



Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel

Quarterly Hearing

Witness: The Chief Minister

Wednesday, 27th September 2023

Panel:

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

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

Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter

Witnesses:

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

Connétable A.N. Jehan of St. John, Assistant Chief Minister (1)

Deputy A. Curtis of St. Clement, Assistant Chief Minister (2)

Deputy L. Stephenson of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter, Assistant Chief Minister (3)

Ms. M. Mathias, Director of Delivery and Improvement

Mr. P. Wylie, Group Director of Policy

Mr. M. Grimley, Chief People and Transformation Officer

[9:00]

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

Good morning and welcome to this Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel quarterly public hearing with the Chief Minister and some of her Assistant Ministers as well. For the benefit of the tape we will just go round introducing ourselves as usual. 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, and I am the vice-chair of the Corporate Services Panel.

Deputy L.J. Farnham of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter:

Deputy Lyndon Farnham, an ordinary member of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel.

The Chief Minister:

Deputy Kristina Moore, Chief Minister.

Assistant Chief Minister (1):

Andy Jehan, Assistant Chief Minister,

Assistant Chief Minister (2):

Deputy Alex Curtis, Assistant Chief Minister.

Assistant Chief Minister (3):

Deputy Lucy Stephenson, Assistant Chief Minister.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Just the last formality; can you just confirm that you have read the Scrutiny statement and understand how these proceedings all work? No, I do not think it has changed.

The Chief Minister:

It is just in a different format.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Different font, yes.

The Chief Minister:

I presume it is the same message which we are all familiar with, thank you.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Indeed, absolutely. Okay, thank you very much. So we have sent you the question areas in advance, and the first set of questions we were going to ask are about the Ministerial Plan for 2023 and your priorities. To start, can I ask you about your areas that you call your relentless focuses? Can you just outline for us how you think you have progressed on those and what you are anticipating in terms of delivery of results from that?

The Chief Minister:

Absolutely, thank you. We are very pleased to be here and to talk to you at this quarterly hearing, particularly to look at our areas of relentless focus. We feel that we came into Government with a

mandate for change, and we had listened clearly to the public and were aware of the issues that are impacting everyday Islanders, and that is why we chose our 3 areas of relentless focus, to speak to them, to meet their needs and to ensure that we deliver on that agenda that they are expecting of us. Of course, underpinning all of that are our commitments to being open and transparent. It has been a journey but I believe that the Ministerial Plans that we have set out are being clearly delivered on. We started that with our 100-day plan, which was a real opportunity and an experience to work together with the public service. I think we all proved how when we focus we can deliver. So working through the areas of relentless focus, the cost of living is of course number one. There, we delivered our mini-Budget on entering Government, and that focused on putting more money in the pockets of Islanders. We have just recently published another Government Plan, which follows a similar path, increasing tax allowances so that a single person can earn up to £20,000 before they pay a penny of tax. That enables people to manage their own budgets to meet their own needs and puts more money into their pockets so that they can spend it in the economy as it suits them and the needs of their family. We have also expanded the school hot meals programme, which was an early commitment, and we are working on a pilot to ensure that even more children access school meals, again removing cost from family pockets but also improving health outcomes for children. We can see that there is an obesity issue and we can see that children do not perform as well when they do not have a nutritious meal in their stomachs. That is, for me, a really critical thing to achieve. We have also, and unfortunately the other Assistant Chief Minister for Financial Services, who is also the Minister for Social Security, is not with us now, but she has done her bit by increasing the minimum wage to £10.50. We are waiting for the Employment Forum's next report and we will be looking at where that goes next. She has also increased income support payments by 10.4 per cent in the last year, reduced G.P. (general practitioner) surgery visits by £20, and made changes to G.P. prescribing rules to reduce the number of visits needed to receive regular medication. There are also several other areas, including the Community Cost Bonus, which we have increased, and also, with the help of an amendment, increased the group of people who can now receive the Community Cost Bonus. As you will be aware, there are also plans in place to provide that at an earlier point during the year. There was also the decision of States Members earlier this month to increase the Christmas bonus. So all of these things come together, alongside many others, to ensure that Islanders have the means to weather this cost-of-living crisis that we are seeing at the moment, and to move forward. Another of our 3 areas of relentless focus is, of course, housing. You will see that yesterday the Minister for Housing and Communities announced his proposals to spend that £10 million that has sat in the budget of the previous Government for the entirety of its tenure of office. Now we have come forward with a concrete proposal and are calling on expressions of interest for Islanders who want to buy a home but need some support in order to do that. The shared equity scheme will be a positive way of doing that. That will require a 5 per cent deposit. We also, in our Government Plan, have introduced stamp duty rates for first-time buyers, which will ease the burden for first-time buyers who have the ability to make that first step on to the property ladder because

we believe in home ownership and we want to increase owner occupation. That is the measure that we want to be measured by and we are committed to doing that because we know that Islanders want to get on to that property ladder, and that will ensure that they have a good quality of life into the future. I can see that you are wanting me to move forward ...

