



Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel

Government Plan 2023-26 Review

Witness: The Chief Minister

Tuesday, 8th November 2022

Panel:

Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South (Chair)

Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North (Vice Chair)

Witnesses:

Deputy K.L. Moore of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter, The Chief Minister

Deputy A. Curtis of St. Clement, Assistant Chief Minister

Ms. S. Wylie, Chief Executive Officer

Mr. T. Walker, Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance

Mr. A. Hacquoil, Group Director, Strategic Finance

[12:00]

Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier South (Chair):

Thank you, Chief Minister, and thank you everyone who is attending here this morning for this public review hearing with the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel for our Government Plan review. The usual rules apply here. The Minister and her Assistant Minister are sat at the table but when it comes to particular technical questions if you need an officer to come and join you at the table, they are welcome to do so at that point but please introduce yourself for the benefit of the transcript when it comes to it. We will just introduce ourselves round the table as well for the benefit of the transcript. I am Deputy Sam Mézec, the Chair of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel.

Deputy M.B. Andrews of St. Helier North (Vice Chair):

I am Deputy Max Andrews. I am the Vice Chair of the Corporate Services Panel.

Assistant Chief Minister:

Deputy Alex Curtis, Assistant Chief Minister with responsibility for digital in Modernisation and Digital.

The Chief Minister:

Good afternoon. I am Deputy Kristina Moore and I am Chief Minister.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Excellent, and we are joined by our officer Monique at the table as well. Just to confirm that you have read the notice in front of you and understand all of the rules and procedures for Scrutiny.

The Chief Minister:

We have read them, thank you.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Excellent. Okay, thank you very much, in which case we will crack on. We have got 2 hours and lots to proceed with and we have also sent some written questions as well on some technical matters that we might not have been able to deal with here. So, opening question from me, Chief Minister. In your foreword to the proposed Government Plan you say that this Government is taking a fresh approach. Could you explain to me in tangible terms what is it about your approach that is fresh?

The Chief Minister:

Thank you very much. Although at its very core the Government Plan of course is consistent in delivering prudent decision-making and maintaining Jersey's strong and stable position by returning balanced budgets, it takes a fresh approach in terms of it being a new Government, one that has conducted an election in which it has listened to the public. We have chosen to focus on a number of matters that we think reflect the desires of the public and also our need to support our front-line services, particularly in education and healthcare so that we can deliver those critical services for Islanders. That is why we have taken some bold steps in terms of additional expenditure.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

In those terms then, is not every Government a fresh approach? Why is yours tangibly different to the fresh approach that any Government might claim they are taking?

The Chief Minister:

I think the public feedback that we seem to be getting at the moment is quite supportive of that fresh approach and a number of people have identified how they are grateful that we are doing what we

said we would do and engaging in a different way, communicating in a different way, and that is indeed in itself a fresh approach.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

But tangible? This wonderful feedback suggests that, but what in your view is tangibly fresh and different from a previous Government approach?

Assistant Chief Minister:

I would say one of the things here is a focus on how we prioritised as a Council of Ministers the decision as to where growth funding is going. It was an incredibly short period we had to work within but it was incredibly collaborative in discussing the prioritisations that we had all felt across the election cycle as to what was most important to be delivered right now.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay, and in terms of identifying those areas for growth, what about that approach was different to how a previous newly-elected Government or any future newly-elected Government might choose to identify what their priorities are? What processes did you adopt that made that different or was it not the same approaches but you found the priorities of the time?

The Chief Minister:

I think we have sat down around the table and had some strong and careful discussions about how we prioritise. There was a considerable number of growth bids and we have come together as a Council of Ministers and unified around what we see as our priorities and how we will focus those priorities to deliver for the public.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay, thank you.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

In terms of when we are looking at implementation, how is implementation different in this Government Plan compared to, say, the previous Council of Ministers?

The Chief Minister:

In terms of the Cabinet Office and how that function will work going forward, implementation - we prefer to refer to that as delivery - is very much a different process. The Chief Executive has now created a delivery unit in order to assist us in doing just that. For the moment that delivery unit is focusing in a specific project on recruitment and retention, which is something that we as a Council have identified as a focus that will really make a difference to public sector delivery and

implementation, therefore, of our policies. If you would like the Chief Executive to join us at the table to talk about that, I am sure she would be more than delighted to do so.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Can we move on and perhaps have future questions on that? So the next thing I wanted to ask the Chief Minister, in the Government Plan you state: “The Council of Ministers has taken sustainable well-being into account throughout the development of the whole of the Government programme.” Could you talk us through exactly how sustainable well-being was considered when business cases were being put forward for each growth part of the Government Plan?

The Chief Minister:

Yes. Sustainable well-being and the performance framework are very much aligned and we have talked to you I think in the past about how as a Council we wish to focus on outcomes-based accountability in areas where we can particularly turn the curve. I think that that is an important part of demonstrating the importance of sustainable well-being and our commitment to improving it throughout the term of our office.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Do we find that demonstrated in the business cases that sustainable well-being was demonstrably considered when putting those together?

The Chief Minister:

I think more so perhaps in the choice of business cases. As we have outlined to you, some decisions have had to be taken because we do not have an infinite pot of money available to us and so careful decisions have been taken. Our selection is quite focused on our determination to improve sustainable well-being.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

How do you measure sustainable well-being and how do you rate it as opposed to how sustainable it may or otherwise be?

The Chief Minister:

As you will be aware, that is outlined in the Public Finances Law which was adopted by the previous Assembly and it is a way of measuring that progress in our society. We can do so through the use of the performance framework and the wide range of measures that are taken in that and published on the website.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Thank you. An additional £61 million is due to be invested in key public services during 2023. Can you explain to us what areas that is focused on and how you identified those as being the areas that you believed required additional investment?

The Chief Minister:

Yes. Well, there is a great focus on ... sorry, I am looking at the wrong file. The annexe, I think, has a very helpful table, which helps us to identify that in a snapshot, but in particular children, young people, education and skills is an area of particular focus and investment. The majority of that additional investment is focused in that area to improve sufficiency and also standards for our young children.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Why did you specifically identify that as an area that needed additional investment and was it because you regarded the money going into it previously as being inadequate? If so, why?

The Chief Minister:

I think it became very clear during the last term of office that there were great gaps and the education system was crying out for additional investment in order to meet the needs of children and give them the best formative years that we can as a public service.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

How did you identify the amount that is going to that as the correct amount?

The Chief Minister:

That was work done internally in the Education Department with the Minister. I am sure that the Minister for Children and Education would be delighted to brief you on that if you so wished, but also we can invite members of the Treasury team to talk you through how that process went with the Education Department if you would like them to.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Let us do that briefly, sure. Let us keep that as direct and brief as we can and please introduce yourself at the start.

Group Director, Strategic Finance:

Hello. I am Andy Hacquoil, the Group Director of Strategic Finance. So just briefly setting out the process that C.O.M. (Council of Ministers) went through, the Treasury worked with departments across the organisation to bring together potential areas of investment where Ministers may wish to choose to prioritise taxpayers' money to improve outcomes for Islanders. Once those amounts were

collated there was then a political decision-making process at Council of Ministers meetings. There was a series of several meetings where Ministers had the opportunity to present their case to the whole of Council and indeed challenge from other Ministers to be brought in as well. That process ran over several meetings. There were obviously choices to be made because Treasury officials were advising the Council of Ministers that the plan would also need to be affordable. There was obviously many things the Government could do but not necessarily things that could all be afforded at this time as well. So that was the process that was gone through. That meant that some items were selected. The Chief Minister has already spoken about education, there being a strong case for the need for investment in those, and effectively through that process the final proposed Government Plan growth allocations were developed.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Thank you. This may be back to the Chief Minister, but would you mind staying at the table just in case something technical arises as a result of that then? In terms of identifying that as a priority for extra investment, were there other areas that you considered providing other additional investment that you decided not to because you had deferred back to education and children instead?

The Chief Minister:

As I have said, and I think Mr. Hacquoil has as well, there were a considerable number of growth bids but we had to balance them very carefully against our priorities. You see those clearly outlined in the C.S.P. (Common Strategic Policy) and also in our ministerial plans. I think it is very clear what those priorities are across government and so together we had to find a unified position and best use of public funds. We equally became very mindful of the need to not only be able to deliver services but the need to employ people to deliver those services. So careful consideration was given about the number of people who would need to be employed by the public service in order to do so.

Assistant Chief Minister:

One thing with that prioritisation was there were a large number of business cases that were subject to growth, as the Chief Minister said. It was a case of the Council of Ministers looking at those and prioritising and within each business case looking clearly at the deliverability of those. So the numbers that are reached here are not simply what a business case may have originally come with. That is after scrutiny both from Treasury and also from the Council of Ministers as to what within this business case would be deliverable and there were reductions made on individual business cases to that effect.

The Chief Minister:

If I could just go back to the point about workforce, as you will be well aware, we have very near full employment in the Island and therefore any additional workforce would mean either finding those people through competition with the private sector or inward migration.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I think with my question I was trying to draw you into perhaps revealing an example of something nice that we have missed out on because you have chosen, entirely legitimately, to focus on something else. What kind of things were discussed that you decided now is not the time?

