

2024.05.21

3.14 Deputy A.F. Curtis of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding mapping services.
(OQ.100/2024)

Will the Minister advise what plans there are, if any, for the renewal or retendering of mapping services at the next point in the contract?

The Connétable of St. John (The Minister for Infrastructure):

Access to free public interest maps and geospatial data is in place using the Government of Jersey web mapping application on the gov.je website, and the mapping team are constantly updating the service to provide a wide range of free-to-use public interest maps. The team are working directly with Jersey Library to install the Government's public web-mapping application so it is easier for Islanders to access aerial imagery and the wider range of public interest mapping layers, such as school catchment areas, the bridging Island Plan, countryside access and recycling points that are already on gov.je. I share the Deputy's views in terms of access to mapping and I would be more than happy to discuss those further with him.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

If I may, I do not think my question was answered. I asked specifically about the mapping services we procure which are contracted through 2 companies which I can name, which are public names if it is benefited. The Minister has quite rightly responded about free data. I am looking for an answer regarding the commercial relationships to the 2 entities who sell our data.

The Connétable of St. John:

It is not an area that I have spent much time looking at but in a previous life I used to use that data, so I would be happy to discuss with the Deputy ideas and suggestions on how we could improve things in this area.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Can I have a supplementary now?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Have you answered the question? Has your question been answered, do you think?

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

The answer, as to my understanding, is that the Minister is not aware of enough detail about the contracting arrangements at this point in time.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes, well the question is, Minister: are there any plans for renewal or retendering the mapping services and your answer is that you know of no plans, which you answered the question?

The Connétable of St. John:

That is correct.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

A supplementary?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Well you have had one but you will get one at the end.

Deputy A.F. Curtis:

If I may, that was a clarification that you agreed that the Minister had not answered his question originally and that was a re-chance for him to answer.

The Deputy Bailiff:

All right.

3.14.1 Deputy A.F. Curtis:

Okay, thank you. [Laughter] It is the last Oral Question. A single-user yearly licence for L.I.D.A.R. (Light Detection and Ranging) data alone costs £2,845 per annum. Combined with base layers and aerial photographs, this will cost a single-person business such as an architect a minimum of £7,904.95 per year. Does the Minister consider this aligns with the proposed C.S.P. of keeping government fees, duties and charges as low as possible, as well as the C.S.P. reducing red tape and enhancing opportunities for business, given greater use of this currently commercialised data would enhance the productivity of the construction and architectural professions, to name a few?

The Connétable of St. John:

I have to apologise to the Deputy that I am not fully aware of the current details and costs, which I should be so I do apologise. I do believe that we should be making it as easy as possible for people to access this but I also am fully aware that the service has got to be funded in some way, shape or form. I am happy to discuss alternatives to the current arrangements but I am minded that the service has to be funded.

3.14.2 Deputy J. Renouf:

I think this raises an interesting philosophical point really because it is about the business model that the States adopts. Currently we charge for services such as this so that they self-fund, however that means that we miss the potential upside of people being able to exploit that data and use it for their own commercial opportunities. I wonder whether the Minister will commit to consulting, either in public or with the Assembly, on the future business model relating to geospatial data ahead of any possible contract extension or renewal for these providers.

The Connétable of St. John:

Yes, I will have to make myself far better informed before I do such a consultation but I will commit to do that.

The Deputy Bailiff:

A final supplementary? No? That concludes that period of questions. We now move to questions for Ministers without notice. The first period of questions is directed to the Minister for the Environment and the first question will come from Deputy Andrews.