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

We have got lots of supplementary questions.

The Chief Minister:

... but we have a lot to talk about, and we have not started on recruitment and retention yet, which is our third area of relentless ...

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Can I push you very, very quickly on recruitment and retention and we will come in with some supplementary questions?

The Chief Minister:

Our third area of relentless focus - I am sure we will be able to go into some of the detail on our other 2 areas, which I have not touched on - but as a broad-brush point recruitment and retention is an issue both in the public and the private sector, but we are particularly proud of the work that the delivery unit has done. First, they went into education to support schools and ensure that there was a minimum number of vacancies at the start of term this year. They have done that really successfully and there are only, I believe, 8 supply teachers in schools at the beginning of term. We have got additional teaching assistants working across the Island, and I think that that is a great step forward. We have also improved access to accommodation for our key workers, finding an additional 132 units of accommodation for those key workers, which helps to save them money to make life more affordable for them in the Island where they are here to deliver key services for Islanders. It also has saved us money as a public service, saving £250,000 in one quarter alone. We see that as a great step forward and we will continue in the rest of our term of office to achieve and to deliver for the public, as they expect us to do.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Thank you. A technical question now. In the Common Strategic Policy, there are your headline priorities in that. What is the difference between a priority and an area of relentless focus?

The Chief Minister:

We have 3 areas of relentless focus because a lot of issues fall under those areas of work. I think it is important that we provide focus. It provides clarity to the civil service in their work. They

understand exactly what this Government is about, exactly what we want to deliver and how to do it. Our priorities for underneath that is we have big aspirations for the Island, and there is an awful lot to achieve. We have had 4 years where things have not got done and there has been a huge sense of frustration in the public minds. We want to go into a different gear and we want to deliver for Islanders on the priorities that they have told us that they want to see because ultimately all of us here are members of the public who have the honour of being in the room, have the honour of asking questions on behalf of their constituents and have the honour of making decisions for them.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

This is a technical question, though. In terms of how the Government administers its plan and its programme, how does it measure ... what is an area of relentless focus versus a priority? I am just checking that there is an understanding beneath the words of what they mean because an area of relentless focus as a title is not something that we had in previous C.S.P.s (Common Strategic Policy) or strategic plans before that. What is the technical difference or is it just ...

The Chief Minister:

We have a clear government programme now, do we not, with Ministerial Plans, delivery plans that will come later, and we have obviously the common strategic priorities set out, the overall vision, the direction. I think that is what the 3 areas of relentless focus do. Then underneath it, full buckets of work. We are all aiming to meet the priorities that have been set out very clearly with the ultimate goal of making Jersey a community where everyone can thrive.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Do you think that that is done clearly and in an understandable way and presented clearly in the Government Plan? The reason I ask that is because in our previous review of the last Government Plan, we had recommended that the threads between those priorities and areas of relentless focus was made clearer because often we were seeing things proposed that did not make reference to those, and so it was not clear exactly politically how that had been arrived at.

The Chief Minister:

I think our 3 areas of relentless focus run through everything that we do, and that is why they are called areas of relentless focus. I think we heard very loud and clear the feedback from the Scrutiny Panel with regards the Government Plan, and I hope that you will find that it is clearer this year and it does make those connections. Also we have provided a summary document, as you recommended ... I am just trying to find other examples to make sure that I do not forget them. But I hope that you will see that we have heard very clearly your recommendations and met them.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

We have some more questions on that a little bit later in this hearing just to take in on that.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

A quick question from me on inflation. We note the help given to Islanders to help with the cost of living by keeping or putting more money in certain Islander's pockets, but inflation is a blight on any community. Although we have limited actions we can take because inflation is impacted upon by national and global factors, what single action has your Government taken that has created a tangible impact in reducing the rate of inflation?