Assistant Chief Minister:

For one example, in the Cabinet Office there were requests to increase investment in I.T. (information technology) and while you will see there are growth bids here, there were proposals that did not feel that they met the prioritisation, especially when we look at front line, so those were cut. But part of that is also as a strategy looking at where we can, within existing budgets, refocus our mind on what really is important and working within that play rather than just approving.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Thank you. Okay, moving slightly on and thank you, so apart from the decision to review the hospital project, which I am not specifically asking about with this question, what are the principal changes that the new Government has made to its approach to the management of the public services and economy of Jersey that are distinct to the previous Government?

[12:15]

The Chief Minister:

As you will be aware, the Minister for Health is embarking on a programme of much needed transformation in our health service. She has paused the Jersey Care Model and is looking very carefully at that and how we can best deliver primary care and long-term care for Islanders. Equally, we are looking at the culture within our health service, which needs some repairing.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

How did you identify what the principal challenges facing the Jersey economy and public services are?

The Chief Minister:

We have the benefit of a Chief Economist who is able to assist the Council of Ministers very ably in giving us an overview of the economy. Clearly the statistics department also supports us in providing

a very clear and diverse range of statistics on which to base our decisions along with, of course, advice from the F.P.P. (Fiscal Policy Panel).

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

We spoke at the start about the fresh approach and everything you have just listed there has been referring to personnel who are the same as under the previous Government. I am still going to challenge on this point of a fresh approach and understanding exactly when you got the keys to Broad Street and walked in, what processes did you ask specifically were changed that would then help inform you as to how you determined what those priorities were and what goes into the Government Plan?

The Chief Minister:

The structure of our Government in Jersey is one that is very much focused on the public sector and the civil service who are, and remain, impartial and they are there to serve whoever the Government are of the day. Of course, that Government are largely chosen by the public and then the Assembly. So we step into Broad Street and place ourselves in meeting rooms alongside officials who supported the previous Government and they do that in a seamless way. There is, as we have outlined, some changes been put into place, largely reflective of a group that you are very well familiar with in terms of the democratic accountability group and the recommendations that they made in the work during the phase of the previous Assembly. In doing that, we are making changes in the Cabinet Office that is ably supported by the Chief Executive and looking at that, but we continue to work with the very able civil service who are here to support Islanders, whoever may be in Government.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Indeed. I was trying to get to, with that question, obviously every Government will have to decide how much it defers to its impartial advisers and that personnel will often remain static there, versus at what point your political priorities take over. I think you have got to that point with the Cabinet Office point, so we might come back to explore that.

The Chief Minister:

Thank you. I think it is that gathering of people around the table, is it not, that provides that fresh approach? You will be very familiar with the fact that only 6 members of the previous Government made it through the election process, and so the public have their say on them and their performance. That is reflected in the new Assembly that we have and then the new Government that the Assembly has had the opportunity to select.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Thank you. How will the changes you have made in the 4 years budget of the Government Plan contribute to remedying the challenges that you as a Government have identified?

The Chief Minister:

These are challenging economic times, are they not, globally? We feel that it is very important to maintain a prudent and careful approach to our government finances and to public expenditure because we see one of Jersey's strengths as its strong fiscal position, its lack of borrowing or very minimal borrowing. We want to protect that so that future generations can also enjoy the same benefits that we have currently today.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

What risk is there to the forecast budgets you have got for 2023 to 2026 on the situation with potentially borrowing to fund the hospital when at this point there is political uncertainty over that? What analysis have you done about the risks there may be about a change in arrangement, either that being a political change or economic change that we have no control over?

The Chief Minister:

The previous Assembly had its debate about borrowing and I think my feelings on that were made very clear at the time. My position has not changed, that we have to carefully support and protect the public purse and that means being careful about our borrowing, particularly in light of the current bond market. Had we in the early days of our Government gone out to the bond market to borrow, as the previous Assembly had agreed, then we would have been facing a very high coupon rate and much higher costs than had previously been budgeted for. That would have put the public and future generations in particular in a precarious place, in our view. So we feel that there is no option for the Island but to find a course that is pragmatic, affordable and appropriate. That means that we will aim to stagger any borrowing that is done but we will also exercise restraint and carefully choose the project on a basis that is affordable not only for current circumstances but also for future generations.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Whatever option we go with, there is volatility within that, often for reasons that are beyond our control. What are you doing to ensure that the evaluation of those forecast budgets takes into account different potential scenarios to ensure that you get as much certainty as possible?

The Chief Minister:

There will clearly be a range of careful scenario planning as we progress with the project. I think some of that was drawn out in the report itself that was produced by the adviser and it will be central to our decision-making. As we have outlined to Scrutiny Liaison Committee when we came to meet

with you some weeks ago, there will be propositions to come back to the Assembly once we have that in place. It will be in a phased approach to minimise the risks of what is a very volatile economic situation in other places but one that we have to find our best path through and maintain our position as a safe and stable jurisdiction.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

You mentioned scenario planning there. Who exactly does that scenario planning and how do they present to you? If that is a technical question, then feel free to ask for help there.

The Chief Minister:

The Treasury and Exchequer have some experience of doing that for the previous Government. Would you like to outline the strengths of the team that we have internally?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Was my question clear there: who does that scenario planning and how does that get presented to Government?

Group Director, Strategic Finance:

Would you like me to reintroduce myself?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Yes, please.

Group Director, Strategic Finance:

Andy Hacquoil, Group Director of Strategic Finance. Often with something the size and scale of our hospital we would draw on expertise from across the organisation, including Treasury and wider colleagues. With that amount of money, that would make sense. So we would obviously speak to, for example, the Chief Economist to pick up on what are the potential risks in the economy moving forward. That can then be used with a range of teams. We would have our strategic and investment management team within Treasury, who are our experts in terms of executing borrowing and managing investments. They would be able to use their expertise to do a lot of scenario planning across what the potential scenarios might cost and what that would be. That would also work with my team within strategic finance where we would look at what impact does that have on the wider public finances as well, so drawing together all that range of expertise to be able to present the overall picture of what those are. The challenge is often there are many, many, obviously almost infinite, scenarios that you could go through, so it is trying to draw out which are the likely scenarios and which ones are slightly more remote, but you do need to still have an eye on those remote ones to make sure that we can manage the risks. For example, in the last analysis for the funding of our

hospital, the worst case scenarios, when you were in a low interest rate environment had been stable for a long period of time, probably do not look worst case anymore. So that would mean a new analysis would use a different range, I guess, and that is something that would be brought back as part of the development of any other proposals for funding our hospital or the replacement of our hospital project.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Thank you.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

In relation, say, to the national debt increasing once the borrowing has been agreed, during this Government Plan there has been a lack of data to basically show that there would potentially be a contingency in place. What impact could this potentially have in terms of the national debt increasing during this period with public sector provisions?

The Chief Minister:

Sorry, I was not clear what you meant by contingency.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

We are looking at the national debt and once that increases with borrowing that will be agreed upon by the States Assembly. What impact will that have on the public sector?

The Chief Minister:

We will have to ensure that whatever plans for borrowing take place that the public purse can afford to make those repayments.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Potentially would you say there are threats in terms of there being cutbacks in some areas within the public sector once the borrowing has been agreed?

The Chief Minister:

No, that is not what I said.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

No, I am saying could that potentially happen.

The Chief Minister:

I said that we would have to ensure that we could pay for any borrowing that was undertaken.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Thank you. You note in the foreword of the Government Plan that the Government will monitor the increasing burden on household budgets to give targeted support to Islanders during the cost of living crisis. Can you explain how that monitoring will be conducted?

The Chief Minister:

Yes. We have, as I outlined earlier, a Chief Economist and we have a statistics department that provides regular glimpses of our economy. Also we have the Fiscal Policy Panel who are due to report to us tomorrow with their latest views and advice about our fiscal position generally. Then, of course, there are community-based groups as well, such as the Consumer Council and also Citizens Advice Jersey who have clear insight and knowledge. It is very important that we communicate and listen to the soundings that they have.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The mini-budget provided some measures immediately in response to the cost of living crisis and highlighted other measures that would be brought into effect by this Government Plan. What flexibility do you think you have if in the early part of next year something happens and you identify that there is a need that needs to be addressed in one form or another, whether that is further measures or changes? How would you approach that and do you have the flexibility you need to respond in a timely, targeted or temporary way if necessary at that point?

The Chief Minister:

As you will see from the budget forecasts, there is a small amount of flexibility in the surpluses that we are planning, although those measures would probably have to be short term because there is not very much, if any, flexibility really in 2025. That is something that we are very mindful of because, of course, it would depend on the specific scenario that we were having to consider at any particular time, but in the first instance we would have to ensure that unless it was a catastrophic or a very serious issue that those measures that were taken would be affordable.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

One item that has been raised recently is the impact of increased mortgage rates for people because of interest rates going up. I know one of your ministerial colleagues did issue a brief statement on that recently. Is there anything you think is in this Government Plan that specifically targets those people who may be struggling with their mortgage payments, having seen them increase monthly at a rate that they would certainly not have been anticipating previously?

The Chief Minister:

That is certainly an area of concern because we are all very mindful of the level of borrowing in a number of households. Just today we have been considering the latest insight that we can gain in terms of the kinds of mortgages that Islanders have and how they might be impacted by rising interest rates.

