

21.06.29

5 Connétable R. Vibert of St. Peter of the Chief Minister regarding political oversight group's approval of deferral (OQ.138/2021):

Will the Chief Minister advise whether he was consulted prior to the political oversight group's request to approve the deferral of £4.319 million, as identified in the report R.105/2021 regarding transfers between heads of expenditure, in relation to the projects entitled Electronic Document Management, Cyber (Major Project), Court Digitisation or Regulation Digital Assets?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré (The Chief Minister):

Yes, I did participate firstly in the political oversight group meeting on 18th February, at which it was decided to request the Minister for Treasury and Resources, following consultation with other relevant Ministers, to defer £17.796 million of funding from existing capital programmes and reallocate this funding to our hospital project. The Council of Ministers were consulted during meetings on 1st April and 27th April and agreed to the transfers. I participated in both of those meetings. Obviously papers were shared with the Council of Ministers in advance of those meetings. It is worth just making the point that obviously the hospital is an extremely critical part of our infrastructure and it is really not acceptable to let the existing hospital deteriorate without having an alternative. Therefore, the hospital project is critical. What we are dealing with is slippage or underspends in other or existing projects. It is a cashflow issue and essentially what we have done is looked at the efficient use and management of our cashflow to address the consequences of the delays that occurred as a result of the debates in the Assembly towards the end of last year, which were not anticipated in the original programme. But it is not additional spend.

5.5.1 The Connétable of St. Peter:

Can the Chief Minister confirm that we are likely to see these funds requested again by the relevant departments in the next Government Plan?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

The mechanism we are still working through because obviously the next Government Plan is in the process of being produced. But what I will absolutely say is that this is a cashflow issue; it should not be regarded as an additional increase in expenditure.

5.5.2 Senator K.L. Moore:

At the time of the Government Plan 2 years ago, it was argued that the cyber project and monies allocated to it were of critical importance and it was essential that this work was conducted in the quickest time available. Could the Chief Minister describe what has changed and why this project that was then deemed critical is no longer so important?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

The simplest way would be to refer the Senator back to the Scrutiny hearing we had on Friday where the director general gave quite a detailed explanation as to the rationale behind it. But essentially delays did occur through COVID and he was satisfied, relative to the risks that the Senator is alluding to, having been prioritised and having been satisfied.

5.5.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

The electronic document management referred to there, does that apply to the communication between G.P.s (general practitioners) and other workers in the community and the hospital? Because a delay there will seriously affect the Jersey Care Model, will it not?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

My understanding is that is not the case. But I will go back and double-check that. What I can say is that there has been a delay. The 2 areas that it is mainly relating to are the tech files, which need to be in place before they move to the new office building in mid-2024, and what is referred to as the health files, which I do not think is the interaction between G.P.s and the health service. I think it is the personnel and personal health files that are maintained in paper form and they were in the basement of the General Hospital. It is about getting those essentially put into an electronic format. That needs to be done before the move to the new hospital in hopefully 2026. Despite the changes in the programme, we remain confident that those deadlines will continue to be met. So I do not believe - but I am very happy to check - that it is exactly the area that the Deputy is referring to.

Connétable D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence:

I have indicated that I would like to ask a question but it is not in relation to this question.

The Bailiff:

Then it is not in accordance with Standing Orders and it will have to wait until when the Chief Minister is answering questions more generally. Final supplementary question, the Connétable of St. Peter.

The Connétable of St. Peter:

No, thank you.