[9:15]

The Chief Minister:

We have restrained our expenditure. We have put more money in the pockets of Islanders so that they can weather that cost of living. But we are seeing that inflation is starting to turn around. We, as you say, have very few levers, but we have a cost-of-living strategy group who meet regularly and consider how we can tweak those levers that we do have. Of course, that comes down to regulations and other actions that we can do.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Do you know if any of the, I think 6 or 7, I can't remember, recommendations of the Anti-inflation Strategy Group have been implemented?

The Chief Minister:

Those are being tracked. Unfortunately, I was not able to attend the meeting yesterday and so I missed out on the update.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Okay, no problem. I just wondered if there is any particular thing that we could do that actually brings our rate of inflation down slightly.

The Chief Minister:

I said that there are levers that we do have - we do not have the big levers that you would expect or that other nations have - but we do, in terms of a large employer in the Island and a large spender in the Island, have to tighten our belts, just as Islanders do, and ensure that we are not putting too much cash into the economy.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Okay. Thanks.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

In the 2023 Ministerial Plan, so looking at what has already come forward - not for next year - the projects in there have delivery timescales outlined in them, are all of those for this year due to be met. If they are not, can you explain why?

The Chief Minister:

I have a helpful chart here to go through if you would like me to.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Shall we stick to any that are not going to be met with an explanation why?

The Chief Minister:

Yes, so we have some that are ongoing pieces of work, such as the new public service code of conduct, the maintaining and improving of People Services, which is, as you will imagine, quite a long-term project. The Assistant Ministers' forum, which supports the Council of Ministers, that is something that continues through our term of office, of course.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

But once something like that has been established, you can say it has been established, it is closed. I am talking about the ones that have closure dates set for them where a specific aim or achievement has been done. Are there any that are likely to miss the timescales that were put in there?

The Chief Minister:

I have 2 here that are delayed. One is opening the constituency offices, but we are very pleased to see now that the Greffe has put in a growth bid to deliver that in the Government Plan, albeit in 3 pilot projects in different constituencies. But we really welcome that because we see that having constituency offices and enabling States Members to conduct their work and representing their constituencies is a really positive thing. The strategic roadmap for sustainable finance, where we have had a resource issue and we are working with consultants now to fill a gap and deliver that strategic roadmap for sustainable finance.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Any idea when a new target date will be set for that?

The Chief Minister:

That will depend and obviously we will work and deliver it as soon as we can.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay. One item that was in the delivery plan was the Living Costs and Household Income Survey. We have seen the publication of the Jersey Household Income Distribution report. Slightly different titles there, but is that the same thing?

The Chief Minister:

Would you like me to give you a technical answer to that, which is quite a technical question?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay. Please introduce yourself for the tape.

Group Director of Policy:

I am Paul Wiley. I am the group director of policy in the Cabinet Office. The Living Costs and Household Income Survey was, as you know, delayed due to COVID. It was published early this year. The expenditure analysis, which I think is what you are interested in, is due to be published on 31st October.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay, thank you. Based on what has been published so far, how has that been fed into your decision-making and the policies that you have been pursuing? Is it cited anywhere along the process? I am seeing nodding.

Group Director of Policy:

As the Chief Minister mentioned, the Cost-of-Living Ministerial Group meets regularly and met just yesterday. We use this data to inform our policy proposals, which Ministers then take. What I would say though is none of the information, particularly because it is almost historic now, was a surprise. What the Economy Department are doing very well is starting to build distributional analysis that would allow us to better identify what is happening to individual households closer to real time rather than always waiting for the survey, which is very useful, but it will always be historic.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

One of the things that becomes very clear from the reports that we have seen on this, not just the most recent ones but ones before that as well, was the impact of the cost of rent on income inequality in the Island and the numbers of people who are living in relative poverty. That is not just private sector rent but even social rent as well, pushing people into relative poverty. Have there been any discussions around the Council of Ministers' table about that specific point of data that comes through from that, that proves that to be the case, and any attempt to use it to set an agenda for policies that might seek to relieve that?

The Chief Minister:

We have met with estate agents. As you know, I think it was discussed quite widely in an earlier part of our term, we recognise that housing costs absorb a large part of people's budgets. As free marketeers, we took the view that it is not right, and it has not been proven to be right in many other leading economies, to impose restraints and controls on rent levels. But we have made it clear, and made it clear to Islanders who are tenants, that it is unacceptable to see large rent increases, particularly at this time. We, I think, see and hear that in the main that the market has understood that.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

"The market has understood that"; what does that mean?

The Chief Minister:

That people understand that it is not the thing to do. Also it drives people away. I think the market is changing. We watch that very closely.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Do you mean that rents are not going up?