[12:30]

But of course our mini-budget was very focused on putting money in the pockets of Islanders who most needed it and that included people in middle-earning families as well because we recognised that soundings we were receiving from the community were that those groups of people were also feeling the pinch of rising costs. We wanted to enable families to tailor their needs and meet their bills as suited their own requirements and so that was our first step. Going forward, we are looking at those issues and we continue to ask questions of Treasury to gain an insight of what the potential costs might be of various solutions that we might think of. I think that is something that is very much at the forefront of our minds at this time.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Thank you. In terms of COVID response, as much as we are pretty much close to normal life again, it obviously is still lingering and something to be treated very seriously. How have you ensured that any ongoing costs there might be in response to COVID are adequately catered for in this Government Plan?

The Chief Minister:

There is a line in the budget, so there is some funding still available, but as you will recall the Minister for Treasury has committed to repaying all of the COVID debt so that we clear the decks and make ourselves stable looking to the future. The revolving credit facility is still available if it is required but that is for a remaining period of time, so it would be there to be drawn down upon if it were required. But at the moment we are mostly focused on COVID recovery and the Cabinet Office does that work and if you would like us to invite the Director General to the table, then he could perhaps talk to you about COVID recovery.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I think we are okay for now. If we have some supplementaries at a later point we know where to go. Again, moving on, in the Government programme there is a consistent emphasis on building public trust in Government policies, public consultation, building strong partnerships with the private sector charities and the voluntary sector. You yourself have frequently used the word “accountability” in all of that. In practice, how are you using consultation to inform what you do and to ensure those bodies

and areas of society that you have committed to being included in this are being included? How was that done in the process of putting the Government Plan together?

The Chief Minister:

In early days we adopted the public sector's values and one of those is continuing improvement. So I think that this is an area perhaps where we need to continuously improve. I think we are starting to improve confidence in the public but perhaps that is something that you might help us with in terms of some engagement to test those waters. It is always important to test that and not to take anything for granted really. I think it was very clear that we do need to improve public confidence in Government and I think that only over a period of time can we be judged by the public in our actions and they, of course, will be the judges of that in terms of our delivery. But we are communicating in a different way, I think, and developing that communication.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

How so? Can I ask how so do you think your communication is different?

The Chief Minister:

In more regular comments, more regular statements and videos, trying to use social media to good effect. For example, next week with the hospital we have announced that we are going to hold a question and answer session that will be livestreamed and available for the public who want to attend or prefer to send in their questions online.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

If you do not mind me saying, that is not new, because the previous Government did construct this innovation of more Q. and A. type events, Slido and having an independent chair, et cetera. What specifically has this Government constructed as a method of communication that is unique to this Government?

The Chief Minister:

I think our communication is building and more consistent. For example, as we discussed at the last hearing, we are publishing our minutes of the Council of Ministers and I think generally we have a much more open approach to sharing information.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay. Anything else? So minutes being published, great. On top of that?

Assistant Chief Minister:

I would also mention we are missing 2 Assistant Chief Ministers, one of which would be Deputy Stephenson whose role is trying to create a more cohesive communications approach with all Ministers. From what I have seen at least, that is driven by Deputy Stephenson and by Ministers working on how they can have a narrative with the public that is honest and open.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I appreciate she is not here so I will not push too hard on this, unless you want me to, obviously. But what is tangibly different in that approach? The quality of the message can be one thing. I suspect every Government probably thinks the quality of their message is better than the one that came before it. That is less tangible and will ultimately always be subjective, but the processes by which you become more effective at delivering a message to the public is something that ought to be tangible. How are those processes different?

The Chief Minister:

Communication is not just about delivering and landing a message, is it? Hopefully we are effective communicators and we were able to do that, but what we want to move to, and I think what I referred to at the beginning - aim to be continuously improving - is that communication is a 2-way street and so what we want to improve upon is that 2-way engagement.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

An example?

The Chief Minister:

Being able to respond to emails and to engage with people over the various channels of social media but also, and I think these refer back to some of our 100-day action points as well, bringing engagement into different communities. We have got the older persons forum; we have also got engagement with children and young people. I think there is very much a different and a fresh emphasis upon that engagement because we are a small community. We are here to serve the community and to represent the people who elected us and we can only do that by continuing engagement.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Obviously it is important that the public have as much access as possible to information and data to help inform whatever their views or perceptions will be, however inconvenient they may end up being potentially to a Government. What are you doing to help transmit as much data and information out there objectively into the public to help them inform what views they may hold and, therefore, how they may seek to engage with the Government to influence its actions?

The Chief Minister:

First and foremost, the statistics unit are that objective body. They have their own timetable of disseminating information at various points and there is no opportunity for us to direct them because they are an independent and impartial service. They gather data on behalf of the public and they share it with the public in as engaging a way as they can. I think they are always at great pains ... and I am sure the Director General could talk to you about that if you would wish. They are very careful to provide that service as it should be.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Thank you. The Government programme as the umbrella term featuring the other documents as well, C.S.P., ministerial plans, et cetera, was it a conscious choice of yours to not have all of those released on the same date? Was it a conscious decision or did that arise simply out of necessity?

The Chief Minister:

Probably a bit of both, but I do think that it is helpful to have different pieces of information released at different times because it is not helpful to overwhelm people with a deluge of dense information. I think former Scrutiny Panels have indeed found that the Government Plan of the past was difficult to navigate and to fully understand and use. Our desire was to deliver something that was clear and easy to engage with. Equally, and I think we talked to you about this last time, we have been under a considerable amount of time pressure to turn around these key documents in the space of 2 months following the election, because of the election being moved from May to June. I hope that the Privileges and Procedures Committee will consider the date of the next election as early as it possibly can so that it can smooth any transition that may or may not take place after the elections and ensure that the public service is able to support a new Government in delivering these documents and also to give Scrutiny ample time to conduct your important role of holding Government Ministers to account.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I hope this does not seem contradictory for the sake of it but one area where I personally found it was not helpful to have different date for publishing these was with the Government Plan and the annexe. That provided a period of time that was a bit frustrating from our perspective of trying to do our job, although you were helpful in providing access to unpublished versions to help us hit the ground running. Why exactly was the annexe not produced at the exact same that the Government Plan was?

The Chief Minister:

I think that is a simple timing thing. The Government itself and the C.S.P. are both statutory documents that had to be produced within a certain timeframe and, therefore, just to cope with that any additional documentation was left as the next thing to do simply to cope with the turnaround.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Why was the Government Plan considered ready if the annexe was not? Are they not both fundamentally linked?

The Chief Minister:

They are, absolutely, but of course there is an element of collation that is needed and preparation of those documents to put them into a readable and consumable, for want of a better phrase, fashion.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Are you saying then that it is purely an issue of collation when it comes to the annexe then?

The Chief Minister:

Well, and making it a document that is easy to digest and publish.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The concern it gives rise to with them not being produced at the same time is the question of whether the Government Plan was being agreed with the full knowledge of the financials if this essential extra document was not ready at the same time.

The Chief Minister:

If you care to look at the annexe, it has been drawn together from a series of different departments. We have had to put together the various pieces of information, but it has to be collated in a fashion that is uniform and cohesive so that it does not jar greatly and I think that that has been done very successfully.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

This Government Plan does not provide a breakdown by ministerial portfolios saying what budgets each Minister is responsible for, and I remember seeing that in previous Government Plans. I will presume that every Minister knows exactly to the penny how much budget in the Government Plan they are responsible for, so why is that not provided within the Government Plan document itself? It is important for us to know who are being held to account for how much and our government departments do not exactly align with ministerial portfolios.

The Chief Minister:

We may need to have to draw upon some technical advice here because I do not quite recall seeing that broken down by Minister, but we are still working under departmental heads of expenditure and so that is the system. We are very focused at the moment on ensuring that those lines of accountability for each Minister and their relevant lead official are made very clear and of course that will flow through into accounting as well.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

If I ask each of your Ministers: “How much of the budget are you responsible for in 2023?” do you anticipate they will instantly be able to give me that figure?

The Chief Minister:

Thank you for the advance notice.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Had to get that question out quickly.

The Chief Minister:

Yes, exactly. Perhaps the Group Director might be able to add a bit more information in that regard.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

That is a very specific question that I have just asked.

[12:45]

If I ask each Minister: “How much of that budget are you responsible for?” will they be able to tell me a figure?

The Chief Minister:

I think perhaps the fairer way of expressing that to the official, to the Group Director would be whether there is a breakdown under each Minister of head of expenditure.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

That should be a very quick answer.

Group Director, Strategic Finance:

The answer is that that is being finalised and worked on to make sure it reflects any changes to the ministerial responsibility. As the Chief Minister mentioned, the lines of accountability have been moved, so departments do fit more closely to lines of ministerial responsibility. A couple of things, I

guess, that I would draw out would be, for example, the Infrastructure, Housing and Environment Department does have 2 Ministers. But if you look in the annexe there is a clear line of this is what the Minister for the Environment has a line for environment. There is also a line for Infrastructure and various parts of the Infrastructure Department. It is, hopefully, clear to Ministers which of those lines belong to each of them. There are some lines in there, for example, relating to the Director General's office, as he is a shared Director General; this is where it gets somewhat more complicated of how much would you allocate of that budget between the 2. That is what we are just working on and finally resolving, but those are interesting questions because it is unlikely to be down to the pound, as you have suggested, Chair, but they should know which budget they have got accountability for.

The Chief Minister:

Thank you very much, Group Director. If I could add to that, table 2 in the annexe on page 5 does give a list of service transfers of course as well, which also helps to identify how some of that thinking has been framed and has caused some budget transfers.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I am asking this question to work out whether Ministers at that moment when they sat in a room somewhere in Broad Street or otherwise to give the final sign-off to this document, that each of them knew: "I am signing off a document for which I am responsible for X figure in." Is that the case that they knew, that each Minister will have known at that point? Okay, some of it is mixed and matched under different headings but they will have known.

