east of England. That is where the market is taking the major contractors and their subcontractors.

We also have a greater sense of the rate of construction inflation. If you recall the last time, we had quite a lengthy approvals process. We now understand the rate of construction inflation, and the longer that the processes of approvals last the closer to the affordability issue we will get. We have only a margin of £3 million in the outline business case. The project has been costed against a build that will start next year, with construction inflation for 30 months, but that does not give us much room for manoeuvre if departmental or Executive approvals take longer than anticipated.

Mr McCartney: I understand that part of it. It will be up to the system to work as efficiently as possible.

This might be question for you, Brendan. From a central procurement perspective, is there anything built in now so that, in future, when we are projecting that a build will cost x amount of pounds, you can say that you also want it costed if you have £150 million, £120 million or £100 million to spend? In

this exercise, it seems that you are on the master plan and are removing to reduce your costs. If that had been built into your thinking as part of your first project, we might not be —

Mr Smyth: That is a quite a valid point and something that we will consider.

Mr Dickson: Thank you for your update, which certainly sounds to be substantially more positive than where we were in the past with the project.

Are you sure that the proposed reductions do not take the project below the threshold originally envisaged of a world-class college that will deliver for health, ambulance, police, fire etc and do not, in the words of Mr Finlay a few moments ago, just turn it into another FE college for Northern Ireland? Will it, in fact, meet the world-class needs initially envisaged, and will it attract police, fire, paramedic and other health services from across the world who would want their staff to be trained in the Northern Ireland college on either long-term or short-term courses?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: I think that the term "world-class" has worked for and against us. What we want to deliver is world-class training in fit-for-purpose facilities. This is what the current iteration will deliver. That may require a little bit of recalibration from where we were at the beginning and how it was originally envisaged, and that is where the costing went awry. The costing was based on a concept that was probably too grand, but was estimated to come in within the budget. That is where it went wrong.

The change of cost consultants in the design consortium has given the programme board strong confidence and we will hear directly from them on a regular basis about how they go about their business. The board now has strong confidence about the costing of the programme as it currently stands to deliver fit-for-purpose facilities that will allow world-class-level training.

Mr Dickson: To what extent is there a conversation going on, or to what extent are plans developed, in order to deliver what could go on inside that building? It has to be a building of some significance. Clearly, the reductions are important, and we do not need all the bells and whistles. It is in a very attractive place: it is in Northern Ireland; it is Desertcreat; and people will want to travel there. It does not really matter whether it has fancy stonework on the outside. I am more interested in knowing what will go on inside the building. How far advanced are those discussions and negotiations, because, if you are to deliver that world-class quality, the buildings have to be right, but it is actually all about the product that goes on inside. What is the level of cooperation, for example, between the Department of Health and others? Who will deliver the training regime and what will the crossover be? You are all doing it separately at the moment: how will you do it better, more effectively and to this high standard on a cross-cutting basis?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: There is a project board specifically designed for that. It is led by Dale Ashford from the Fire and Rescue Service. For some time, that board has been looking at, and working on, the integration of the training, where we overlap and where we are separate. A lot of it is around sharing facilities, but it provides us with the landscape template to do shared training, particularly on major incidents, where you work together, how that pieces together, and on issues of civil contingencies and so on. That work stream has been going on since the programme board's inception and is well advanced.

Mr Dickson: Chair, there may be some value in the Committee hearing from that group just to understand the progress of that work.

Finally, may I ask whether you will meet your targets in staying within the 10% band, which is where you have to be? When do you expect to bring that to the Executive for a decision?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: We need to do a further eight weeks of work, which moves the high-level design work that has been done to what is called design stage D, which is scheme design. At that point, when we have got more accurate costings for it, we will move into the governance processes, which will step through the strategic group. That group has the permanent secretaries of the two Departments, and we have met regularly throughout. It will then require the Departments to engage with DFP and Treasury about the funding, and, when you have got those parts, it will head towards the Executive.

Ms Rosemary Crawford (Department of Justice): That is exactly right. We want to make sure that we have absolute clarity on costs and, when we have that information, we will be able to approach DFP to engage with Treasury to further the questions on access to end-year flexibility,. So before we take it to the Executive, we will want to make sure that affordability has been tested and proven. We will take it to the Executive at that stage.

Mr Smyth: With our current programme, our estimate is that this will be towards the end of October this year.

Mr Dickson: You will not go to the Executive with something that has not been robustly tested to the point where it can deliver. That was very helpful.

Mr Humphrey: Thank you for your presentation. What is the cost of the project so far?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: We have spent £9.5 million: £7.6 million on design fees; £685,000 on programme fees, which is mostly strategic investment; £398,000 on business case fees, which cover consultancy; and the remainder on some enabling works and statutory fees. So £9.5 million has been spent to enable that, not including the purchase of the site, which is separate.