The Chief Minister:

There is greater level of restraint in the market. Certainly you mentioned Andium Homes, and they have very clear rent policies which thanks to the ...

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

You almost said "rent control" there, did you not?

The Chief Minister:

Rent policies, and that 80 per cent has, which was agreed by the Assembly, made their bottom line harder to manage. That provides them with a challenge. But they have accepted that that was the will of the Assembly.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

They have to, they do not have a choice in that. There is currently a consultation going on, although submissions have closed for a White Paper that included rent control in it. By your previous answer, are you suggesting that that is not something that the Council of Ministers ideologically agrees with?

The Chief Minister:

Personally - I can speak personally - it is not something that I think has been proven to work in other places.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

So why would the Government be consulting on something when the head of the Government does not agree with the policy it is consulting on?

The Chief Minister:

That is a matter for the Housing Unit, who put together that paper, and I think they wanted to hear people's views on a variety of measures, which is the whole point of a consultation.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

But it is your area of relentless focus as well.

The Chief Minister:

It is.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

So you would consult on something that you would not be prepared to do?

The Chief Minister:

But I do not agree with what everybody does all of the time, and I think it is the purpose ...

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

But it is you and your Government, it is not other people.

The Chief Minister:

The purpose of a consultation is to welcome the views of people. As you know, we have taken a very different approach to engaging with the public, and we welcome opportunities to hear what the public think.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Is it helpful to ask the public what they think on something that you already say you do not agree with and presumably would not want to do? Does that help improve?

The Chief Minister:

That would be a matter for the Assembly. I am sure that whatever we put in a proposition ...

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

It will be a matter for the Government what the Government proposes.

The Chief Minister:

Yes, but whatever we might put in a proposition, it will go to the Assembly and ultimately the whole of the Assembly will be able to have their view. It is helpful for views to be expressed in a consultation.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I suppose the gut feeling is that, given the housing market and inflation, one thing and another, that with the cost of housing coming down, that rents may have stabilised somewhat, which I think is what you are alluding to, do you have any statistics or evidence to show that or is it pretty much a sensible gut feeling currently?

The Chief Minister:

Currently, this is, as I say, something of a gut feeling. I look at the newspaper and note that there seems to be a higher number of properties being advertised at the moment and in other fora. We continue to engage with different parts of the economy, and I met relatively recently with the estate agents.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I cannot remember, maybe an officer can help. Are there any statistics that are gathered regularly currently that can report on the private rental market?

Group Director of Policy:

As we discussed, at the Cost-of-Living Ministerial Group yesterday, we are waiting for the latest round of inflation projections from the Fiscal Policy Panel in October and, as you say, include rental.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Would the Chief Minister agree to treat that as a priority to get those figures to hand?

The Chief Minister:

They will be published by the Statistics Unit.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Quick follow-up on that: is that actual rents or advertised rents?

Group Director of Policy:

I will have to write to you on that, I am afraid. But I believe it is actual rents.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec: If it is actual rents, how do they capture data on rent increases in ongoing tenancies or tenancies at the point of renewal for a sitting tenancy when there is no reporting mechanism for that?

The Chief Minister:

I think it is best if we ask ... either you can have a briefing from the head of Statistics or we provide you with a written response to ensure that we give you absolute clarity.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Indeed. Let us change subjects. You might want to wish to stay for this next one.

Group Director of Policy:

It is actually me, yes.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Thank you, Chair. Chief Minister, I would like to firstly ask you a question about gender pay. The Government from 2024 will start to publish gender pay across every single government department alongside the income ratio. However, is there going to be any intent to drive economic policy for gender reporting and also for income ratio reporting for non-public sector entities?

The Chief Minister:

We think that this is an area where we have to take the lead, which is why we have chosen to move towards reporting for Government and we are encouraging the private sector to do so. However, at this time, where there are cost constraints, there are inflationary pressures, there is a constrained workforce. What we want to see and ensure is that the economy can drive as best it can, and adding layers of bureaucracy and regulation to that, however well-meaning, is sometimes going to cause friction. So this is an area where we hope that by taking the lead and also by providing tools to help the private sector to do their own measurements and reporting, we will see a greater reporting of this important matter because it is in everyone's interest that we have a workforce that as many people are as active in our workforce as we can. So the issue of gender pay is critical to that.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Do you think this will potentially be something that can be deliverable during this term of office, so before the end of 2026?