The Chief Minister:

As we outlined earlier, firstly, it is a collegiate approach and any Minister who had been facing a change in their budget in order to fund another piece of work would have been aware of that. But our focus was more on enhancing various areas of business and each Minister's budget. We have talked already about Education and I think also another area where there was much needed investment was in Home Affairs. I could give those as 2 examples.

Assistant Chief Minister:

I would add especially when we look at the growth bids, each Minister presented their own growth bid and leveraged the support of Director Generals or Group Directors, so they are very acutely aware of the exact growth within their department.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay, but they have legacy funding that they are responsible for and I am trying to make sure that they knew what it was, since it is not in black and white in that document itself, but I hope we will get that black and white fairly soon.

Group Director, Strategic Finance:

If I may, Chair, an earlier C.O.M. meeting and especially considering the amount of time that Council has to make all of the decisions, one of the earliest things was to look at this is your what we call base budget, so the one that was brought forward from previous Government Plans. Council agreed that that was an appropriate place to start from when considering the further decisions. Ministers would have seen the budgets for their areas as part of that discussion. Hopefully that helps answer your question.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay, thank you.

The Chief Minister:

Yes, and as Deputy Curtis outlined very helpfully, each Minister was very capable of talking the rest of the Council through their various budget decisions and I think particularly given the speed with which they had all had to do that it was quite impressive.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I am going to do some of these next questions slightly differently just because of time. Chief Minister, how do the proposed additional revenue programmes and capital projects align with the priorities you have proposed in the Common Strategic Policy?

The Chief Minister:

I think our Common Strategic Policy is to show a balanced approach and that puts at its very heart the desire for Jersey to be a community where everyone can thrive. I think that we have readjusted and flexed our budgets in order to do that and to focus on areas where we felt that there was a need for investment such as education and skills.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Can I look at some of the indicators that you have put in the C.S.P. to see how they measure up against what you are proposing doing in the Government Plan? You have things in there like under housing and cost of living looking at real median equivalised household income as an indicator. Why have you chosen that and how do you anticipate your measures in the Government Plan having an impact on that?

The Chief Minister:

Sadly, we do not have the correct member of the Cabinet Office who can talk to you ad infinitum, as I am sure you are aware, on the various ways of calculating financial well-being. It was agreed that that measure of household income was a good base from which to work. But at the end of the day what we want to ensure is what we say in our headline, that the Island could be a place where everyone can thrive and that does mean improved financial security in households and, therefore, in their median income.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Sorry to press you on this, can you point out something in the Government Plan that you think will lead to an increase in the real median equivalised household income?

The Chief Minister:

I think our mini-budget was very much focused on that and it focused on putting more money in the pockets of various and most household groups in the Island in a way that they could make their own decisions about what their particular needs were for the running of that household and the meeting of rising prices. But of course I have talked in the round also about future generations and we very much believe in the investment in education as being a critical factor in turning round the futures and, therefore, the future earning potential and satisfaction of our young people when they become adults and move into the world of work.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Great for what that does for those who receive that education and can, therefore, benefit from other employment opportunities. But there are certain jobs that will always need to exist and always need to be paid, for which education does not eliminate the need for those kinds of jobs. For people in lower-paid jobs, how will they see their real median equivalised household income increase?

The Chief Minister:

We have increased the minimum wage, which is the best start and also there is a great deal of encouragement to employers across the Island at the moment to meet the living wage and of course the public sector is a living-wage employer.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay. This is my last one on that particular indicator. Do you accept that that indicator of real median equivalised household income can be skewed by substantially higher incomes for those who are already on very high incomes as an indicator that can skew the data you get there? If you do accept that, how will you be vigilant in making sure that your measures that you pursue as a Government will focus on the correct end of that spectrum to improve that indicator?

The Chief Minister:

That is why it is important to use median rather than average, is it not? In a median, if you are using a median calculation, then as people progress in the top end of earnings and that takes the median up and so naturally that becomes a good thing for those who are around the median position.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay. One of the indicators for economy and skills priority is to increase total G.V.A. (Gross Value Added) per person. To what extent does that directly lead to an increase in the welfare of an average Jersey resident, given the significance of the finance industry to the Island which will have an impact in increasing that? But it is obviously not an industry that everybody works in and not everybody will align with what that figure might indicate.

The Chief Minister:

Yes, but also this is generally about productivity, is it not? We are deriving the greatest value out of the community that we have and of course we need people to be working in various sectors to make the Island a vibrant and interesting place that it is to live and to enjoy living in as well. We do that balanced against the commitment to sustainable well-being, which also has a range of other factors that we have discussed already today that help people to find their personal well-being and enjoyment of life.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

What consideration to other indicators have you given to assess the welfare and well-being of Islanders? G.V.A. per person is one G.D.P. (Gross Domestic Product) per person reveals different things when you look at it there.

The Chief Minister:

We have looked at the Better Life Index, which was published earlier on this year or the latter end of last year. I think that was a really interesting way of looking across the community and finding different measures to draw and of course the civic engagement and lack thereof in our community is one really important factor. Engagement means so many things about people's attachment to the community in which they live and their belief and understanding and also their confidence in the Government of the particular day, but we are also looking at statistics that we can draw out of. Let us say in the Opinion and Lifestyle Survey back in 2017, it was very clear in one of the answers to that question that people living in St. Helier had very much lower levels of satisfaction in the environment in which they live, as opposed to people dwelling in the countryside areas of the Island. I think it is about 33 per cent versus about 76 per cent in those 2 different groups and so that is something that we are very much focused on in other aspects of our work, perhaps not quite

expressed in the Government Plan but certainly when we are looking at future places, which I think we have talked to you about that group. It is the Regeneration Steering Group plus, plus, looking at a more strategic way of considering with our built environment and how we all travel around and enjoy it as well.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay, thank you. In a letter received from you in response to the panel's request for some of the business cases, you highlighted that full business cases were not available for some of the additional revenue programmes identified within the plan at that point. That included a cultural centre, community fund and support for Ukrainians in Jersey. Are those business cases complete now?

The Chief Minister:

I might have to look off the table for that specific piece of information. No.

Group Director, Strategic Finance:

You can, yes, the answer is ...

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

It should be one might answer this.

Group Director, Strategic Finance:

Andy Hacquoil, Group Director, Strategic Finance. Not all those business cases are completed but the amounts are held in reserve to reflect that and the allocation would be formally made once the business case is completed.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Thank you. How can you have judged that informed approval can be given without complete business cases for those?

The Chief Minister:

I think the Group Director has illustrated that a sum has been allocated and clearly that gives us a budget to work within and helps us to make ...

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

How do you know it is adequate though?

The Chief Minister:

Sometimes one has to set a budget in order to work within it and figure out what we can achieve within that budget and so that is what is important to do, particularly when we are working at pace.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

If you provide a budget and then provide your business case afterwards, is there not a risk that the budget put in place could be too profligate for what you are trying to achieve and, therefore, not represent best value for money? How do you know that that risk does not exist if you do not have the complete business case first?

The Chief Minister:

That would be a great place to be and we would look forward to returning some funds ...

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

It would be at odds with your values though.

Assistant Chief Minister:

But I think to the Group Director, these sums are not approved until a full business case comes in and I expect we would all give full scrutiny to whether it is value for money at the point of the business case being arrived at.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Is that a habit you will be establishing of approving budgets for things without complete business cases?

The Chief Minister:

I think every now and again that has to be done and, as I said, particularly when working at pace there needs to be a nominal budget.

[13:00]

As the Minister for Treasury and Resources was reminding me just the other day, it is not good practice to be returning to the Assembly to amend Government Plans during the year of that Assembly. There is plenty of other business to be doing and also it would be tedious for the Assembly but it also would not be good budgeting.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay, thank you. Deputy Andrews, for question 17.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Thank you, Chair. Chief Minister, in relation to the Council of Ministers' priorities in relation to Government programmes and projects, please explain what those priorities will be? In relation to Government projects and programmes, what will those priorities be over the next 4 years for the Council of Ministers?

The Chief Minister:

In terms of capital projects do you mean?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes, we could be involved in capital projects indeed, yes.

The Chief Minister:

Right. Obviously the hospital and beginning construction on the hospital will be first and foremost in our minds. Then we are also looking at school estates and how we can improve the school environment for young people, alongside items that are important, such as drainage. I think that comes to mind at the moment.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Okay. When we are speaking about infrastructure, and obviously there is an issue in terms of there being an undersupply of labour, do you believe there will be some projects that potentially could be put on hold in terms of not being delivered on a timely manner due to the shortage of labour?

The Chief Minister:

This is an interesting area and capital spending has consistently ... perhaps not consistently is the best way to describe it but often Government has a larger appetite to deliver on capital spending than it can deliver. I think the hospital and its potential delivery in a phased approach is a really good example of that in terms of there being quite a great level of concern from members of the public about the number of people we would need in the workforce to deliver a project of the size and scale of the previous project and, therefore, the need to phase it to ensure that the local construction workers could meet the delivery of that project, alongside any other private sector work that is being conducted at the time. Householders and larger private business also sometimes express frustration at the difficulties they find in seeking labour in the local market.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

As a panel as well, we also note there is a contingency for capital project budgets. Perhaps could you maybe just explain what really the contingency is and also the breakdown of that contingency as well across all Government projects that are being undertaken?

