

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 24th SEPTEMBER 2013**

Question

Given the substantial underspends in both 2012 and 2013 amounting in total to over £40 million, does the Chief Minister consider that the below inflation pay offer to the public sector, removing some £14 million from departmental spending, remains justifiable?

Will he consider returning to the negotiating table with public sector representatives with a fresh offer to end the continuing dispute?

Will he, in particular, consider consolidating those elements of the offer that are currently unconsolidated?

Answer

Departmental underspends are one-off items which may occur for a variety of reasons. For instance: -

- 1 - a department may decide it would be prudent to spend some of its budget the following year, or circumstances may have delayed the relevant project.
- 2 - a department may have made required savings earlier than required – like Home Affairs during the CSR process.
- 3 - there may have been an amount allocated for a specific purpose, like Income Support, all of which is ultimately not required.

Salaries, on the other hand, are a continuing expense which cannot be funded by one-off underspends.

There are no plans to make a further financial offer to public sector representatives. We have reached agreement with many staff groups, for example Nurses, Police, Prison and Fire Service. We continue to have constructive discussions with other pay groups about a wide variety of workforce issues.

The pay awards made to public sector employees are fair and prudent within the Island's finances.