The Chief Minister:

As I have said, we are quite mindful at the moment that what we want to do is deliver value for money and better-quality services. We do not want to introduce any greater friction in the local economy than is necessary. We encourage the private sector to move forward and to do their gender reporting because I think most of them are really interested in encouraging as many people into the workplace as they can and will be following that issue very closely themselves. However, we will take a view as we progress. We obviously want to move towards that point, but at the moment it does not seem a sensible thing to do.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

So there is obviously a difference between, say, encouragement and then, say, bringing forward policies.

[9:30]

In terms of the implementation of policies, is this something that we could see before the end of this term once things have maybe calmed down a bit more in the economy?

The Chief Minister:

What we want to see is family life and people's quality of life improve. We have a declining birth rate here at the moment. We can see that many of our areas of relentless focus contribute to that declining birth rate, which is an active decision I think for many people. That contributes to long-term issues for our population and our community. What we want to see is a greater focus on those elements that get as many people working and operating in our local economy as we can. That has to be our core focus.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

I think many people would probably argue in terms of looking at quantitative data, that is what will allow the Government to be more informed to then implement policies. However, if we are not collating data, how can we be informed to then make those policies?

The Chief Minister:

I hear your point but there are different ways of collating data, are there not? We can sometimes take anecdotal data just by listening and engaging with people, as well as collecting it, because there is ... and I think Paul is wanting to provide some additional detail.

Group Director of Policy:

Yes, just to amplify what the Chief Minister is saying, we do have data but we have chosen to do that in a more proportionate way, because if we were to emulate what the U.K. (United Kingdom)

did, you would be talking to mainly companies of 50-plus employees, and there are other ways to persuade those companies. Often we are pushing through on an open door. Through the leadership of the Chief Minister and Deputy Miles, Deputy Doublet and Deputy Jeune, we are developing a diversity, equality and inclusion approach, and we can build on the data that Jersey Statistics were able to provide and will continue to provide around using management information to look at gender across the pay sectors.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Even, for instance, if we are looking at some of the research that I have conducted, because obviously I brought forward the original proposition, some jurisdictions will appoint a body who will be deliberately there for a purpose to have firms report the data to them, whereas, say, it will be maybe the Government who takes responsibility for firms reporting data to them. So longer term, how will the process work? Will there be an independent body being set up potentially or do you think it would just be the purpose of reporting to the Government directly?

The Chief Minister:

I do not think we are at a point where we could say that, but I would simply refer back to what I have said earlier, which is at the moment, with the constrained workforce that we have, it is in every employer's interest to be meeting the needs of all of its employees and being as attractive as it possibly can so that they have people to contribute to the services and the business that they deliver for the Island.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Okay, thank you very much, Chief Minister. I will move on to the next section of questions. We do note, as a panel, that you officially launched your Government Public Engagement Framework on 14th September 2023. Please may you outline why you did this?

The Chief Minister:

Because we, at a very high level, are committed to engaging with the public and to being more inclusive, to listening. We think that that is an important thing to do. Would you like Deputy Stephenson, as she has taken the time to be here, to talk to that?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Indeed.

Assistant Chief Minister (3):

I think as the Chief Minister has exactly said, we have made a commitment to engagement and engaging better. The whole point of the engagement framework is to provide a consistent approach

across government, recognising that it does not necessarily come naturally to everybody in all departments, and also very conscious that sometimes there may be a tendency to try to over engage. It is not a case of one size of engagement fits all. This provides a workable framework that there is now a best practice guide ready to go imminently, that is about to be promoted across the organisation. Training is being lined up, I think, for the first quarter of next year. Is that right?

Group Director of Policy:

Next month.

Assistant Chief Minister (3):

Next month; apologies.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Could we maybe just look at what is maybe new to this framework that, say, our predecessors did not utilise in terms of engaging the public?

Assistant Chief Minister (3):

I think that there was not a framework for policy officers to work to at all. I think there were pockets of good practice going on, but there was not a consistent framework across government. So this provides the tools and the opportunities to stop along the stages of your work and recognise engagement as being an important part of the process along the way; signposting where else you go to for further support and information should that be required.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

What process is in place to ensure that there is a reappraisal of how successful this framework is as we go along?

Assistant Chief Minister (3):

I think maybe I might have to go over to Paul for that answer.

Group Director of Policy:

I am the senior responsible officer under Deputy Stephenson's leadership, to make sure that it is happening. We are very much in the implementation phase but, as with all policy, an element is once you are into delivery phase, you evaluate and you iterate and you improve. So it will be part of the delivery, but not yet.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Okay, thank you very much. Thank you, Chair.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

In the Ministerial Plan, it notes that an end date for the 30th of October for the “Integrated Technology Solution (TTP) (Major projects)”. Firstly, are you anticipating meeting that end date?