The Chief Minister:

Contingency is clearly and often set out in all projects to ensure that rising costs or unforeseen circumstances can be met and there would not be a difficulty. In terms of any technical illustration, whether we have a particular in-house method for deriving a particular sum and percentage of contingency, would you like me to invite the Group Director back to the table?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes, please do, yes.

Group Director, Strategic Finance:

Hello, Andy Hacquoil, Group Director, Strategic Finance. Would you just repeat exactly the bit that you would like me to elaborate on?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

The question was in relation to budgets that have been set out in the Government Plan and it is also to foresee with inflation there would be a contingency measure in place for each capital project across all Government projects.

Group Director, Strategic Finance:

Is your focus on the line for central risk inflation?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes.

Group Director, Strategic Finance:

The line for central risk inflation is designed to be a provision against risk and inflation across all projects in the capital programme. The sizing of that is based on the scale of that programme. I am sure the panel will have noticed that in 2023 there is significantly more provided in that than it has been in previous plans and that is indeed because of some of the economic concerns you are currently facing. Some of the information in intelligence that we are getting in terms of the impacts of the current economic situation on material prices, labour prices, et cetera, so that has been calculated based on what those inflationary assumptions and intelligence is and that is why I say is a higher number.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Okay, thank you, officer.

The Chief Minister:

While we are talking about capital projects as well, of course the Integrated Technology Solutions programme is also a capital project; of course not a construction project but one related to I.T. I do not know if you would like ... we have got the Assistant Chief Minister here ...

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

This is going to be mentioned later on in the question plan.

The Chief Minister:

Okay, sure.

Assistant Chief Minister:

What I would mention on capital projects is when being presented to the Council of Ministers there was also a breakdown with regards to is this looking at information technology spend or construction to make sure that the appetite for any area was reflected with what would be realistic. Again, I think as the Chief Minister says, desirable perhaps for the previous Government Plan would not have been a realistic delivery of construction, so that was kind of again prioritisation to say what is deliverable within what the Government can invest in construction.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Okay, thank you. In relation to departmental services, what constraints do you believe there to be, potentially, for say some of your Ministers in their departments in terms of making sure that everything can be achieved?

The Chief Minister:

I think we have mentioned recruitment and retention earlier on and the care with which we took decisions about growth and the emphasis that that growth might have and the requirement on finding people and resource to make the growth happen.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

What particular departments do you feel will be most affected?

The Chief Minister:

Education and Health particularly are affected at the moment by recruitment and retention issues. We are working on it and that is why the Chief Executive has set her delivery unit to work on focusing on recruitment and retention. It is an area that we really want to see improvements made so that we can have a continuous, stable workforce providing our critical public services.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Have any other Ministers mentioned to you personally about the difficulties that they have in terms of recruitment of staff?

The Chief Minister:

I do not think we have had any particular discussions about other areas but ...

Assistant Chief Minister:

I would say each Minister, from my experience, is aware of some of the constraints within the local supply. Within technology it is obviously quite hard to find certain skills, whereas others are easier. I think the same can be found within the economy. I think most Ministers are having it but they are also managing it with their team.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes. In terms of when we are looking at the undersupply of labour, what measures have been deliverable measures to circumvent those issues?

The Chief Minister:

I would say there is discussion about automation and whether I.T. can support us and general productivity as well. I think the value for money programme looks at productivity and that is a key part of being able to deliver more with the same, is it not? But also if you would like the Chief Executive to talk to you specifically about the work of the delivery unit and how they look at recruitment and retention is about improving these processes and ensuring that we are a bit more productive in our ...

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes, please. Thank you.

Chief Executive Officer:

Thank you. Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive Officer, Government of Jersey. Just to talk about some of the recruitment issues and then I will talk a bit about the delivery unit. Of course the Chief Minister has referred to where the most critical shortages are in children's services in health. We also have some difficulties recruiting into infrastructure as well and obviously into technology services too because they are very, very specialised posts, so when you think of engineers, et cetera, we have difficulties there too. Each of the departments has been involved in their own programmes of trying to improve where they can get resources from, both on Island of course and working with the schools and with the private sector and with the college as well to bring through more on-Island skills in those professional areas. Also, if you look at the H.C.S. (Health and Community Services), for example,

they have a significant outreach programme bringing in expertise from around the world where we are able to recruit from and being really focused in terms of their particular needs, whether that is in specialist surgeons or whether that is in midwifery services, for example. The same in children's services, they have a very specific programme for recruitment of social workers as well. In terms of the delivery unit and the work that it is doing to support those departments, which is what it is there for, it is trying to look at all of the barriers to recruitment and retention and once we have recruited people, keeping them in those jobs and supporting them and ensuring they are valued in those jobs as well. It is speeding up the process from end to end. It is making sure that we are guiding the candidates through that process, looking at their needs, whether they are on Island or we are onboarding them from elsewhere as well, and making sure that we can provide them with those needs. The linkage is, for example, with accommodation on Island for some of our healthcare workers. Those linkages are being made and also it is made much more clear now as to what cost differentials are, what other additional benefits there are from working in Jersey or staying in Jersey for work.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Okay, thank you very much for that.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Sorry, can I jump in?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I think it is timely to ask some of these ones here. Just on this, is there a staffing plan, an overarching plan and if there is one can we see it?

Chief Executive Officer:

Each department is in the process of developing its workforce plan and each department is coming forward with that. I have timeframes to meet on those and that will then be developed into an overarching workforce plan for the Government.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay. That will be a document.

Chief Executive Officer:

That will be a document, absolutely.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

It will be scrutinizable.

Chief Executive Officer:

It will be, yes.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Excellent, okay, thank you.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Okay. Moving on to the next question, how has the Jersey Performance Framework been utilised in the creation of the Government Plan?

The Chief Minister:

The performance framework, I think we have alluded to that in terms of being able to ... it is more really about measuring how any changes that are made through this Government programme impact upon the community, hopefully, in a positive way and, therefore, it is a good tool for measuring those changes and identifying where they are occurring.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

How do you ensure there is a continued level of reappraisal throughout that time as well?

The Chief Minister:

Perhaps the Director General from the Cabinet Office would be able to talk to you about how the performance framework is used internally.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Absolutely, yes.

Director General, Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance:

Thank you. Tom Walker, Director General, Cabinet Office. The performance framework feeds into the Council of Ministers' considerations of their priorities, as part of the Common Strategic Policy process. As we know, we have a foundation, the Future Jersey public consultation that was done in 2016 and 2017 where Islanders expressed their long-term 20-year ambitions for Jersey. Then each Council of Ministers benefits from coming fresh out of elections, fresh from the doorstep, having heard the pressing issues for Islanders right now within that longer-term set of aspirations. The Jersey Performance Framework also feeds in where there are areas where Jersey is clearly

performing well against the framework and then those tend to not get reflected in the doorstep, they tend to not get such an emphasis within the Common Strategic Policy because they do not need it. Then those areas that are a real focus for Islanders and have been reflected through the political process tend to also be emphasised through the performance framework, through the objective statistics, those areas that need particular attention. That comes together and then as the new Council expressed in their Common Strategic Policy, the policy is then assessed on an ongoing basis against a range of different measures.

[13:15]

It is not just about one particular measure within the performance framework but it is about balance of performance against different measures and keeping a close eye on those areas where the Council has an ambition to start to turn the curve on some of those longer-term measures.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Thank you very much. In relation to the public sector workforce, of course, because there is an undersupply of labour, there are more opportunities for labour to migrate into new roles. Chief Minister, how are you ensuring that the public sector is an attractive place to work and also a place where we can be attracting the best possible employees as well?

The Chief Minister:

That is part of the whole package. I am perhaps biased, but I think Jersey is a wonderful place to live, but we also need to make sure that people are well remunerated and able to enjoy a good quality of life when they do come here to work. I outlined earlier issues we have with accommodation for staff, particularly in healthcare. That is certainly an area of some focus and we have worked with Andium to bring online some more units of accommodation particularly for our critical front line workers. We are continuing to do that and the Minister for Infrastructure was very helpful in progressing remediation works at Westaway Court so that it can once again be a safe, liveable environment for key workers. That should come online early next year.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Chief Minister, can you just expand in terms of the delivery of more units, especially for healthcare workers? How many projects could we potentially be looking at throughout this period of the Government Plan?

The Chief Minister:

That is an area of consistent focus. We need to ensure that not only our front line workers but everyone in the Island has access to a decent home. That is one of the reasons why we have the

objective assessment of housing need and we rezoned land under the Bridging Island Plan. But I found the debate and discussion among States Members last week very interesting in relation to St. Helier and the political views that were being expressed there that perhaps the current level of building for St. Helier was reaching a saturation point and we are seeing a lack of political appetite to see more homes delivered there. So we will be looking outside of St. Helier perhaps. I know that there are some rezoned sites outside of St. Helier, but perhaps we need to look at identifying some more sites, so that we can offer everyone in Jersey a decent home and a decent quality of life in and around that home.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Moving on, what effect has the creation of the Cabinet Office had on staffing and resourcing?