Mr Humphrey: Not including it?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: No.

Mr Humphrey: So what is the cost of that?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: It is £2.8 million.

Mr Humphrey: Given Mr Dickson's point, which I agree with, that we seem to be in a better place — it is a better place but it is not necessarily a good place — and the £13 million spent so far, what are the projected costs for the entire project?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: The design fees?

Mr Humphrey: No; everything.

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: The total approved capital cost is £157.2 million, and what we have so far is the upfront spend. The majority of that has been on design fees, which is not untypical for a project of this magnitude and scale. Such a project needs all the design to be completed before you actually contract to do the building work.

Mr Humphrey: What was the initial cost?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: That depends on how far back you go. In 2011, the construction budget was £97.5 million. In 2012, when we issued the tenders, there was a works cost limit of £103 million. Of the tenders received, I think that £133 million was the lowest. The addendum to the business case brought the works cost limit to £114 million in round figures. The works cost limit is for the build, as opposed to the £157 million, which includes fit-out, ICT and some other parts of the programme.

The cost has risen and continues to rise. One of the key issues is around the impact of construction inflation and where that is running at the moment. I think that 11% is the figure that has been factored in, which is significantly higher than the underlying rate of inflation but reflects the market.

Mr Humphrey: So, the longer this takes, the more and more it costs the Northern Ireland taxpayer.

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: If it takes any longer than we envisage, it will be outwith the outline business case.

Mr Humphrey: If it is outwith the outline business case, what happens?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: If it is outwith the outline business case, we would not have the authority to go ahead and deliver the project. The business case would have to be revisited and would need an addendum. We have made previous addendums to the business case. Addendums require approval from both Departments and DFP, and, given the interest in the project and the fact that it is in the Programme for Government, an addendum would require Executive approval.

Mr Humphrey: Is there a risk of that happening?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: Yes.

Mr Humphrey: What timescale are we talking about?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: We have programmed this to get the contract closed in June 2015, with the contractor on site in July to complete a 13-month build. That has been projected against the underlying construction inflation rate of 11%, so it envisages the project being able to deliver within that timescale. Delays, particularly in approval, would affect us. I say "particularly in approval" only because other delays are probably more within the control of the programme board in the programme work and through the procurement phases, whereas issues around approval rest with government through the Departments and the Executive. The funding has to be confirmed: in other words, where Treasury lies on the major tranche of money involved. There are a number of hurdles. If there is slippage on those and go over the £3 million margin, which is a very narrow band in a project of this size, we will be outwith the business case and back to recalibrating the programme, meaning that people would have to take a view about where the programme was.

Mr Humphrey: How likely are delays?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: We have tried to programme in what we think are realistic time frames for approvals, and those are based on the experience of those working in that environment. You may recall that, the last time, when there was a longer than expected delay on the health side, the Justice Minister invoked an acceleration procedure and took it to the Executive in order to move it through. If anything like that happens, the project is in jeopardy.

Mr Humphrey: In a scenario that none of us wants, we are outwith the project, the delays are such that we have gone past the period covered by the business case and everything has to start again: at that point, what is the cost for achieving nothing?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: Just over £9.5 million.

Mr Humphrey: It is more than £9.5 million now, given the cost of the site.

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: The cost of the site is recoverable inasmuch as it could be used for other purposes or sold, whereas the £9.5 million is not recoverable unless we deliver this programme and project.

Mr Humphrey: How much are we over the budget projected at the outset?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: That depends on when the real outset was. Originally, we were looking at £97.5 million, and then the cost went up to £114 million. We had to take out £25 million, of which we still have £22.5 million, so we have to find that additional £2.5 million.

Mr Humphrey: The £114 million is for the build. How much, then, to kit it out?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: That is all included in the £168 million.

Mr Humphrey: So the total is £168 million.

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: Yes.

Mr Humphrey: You have taken out £25 million. The people of Northern Ireland will be rapidly losing confidence in the whole project, if they have not already done so. At times, it has looked like a

debacle and badly, if not incompetently, mishandled. The truth is that, if we are to get back people's confidence, this needs to happen quickly.

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: Absolutely.

Mr Humphrey: Can any of you sit there and say that how the project has been handled provided value for money for the Northern Ireland taxpayer? Had it been handled like this in the private sector, people would have been fired.

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: People have been fired. This takes us back to the underlying issue, which was the wrong costing of the original design concept by the cost consultants, who were part of the Perkins+Will consortium. As a result, people lost their jobs in Perkins+Will, and the cost consultants were replaced by an entirely different firm. The team that we deal with now is significantly different.