The Chief Minister:

It is early days and so I think it would be unfair to make any assessment based on this very early time. But what we are very focused on doing is ensuring that we are working at our optimum, at our most productive. The Cabinet Office is very focused on providing advice to Ministers but also on strategic delivery, particularly I.T. comes into that, and people services as well. So it is a large department but it is one that is very important.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The Cabinet Office exists now, so you must have some indication of what happens to staff for the purpose of its creation, whether anyone had to be recruited from outside the organisation into it to help establish it or contribute to the running of it as established, or whether you did that purely from the resources you already had but just rejigging them around.

The Chief Minister:

In the most part, perhaps, yes, would you like the Chief Executive to ...

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

If the Director General can give a clear and precise answer.

The Chief Minister:

The Chief Executive perhaps. The delivery unit was of course one area.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Sorry, my question is very specific in that the Cabinet Office has been created. Did you have to hire anyone from outside who was not already a Government of Jersey employee to enable that?

Chief Executive Officer:

Suzanne Wylie, Chief Executive Officer. The Cabinet Office was created by bringing a number of the departments together and we have talked about those departments previously. The answer is we did that with existing resources. Now that is not to say where there was a vacancy we did not fill a vacancy to help, for example, with the delivery unit, but that was from an existing budget from an existing vacancy. But in pulling the delivery unit together, because it is the newest part of the Cabinet Office, we are doing a number of internal recruitment programmes, so it is about moving resources around.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

There were existing vacancies that you chose to fill, so I see where that on the balance sheet is not an additional out-of-thin-air F.T.E. (full-time equivalent). Fine. Of vacancies that existed, have any of them become redundant because of the creation of the Cabinet Office and therefore you are being able to be more sleek in that sense?

Chief Executive Officer:

Just to be clear on the first question, because of course in terms of some areas like Public Health, for example - and I am looking at the Director General - and Statistics Jersey, et cetera, in the Government Plan you will see there is some growth there for specific posts within those areas, which would have been in the existing Strategic Policy and Planning Department. So those would have come through from S.P.P.P. (Strategic Policy, Performance and Population) and been put in as growth, so you will see those in the budget line. I guess my articulation is of the fact that the new posts from forming the Cabinet Office really did not happen, we did it within existing resources. But in terms of in each individual area that has been incorporated into the Cabinet Office, there are some additional posts in there as part of the growth bids that were made during the Government planning process. If that helps to answer the query that you have.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

It does. You have alluded to what we have down as question 25 here, which is about the table on this, which shows the staff costs going down for the Cabinet Office over the next few years. It starts at 41,978 and by 2026 it is 41,863. That is a small reduction. How did you anticipate delivering that?

Chief Executive Officer:

Of course, in bringing Cabinet Office together, we are looking at the number of senior staff in the Cabinet Office and looking at how we can rationalise reporting lines over the next period of time. That is a piece of work that is ongoing. We are also going to look at how we can bring together the parts of the previously separate departments that service those departments, so looking at the

business support functions and looking at how we can automate and share some of those services and make sure that we reduce any duplication that there is over that period of time.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

While that shows staffing costs going down over those 4 years, is that taking into account the prospect of salary increases for those who are working in that? In times of inflation there will be pressure from staff for pay increases. Do those figures take into account anticipations for pay increases?

Chief Executive Officer:

Pay increases are a centrally-held budget and inflation is accounted for centrally as well. I am going to look around and just make sure that I have answered the question correctly. So the answer is, no, they do not.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

We will move on to the next section of questions. In relation to department budgets, are you satisfied that there is an appropriate level of funding for each department and also accounting for inflation as well?

The Chief Minister:

We have made our best efforts to ensure that we can deliver strong and stable public services while making particular investments in areas that were much needed, such as education, children's services, the Chief Executive rightly highlighted, and also our healthcare services. In doing some of that, we also have a desire to ensure a greater level of continuity within our workforce, which will help us to make savings. If we are successful in our drive to improve recruitment and retention, then we will spend less money on agency staff, which will be something that the Council of Ministers will really welcome.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

If issues, for instance, do arise during the period of 2023, how will you best address that going into the next Government Plan?

The Chief Minister:

Do you mean in terms of the cost of living?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

No, in terms of if we are looking at Government budgets, for instance, being planned for but potentially there are concerns with there being a shortfall of planned-for budgets, how will the Council

of Ministers best prepare for next time in terms of what will the lessons be learned and how will you move forward?

The Chief Minister:

Every quarter there is an accounting process and it is a really important part of each Minister's duties to sit with their Director General and senior officials to ensure that they are satisfied that the budgeting is working and sitting within that which is set out in the Government Plan for the whole year.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Thank you very much. That is me, Chair.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Thank you. So, on to the value for money programme. What does value for money in public services look like?

The Chief Minister:

Value for money really means delivering the best level of services in the most efficient way.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The value for money test, the 3 Es, efficiency, economy, and effectiveness, in your Government Plan you specifically make reference to efficiency and effectiveness but not economy. Why is that?

The Chief Minister:

That is a very specific question. I cannot find the right page in my briefing pack to draw your attention to that. But economy would mean economising in the circumstances, I imagine, and ensuring that we are delivering both efficiency and effectiveness in the most value for money fashion, for want of a better phrase.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

How would you benchmark the value at which you are providing services against how the private sector might provide something equivalent? I appreciate that is not possible to do for all kind of public services.

The Chief Minister:

I guess perhaps education might be an area where I can easily think of a private sector equivalent. Education is obviously a great area of focus. We, as a public sector, want our children in public

sector education to experience the best possible education and formative years that they can. So we would be seeking to deliver services that are the best that we can within our budget requirements.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

You are setting my mind off with that example. As we know, in the fee-paying schools, some of which are completely private, as opposed to States-owned, the amount of money that would be spent on a student would be higher than what they would be in an equivalent States school because of the subsidy plus fees that they get for those students. I do not really know where I am going in raising that. But you have stated earlier on that education was a priority and a funding area and there has been the School Funding Review previously. In terms of economy, when it comes to comparing how much we would spend to educate a child in States school versus how much is spent on them in a private sector equivalent, have the consequences of that School Funding Review, which identified that, been taken into account in how you judge how much you need to provide for that particular service that you have chosen to raise, not me?

[13:30]

The Chief Minister:

Yes, I did. Perhaps not the best example to give but let us carry on rolling with it. So I guess there are very many different ways of looking at budgets, are there not? In education there will be capital allowances as well as revenue expenditure and that will largely be focused around the workforce. Of course, often the difference between private and public sector education is in class sizes. Clearly, we are meeting a much greater need in the public sector and so class sizes sometimes invariably will be higher. There is some pressure at the moment in terms of meeting the recruitment of teachers in particular and that is an area of focus for Government because we genuinely have chosen to invest in this area because we see that there is a need. Also, we want our teachers to stay and provide a consistent and fantastic education for our young children.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Going back to where I probably should have stuck with on that question when I posed it, there will be certain things in government departments that can be compared to how a private sector organisation may fund part of their operation. Do you think it is important to conduct any kind of benchmarking exercise to ensure that we are getting best value for money and, if I could put it in a slightly crude way, to make sure we are not being ripped off just because we are the Government?

The Chief Minister:

Perhaps other officials might want to talk about procurement and how we are trying to drive that value for money through procurement processes. But I could equally, if we go back to the education

as a crude example, point to greater economies of scale. So, where we have the greater numbers, we can also deliver a greater service by using that economy of scale. For example, I talked earlier about investment in school capital programmes and by delivering 2-form entry rather than one-form entry, that creates and generates an economy of scale and therefore an ability for that particular school's budget to deliver more for its children through that.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I think this might give rise to some questions we might put to you in correspondence that could be helpful about this point about benchmarking against the private sector.

The Chief Minister:

Did you want to talk about procurement?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I think we can deal with that perhaps on another point. So value for money, previous iterations of Government have wanted to achieve greater value for money and there have been varying degrees of success and there have been at times, in recent years, concern that value for money has meant cutting public services that people value. How is your approach any different to those previous attempts by different Governments?

The Chief Minister:

The value for money programme is a new methodology and we are very mindful also of the Comptroller and Auditor General's recommendation that, if trying to deliver savings, then they should be identified and assured for delivery prior to doing so. We have steered away in the time that we have had from that. This is very much more focused on a way of doing things, so we are back at thinking lean, for example, and also in adopting simpler administrative processes. So what can we simplify? Any form that needs to be filled in has to then be administered, so it places a burden on administration. As you know, we will be debating whether to remove G.S.T. (Goods and Services Tax) from food in the next Assembly. Of course, in doing so, there is an administrative burden. I am sure most States Members will be weighing up that question in their minds, whether the savings for householders are worth the administrative cost to the Government. Perhaps that is a useful example.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

You used the phrase "thinking lean". I seem to recall that term being used by a previous Minister for Treasury and Resources years ago. Are you using it in the same sense? I believe it was an acronym maybe. Are you using it in the same sense or are you just using it as the literal meaning of the word?

The Chief Minister:

I think “lean” is well-known and used. It is not an area that I am particularly an expert in, but it is one that has been used in the past. It is used widely across the world.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Thank you. We will follow that up with the Minister for Treasury and Resources. I was just checking in what context you were using the word, but that has answered that, thank you. I am conscious of time, so apologies for rushing through some of these. What monitoring will you do to make sure that when pursuing value for money measures, you are not having a negative impact on public services?

The Chief Minister:

That has been very much the emphasis that we have placed. We want to ensure that we are delivering value for money and that means efficient and effective processes to minimise the cost of doing all of that so that we can put the most on our front line delivery. Really that is, to go back to one of your earlier questions, part of our fresh approach because we have seen the need to invest in the front line. In order to properly deliver that and assure Islanders that we can, it means ensuring that we are at our fittest, most effective, behind the scenes, so that we are spending as little as we can on the administrative burden and spending as much as we can on the delivery of public services.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

But what I am trying to get at with my question is whether there will be a formal process for monitoring as opposed to simply asking Ministers to be politically vigilant. That is a fine thing to do but I am asking if it goes beyond that in terms of a process, which we can ask to see, and see how you monitor to make sure that is being done.

Assistant Chief Minister:

We will be building that into the scheme, but that will be varying depending on what the value for money exercise is targeting, whether it be more of an internal service or whether it be looking at closer to front line staff, but that will be a process.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

So there will be a process that we as Scrutiny can say: “Talk us through and we want to see how that works.”

Assistant Chief Minister:

I am sure our Chief Executive could probably tell us a little bit more about that.

Chief Executive Officer:

Suzanne Wylie, C.E.O. (Chief Executive Officer). The way that the value for money programme is designed, it will look for cashable savings targets and each department will have smart targets allocated to them. It will also look at productivity improvements and will carry out a number of best-value reviews each year over the 4-year term. Within those best-value reviews and the targets that are set within those, then there will be a monitoring process put in place so you can absolutely see it and scrutinise it.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

In relation to good public administration, when we are looking at say the healthcare service at the moment, there are obviously concerns, there are waiting lists that are building. So what can be done across this Government Plan to address the issues with the waiting lists and what can be achieved, do you think, in a timely manner?

The Chief Minister:

First of all there is a focus on workforce because, at the end of the day, healthcare is particularly focused on those front line workers who deliver critical services, but then there is also the process behind that and ensuring that it is effective and clear.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

How important do you think it is that a hospital is built, and built soon, because of course with the current hospital site it is becoming rather problematic in terms of day-to-day operations?

The Chief Minister:

There are some complexities with the current hospital site of course, but also what is most significant and what we can deliver change with by a new focus and a fresh approach is the culture. I spoke earlier about culture within the health service. There is a need to support our healthcare workers and we are starting to do that by the transformation work that is progressing and the speak-up champion that has been introduced and provided. So there is a much greater emphasis on providing that support and also ensuring that we have a safe and well looked after workforce.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Do you believe there has been a sufficient level of feedback with hospital users and also with the staff as well?

The Chief Minister:

We are getting a lot of feedback and we are starting to make sure that there is a central log of that feedback. It comes into various people in various ways and it is important that we bring it together to properly understand the strong themes that are apparent within it.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

How can we ensure that the healthcare service department can become more productive and more efficient and that we can be addressing the current waiting lists?

The Chief Minister:

Having a strong workforce is one of the first points there.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

But also, for instance, in terms of the current resources that are available, do you think there could be anything that could be done without the need for net inward migration, for instance, where we could be more attentive to the needs of those who are on waiting lists?

The Chief Minister:

The Hospital Review touches on the importance of digital healthcare and there are already some strong leaders in our health service who have a great interest in digital healthcare and how that can transform healthcare services. So that will, in the future, make our health service more productive as well, yes.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

How soon is it intended for the recruitment drive to happen in terms of the relocation of healthcare workers and also how soon can it be met where there is housing accommodation made available for those workers too?

The Chief Minister:

We have spoken around those 2 items. It is an area of focus and we are delivering more accommodation, but if you would like the Chief Executive to give some more detail?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes, please.

Chief Executive Officer:

I mentioned earlier that recruitment processes are ongoing and some innovative recruitment processes are ongoing for meeting specific gaps within the health service at this point in time. Of course, we do have 100 new keyworker units coming online over Christmas and into the New Year,

which will be very helpful to this process. We are also addressing how we allocate people to that particular accommodation in a much more straightforward way. In terms of waiting lists, of course part of the problem that we face, and other health services are facing, is having sufficient workforce to provide the care in people's homes and people's communities. That is clearly being looked at as well. I am working with other parts of the health sector and health family to improve that. We need to be looking at the workforce collectively as opposed to looking at it in silos. Of course, within this Government Plan, there is further investment in trying to reduce those waiting lists and a real focus now on how we are doing that across each of those individual specific medical areas that exist on the waiting lists. You will have seen that waiting list is now starting to come down in some of those critical areas.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Thank you very much for providing an answer there. Thank you, Chair.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Thank you. The last Government Plan detailed some different levers within each department that could be used to increase productivity, like implementation of zero-based budgeting, reductions in avoidable overtime, and reductions in agency staff, which you have mentioned there. Can you confirm whether or not those methods are intentionally being continued by this Government and if that emphasis is still contained within the value for money programme?

The Chief Minister:

We have acknowledged a reduction in agency staff is one item of focus. Then the other aspect you spoke about was reducing unnecessary overtime. Would the Chief Executive like to talk to that?

Chief Executive Officer:

Absolutely, as part of the best value reviews, issues like the use of overtime will absolutely be considered. Where we can reduce that, and obviously that will take some time to make sure we have the right level of workforce in place so we do not impact on service delivery unintentionally, but we do intend to take overtime levels down and make sure we have a sustainable workforce in place. Of course, when it comes to agency staff, there is always a balance of course, is there not, between when there is surge capacity, so winter pressures for example, that we may need to use agency staff. So it is not about completely removing that from the equation, but making sure that we have enough full-time equivalents in place and that will reduce agency staff over a period of time.

[13:45]

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Are those methods explicitly referred to in the Government Plan?

Chief Executive Officer:

I think they are explicitly referred to in what is being formulated as the value for money review programme. We certainly would be happy to talk to you specifically about that review programme and have your input to it.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The table in the Government Plan for value for money savings arrives at a total figure at the bottom of £10 million, a very convenient round number. How realistic is that?

The Chief Minister:

The first thing that comes to my mind is the amount of money that we are spending on agency staff and overtime. Therefore, by driving a more sustainable workforce, then I think that we should be able to meet those targets and hopefully we will over-deliver.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The department with the biggest contribution in that is Health and Community Services, so it would seem logical that if you can reduce your reliance on agency staff that can be a helpful way of meeting that target. But that is £1 million within that £10 million target there on that vital part of our public service. What risk, therefore, is there that you do struggle to meet that target and what pressure does that put on other parts of the service?

The Chief Minister:

At this stage I would prefer to focus on the opportunity that we have to deliver a great improvement in our healthcare service. It is an absolute desire from everybody around the Council of Ministers table; we want to support the Minister for Health and Social Services in that work. Equally, I am very grateful to the Chief Executive for her support in finding a way forward for us. Although it is early days, I am really pleased to see the progress that has been made.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I want to come back to the risk though, because you do have to be prepared for it and ensure that you have the flexibility you need so that if things do not quite go according to plan that you have not tied your hands behind your back and forced yourself to make decisions that are more difficult than you would like. How have you balanced that target off against risks, again for reasons that may be totally out of your control, that you might not achieve that?

The Chief Minister:

£1 million out of the amount of money that is being spent on agency staff, short-term accommodation, travel expenses, I think it could be delivered.

Chief Executive Officer:

Also in terms of non-staff costs as well, in terms of procurement and how we buy, how we share and use equipment better, how we work better with the third sector and the private sector, is all part of the analysis that we have done. Of course, in terms of health and increasing demands over time, we do have to be mindful that we do have an ageing demography, et cetera, and there will be increasing demands on health services over time, but that has been factored into the whole Government planning process. We do believe that these targets - and they are targets in terms of the efficiencies - that certainly through these value for money reviews, through these deep dives into the departments, we will be able to find savings.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

We will hold you to it. I have one more question on this and then I think we can pose some of those in writing and then move on to the last section, because I am just conscious of the time. The last question that I wanted to ask on this was specifically what the Cabinet Office's relationship is to the value for money programme.

Chief Executive Officer:

So the delivery unit, alongside Treasury and Commercial Services, and also people in Corporate Services, will all form the team that are going to carry out the value for money reviews. So there will be a relationship clearly with the Minister for Treasury and Resources and the Chief Minister to make sure that programme is properly overseen and that those reviews are focusing on the right things and that they are identifying what savings can be made.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The last batch of questions will be on I.T.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Chief Minister, can you confirm whether the Information Technology Investment Projects were previously named the Technology Transformation Programme, and, if yes, why has the umbrella term been disposed of?

Assistant Chief Minister:

I will have to think about that. The Technology Transformation Programme was, under the previous Government, a range of projects. We are looking to move away from that. We are looking to move towards a digitally-minded approach to the projects and services we deliver. Some of those

programmes, I think service digitisation fell under the T.T.P. (Technology Transformation Programme). It will still remain, but the focus really needs to be driven on their delivering a digital change, either to citizens or inside Government, and it is less about the technology you are using.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

What changes have been implemented since you have taken office compared to what was originally planned for under the last Government?

Assistant Chief Minister:

The first one I would call out maybe would be the electronic documents management or Enterprise Documents Management Service, which has also renamed Record Transformation. From our side, we were looking at really understanding the purpose: is this a programme based on a burning platform or is it a chance to refresh our mind as to what should this be delivering? We are now looking at taking that programme away from a procurement model, which is a sole capital project procurement of a consortia, and looking at this being a greater Government-owned programme where we build internal capabilities. That message of internal capabilities of digital is going to be the wider thread and E.D.M.S. (Enterprise Documents Management Service) is perhaps the first example of where we have made a decision on that.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Also, when it is coming down to some of the delays that we have seen with the completion of I.T. projects, why has this been?