Mr Humphrey: I am not talking about the private contractor; I am talking about the people charged by the state with overseeing the project — they would have been fired. Opportunity costs meant that funding had to be taken out. So funding has been lost, and there is the potential of millions more being lost. Is it not the case that the project was simply too big from the outset and was not handled properly?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: I do not think that it was, and I am sure that that will be the subject of some scrutiny in due course. This went wrong in the design and in the costing of the design. Last time, we had quite a long debate on Perkins+Will and the legal advice, which we reaffirmed, to continue with them. We have obligations to our contract with Perkins+Will and, in managing public money, we have an obligation to reduce losses, which is best done by maintaining with Perkins+Will and seeking to deliver the project because, as you pointed out, unless we do this, and the programme board is seized of this, we do not have an awful lot to show for that £9.5 million. However, if we deliver —

Mr Humphrey: You have nothing to show for it.

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: If we do not deliver, we have nothing to show for that, but, if we deliver, the £9.5 million becomes part of the costs envisaged in the original business case. Through litigation, there will also be some recovery of costs from Perkins+Will at the end of the process.

Mr Humphrey: You came in part way through —

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: Yes.

Mr Humphrey: In your judgement, was the project far too big at the outset?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: I do not think that the project was too big. We anticipate that the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) will want to look at a project of this size. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) will probably want to look at it. I am sure that, as they look back over it, they will identify points at which things were not as good as they could have been. As in all projects, those points are found with hindsight.

I can speak only of where we are now and from when I became involved. We have a viable project. My concern is that it is on the margins of the outline business case. We can deliver value for money for the £9.5 million by demonstrably building a quality, fit-for-purpose training college that can deliver world-class training in the right setting. We can do that by ploughing ahead, as we are, remaining committed to the project; and completing it within the timescale.

Mr Humphrey: Despite my line of questioning, I very much hope that you can because it is in the interests not only of the taxpayer but of the organisations represented here, including the Fire Service.

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: I appreciate that.

Ms McCorley: Go raibh maith agat. Thanks for the presentation. What has been the biggest lesson learned from all of this?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: There is a lesson to be learned about the viability of the expertise of the design team that you rely on and how that team is made up. Something went wrong there, and we spoke about the role of the cost consultants. However, these people came with a reputation and a professional brand. It is difficult to know how to identify shortcomings in the people selected and the necessary criteria, but it makes you wary of professional advice.

The other lesson learned — I do not know whether it is peculiar to this; it may be peculiar to the time — is the impact of construction reflation and changes to the market. Did we have enough awareness of market conditions throughout that period? With hindsight, maybe not. I do not know who did. We discovered some of this, but awareness of market conditions and of construction reflation and its impact on the programme are certainly lessons to be learned.

Ms McCorley: It seems that it could happen again because, from what you say, at some point, you have to trust people to deliver what they say they will.

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: The board's function is to hold the contractors to account, which it has done and continues to do. I was not on the board at the time, but I know that it was shocked when it realised the difference between the envisaged and actual cost. That was when we went out to the market, and it said that the project could not be done for that cost. That is when we identified that there was something seriously wrong with the way in which the programme had been costed. In a technical area of expertise involving civil engineers, costings and other activities associated with major building projects, you have to have some trust, but it is the function of the programme board to hold those expert advisers and contractors to account.

Mr Smyth: Rosaleen, it is recognised that this could happen again, but the project team and the project board have taken steps to ensure that there is much greater scrutiny and much greater involvement with cost consultants in particular. There is greater peer review of cost consultants than there was previously. A cost consultant will be in regular contact with the project team and give comparators against a wide spectrum of buildings for which contracts are being tendered and won. So there is much greater scrutiny of and confidence in cost estimates. Whilst the process, fundamentally, is following the same broad structures, there is much greater scrutiny by the project team and the programme board, and they have much more contact with the consultants.

Ms McCorley: Are you more confident that you can deliver this? I know that it is not down to you alone, but how confident are you that it will, ultimately, be delivered?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: I am confident in the sums and in the functionality that the college will bring. I am optimistic — a different term — about the approvals necessary to make that happen. Those are outwith my gift; they are in the gift of the Departments and the Executive and, to a greater or lesser extent, are almost a political decision by the Government of Northern Ireland.

Ms McCorley: If another major hurdle came along, is it possible that the project could survive?

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: That depends on the major hurdle and on the view of the Departments. We are working on the current outline business case. If we move out of that and have to start a different process, that will take us back to having to produce a new outline business case. It would take considerable time to do an option appraisal and consider how we were going to do business. Things that were off the table because we had made decisions and moved forward would come back for consideration. During that period, construction inflation would continue, so we would not get the same for our money. Would it survive? It would depend on the hurdle and on whether there was a will for it to survive, particularly among Ministers.

Ms McCorley: Thank you.

The Chairperson: Thank you very much for coming to the Committee. Hopefully, we will not need to see you again for a while and there will be some progress. It would be ideal if you invited us all up to the site for an official announcement. We appreciate your time.

Interim Deputy Chief Constable Finlay: Thank you.