Assistant Chief Minister:

Do you have an I.T. project in particular you would like to ...

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

If you can maybe just give us a breakdown in terms of the main ones that have come to your attention.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Feel free to speak your mind and speak freely on this because a lot of them pre-dated your time in office.

Assistant Chief Minister:

So where do we start? Let us start with I.T.S. (Integrated Technology Solution), shall we, which I trust you know I have my feelings about and I know the Chief Minister has feelings about, and has experienced that from being in Scrutiny.

The Chief Minister:

If I may, the starting point is, if we were to be starting, we would not start from here. So in terms of moving forward, I am very grateful to Deputy Curtis for his robust approach to driving greater accountability in this area. But we have to try to make the best of the circumstances that we find, given the decisions that the previous Government took to invest considerably in some of these projects.

Assistant Chief Minister:

Two areas I would call out, for example I.T.S., which is the most significant I.T. capital project I believe the Government has undertaken. One is when you deliver a large project all in one go, and you have signed a contract on that, you are under pressure to release resources to support that project, which ties your hands. If the Government cannot provide resources at the rate that a consortia or a programme deliverer want to, then that can inevitably slow a project. The second one would be if as a customer in this case, when you are not owning the delivery of your programme, you are looking at the level of business change requests that you might be having to the platform you want. That then adds time as the project has to go back and rethink how it delivers it. All the contracts under I.T.S. were signed by the previous Government.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

When we look at the some of the previous Government Plans, they have noted say the efficiency and rebalancing opportunities that will be presented through the investment in I.T., but with this Government Plan there has not really been that information made available, conspicuously.

Assistant Chief Minister:

The significant capital project being delivered and the changes to the department budgets are not necessarily about delivering those efficiencies. We have had to include I.T.S. because that was a procured platform that is in delivery. So within this Government Plan we are not looking at that. Within the department though that is really top of mind is how do we provide services within our department, as a department of change, not of just run. So that is part of a wider strategy for the department.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

In terms of the objectives that you would like to see across this Government Plan, what would they really be in terms of offering more sustainable public administration in this area that is under your remit?

Assistant Chief Minister:

I could start giving you my digital strategy for Government if you want, but previously I have not seen, and I do not think the Government has seen, a joined-up approach to delivering I.T. services. The previous model of corporation sole of each department have left us with mismanaged systems. If we want to get to a point where we can sustainably deliver the size and the breadth of services we need, we will need to be looking at the departments to work with Modernisation and Digitalisation as a central department with a greater mandate to orchestrate joined-up services, but that falls more within how do we have ways of working and less necessarily about this Government Plan.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Previously, there has obviously been more extensive expenditure under the previous Council of Ministers. Despite there obviously being a new Council of Ministers that has formed, do you think there are potentially difficulties with some departments where maybe there are projects that have been undertaken and they are potentially out of control in terms of there being excess expenditure that could still potentially be incurred moving forward?

Assistant Chief Minister:

Are we talking about I.T. projects?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes.

Assistant Chief Minister:

Within departments not under the control of Modernisation and Digital, just to be clear, was that your question, outside of the central department?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

In terms of when looking at good value for money for the public, do you think there potentially could be some projects that are being undertaken still currently and there could potentially be a risk involved where there is going to be excess expenditure being incurred, like we have obviously seen previously under the last Government.

Assistant Chief Minister:

There might be. That is part of the challenge with our current model of I.T. is that Modernisation and Digital do not have, necessarily, under the Public Finances Law, a requirement to dictate how I.T. projects are delivered. It is suggested that departments should consult with Modernisation and Digital but the law does not say that they have to.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

In relation to the decisions that you look to take to move forward, to offer better public administration, how would you justify the decisions you would take in terms of investment in the areas to improve resource for good value for money for the public?

Assistant Chief Minister:

For me, the best investment we can make is in people who can deliver services for us. Just to be analogous to the Health and Community Services, we know we will deliver better value for money if we have capabilities in-house to deliver. We will not need, for the range of services we need, gold-plated state-of-the-art systems. What we will need is I.T. systems and processes appropriate to our size. So any investment in having a capable workforce of delivering that in-house and reducing a dependency on consultancy and a larger capital procurement approach will hopefully deliver that value for money.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

In terms of making sure that this is of monetary benefit to the public, how will you ensure this messaging is conspicuous so the public are reassured that there have been improvements and they know what those improvements are?

Assistant Chief Minister:

That is something we can take away to look at our messaging from a technical perspective and we would welcome any feedback you might have.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

As well, I just have listed here, could you just give us an update on the progress to date of the Integrated Technology Solution overall? So the current position where we are now.

Assistant Chief Minister:

The programme is currently delivering releases 1 and 2 and 3. Releases 1 and 2 were in our forecast for delivery in January. Release 1 is Treasury and Supplies Ariba, which is our procurement side. There is a really important date that they need to reach, which is to allow us to switch over from J.D. Edwards, from an accounting perspective, over to Connect Finance. Release 2, Connect People, is also targeting January, although I appreciate, like I said, there are always challenges on resourcing some internal ...

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

So potentially there could be some constraints in terms of the delivery in a timely manner being seen here?

Assistant Chief Minister:

There could be, yes.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

In terms of the timeframe, how much time could we be looking at if there is going to be a delay? Would it only be a short time period or could it be more extensive where we are looking at a period of several months for instance?

[14:00]

Assistant Chief Minister:

At the moment, for example, release 1 is into U.A.T. (user acceptance testing) now, so they are doing user acceptance testing. The build phase is complete. So I would not forecast a long change there, we are tracking that quite well. Likewise, on release 2, the bulk of it, except for one or 2 integrations, is tested past systems integrations testing into U.A.T. So we are not looking at a long period, but we are seeking the certainty from the project team as to what those dates would be.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Also, given the expected timeframe, can you confirm that Supply Jersey has been replaced as part of the I.T.S. project as well?

Assistant Chief Minister:

Supply Jersey should be replaced by the component under release 1, which is known as Supply Ariba, so that is the product that should be replacing Supply Jersey.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Thank you very much. That is probably my questions there.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I will just ask quickly a couple of the final ones as we are just a moment away from reaching our time period. Looking at these I.T. projects from a staff perspective, it had been highlighted previously but the risk about having those 4 releases sequenced so close together and the impact that could have. With a delay for release 1, how is that being managed now so that sequencing is not too disruptive and can be managed effectively?

Assistant Chief Minister:

When you say a delay to release 1, do you mean the one that was back in May or January this year? Release 1 is not forecasting a delay.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

So which one was due to be implemented this year at the latest?

Assistant Chief Minister:

Release 1 and 2 are forecast for delivery in January.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

But with the sequencing as it currently stands, are you confident that is being managed appropriately?

Assistant Chief Minister:

At the end of the day, the resources from Government required here are for user acceptance testing. They come from the departments which are using the systems. So we are not looking to use Treasury resources for people and we are not looking at people for Treasury, but within each department there will always be constraints as to whether they can provide enough time.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Are you confident that staff will be able to cope with all of that coming in, in such a short space of time?

Assistant Chief Minister:

Of the things in the project is there is a significant amount of work on training and readiness, so I know that senior leadership and executive leadership teams have been walked through that, but it will come down to a wider message for leadership to really work through each department. They have had their message. Those who are procurers and those using the systems will also have had training, but we need it to come as well from the top that this is something to be invested in.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

From the top, great, but also at the bottom. Have you taken any time to just speak to random people whose daily working life will be affected by these new systems coming in, to understand how they feel about it and what concerns they may have? There are some people who do a job and who will want to have confidence in themselves that they can still effectively do that job under a new system and be able to report all the things that they need to and for them to not be worried that, if they suddenly find there is quite a significant amount of change, that it is not too far down the line to fix that. Have you had any conversations with people on the shop floor who could be affected by that?

Assistant Chief Minister:

Not yet, no. I appreciate that. But I would leave it at the point this is a new technology platform, but what I would say I felt on the shop floor is there are still processes that the Government used to be better at. A new kind of platform may not be replacing old, somewhat creaky systems. I know that the Assistant Chief Minister, the Constable of St. John, is really keen on focusing that it is not about systems, we need to make sure that the people using them are empowered with the right processes.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Final question, how much extra funding will you be asking for in the next Government Plan?

Assistant Chief Minister:

For I.T.S. I do not anticipate to be asking for any. The last update I was given from the team suggests we are running within the current budget.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

We will hold you to it, thank you. Thank you, Chief Minister, Assistant Minister. Thank you for your time. Thank you to all of the officers who have supported this meeting, both yours and our Scrutiny Officers supporting us as well. Thank you to anyone who is tuning in online to enjoy this - I hope they have got through their popcorn while watching this - and to those members of the public who have attended in person. Thank you very much. We have some questions we did not manage to get through that we will consider whether there is an appropriate way to get those in writing to you. But thank you for this. Is there anything that you would like to take the final moment as an opportunity to highlight to us that could be helpful?

The Chief Minister:

I would just like to thank you for your constructive questioning. It has been a helpful session. Also, we are writing to you with some answers that you have already posed to us in written form. But clearly we are very willing to conduct additional dialogue and certainly we have talked already about a briefing in relation to the value for money project. If there are any further briefings that you require as time progresses then we stand ready to support any of your needs.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Thank you very much. I call the meeting to a close.

[14:05]