Assistant Chief Minister (2):

No, we are not for the functionality that we hope that the system will deliver.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay. When do you think it might be met?

Assistant Chief Minister (2):

We are looking at more of a phased rollout for the features within release 2 now. I would not have the exact date of when the first part of that release will roll out.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

What benefits are you anticipating getting, as it is phased out?

Assistant Chief Minister (2):

We are hoping to get the benefits of any modern E.R.P. (enterprise resource planning) system and management system of the workforce. So we are hoping to be able to support the Assistant Chief Minister and the chief officer of People and Transformation in better managing the workforce and supporting them, delivering training, as well as obviously having a system that can run that is secure and compliant and up to date. But it has to be stated that if we were to look at a project where we were looking for the benefits of a system against the investment one would be making, this would not have been the project that this Government would have chosen to have done.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Can I just ask, Deputy Curtis, why 30th October is not going to be met?

Assistant Chief Minister (2):

Yes. So the programme, as you may be aware, was a programme of 4 releases to cover different functionality. The way the programme was to be delivered required that integration to many core services, often the hardest part - for those who work in technology understand - to deliver was still held within government and the ability to reliably integrate with some of the people systems under the way it was proposed was not possible. Unfortunately that requires a rethink as to how to integrate. But it is absolutely important that when you deliver a system, especially around people

and integrating for payroll, that you obviously support the workforce and you do not put anything out that will risk the workforce not having the right systems.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

What feedback are the workforce providing?

Assistant Chief Minister (2):

On which part of the release?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I guess any part. But the parts that are now not to be in place by the dates that were initially anticipated. I guess I am asking: is that as a result of feedback of employees saying ...?

Assistant Chief Minister (2):

No. So release 2 was not able to go live on the expected date and is a main challenge. Release one, which supplies Ariba for the procurement, and obviously the parts for Treasury to be able to run the government side of the accounting, are released and rolled out. We cannot roll out a system that maintains a record of people internally until it can reliably integrate with whichever system we use for payroll. The choice of the existing programme was not to replace the payroll system, leaving a complex integration. Without the confidence that you can integrate you have a real risk, and obviously with the focus on recruitment and retention, it is not worth risking the impact to the people who work really hard in the organisation on such a critical part of their job.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Not including the payroll in that then, was that a decision that predates this Government?

Assistant Chief Minister (2):

That predates us.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Was it the correct decision?

The Chief Minister:

Well, as Deputy Curtis I think rather diplomatically stated, we would not have chosen this system.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I was going to take down on that, yes.

The Chief Minister:

We are trying to make the very best of an extremely poor set of decisions. The previous Government spent tens of millions of pounds on this system and, as the Deputy said, it is not one that we would have chosen. Many of the decisions we think were rather lacking but we are doing our best to make the best of a bad lot and move forward so that we can deliver a more efficient public service, which is ultimately why organisations choose to adopt different technological solutions, because we know that we want to focus on delivering quality services with best value for money for Islanders. But this is not an easy situation to be in.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I appreciate the frankness and feel free to start off less diplomatic on that in future, if you want to. Given what we have just heard then, what has been your strategy, if you could kind of sum it up in layman's terms, to undo what you clearly regard as having been poor decisions previously or to rectify them?

Assistant Chief Minister (2):

So I think with I.T.S. (integrated technology solutions) the ship largely had sailed, and that was part of the problem with the programme. What we found when we came into Government was a programme that pretty much had been signed away and required the government to be able to function as fast as the delivery team. What we have done is we have obviously made pragmatic decisions on I.T.S. to not look at increased spending but prioritise the function we need. So that has been a clear decision to not say we are going to keep looking to increase funding. We are looking at how to best use the funding allocated and get the best value for money there. We have brought in obviously some of the change management and programme leadership of running I.T.S. within the department, and that has seen a much greater input. I am sure the Connétable can talk to that, if we need. But I think the big learning is moving beyond I.T.S., how do we procure I.T. (information technology) and how do we deliver digital in the future. We have made big changes there, which I can go into detail on, if you wish.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

We saw it reported recently that the Government was not intending to produce annual reports on the financial benefits of the I.T.S. system. What was the reason for that? Given what you have just publicly said frankly about decision-making up until this point, would it not have been helpful to have an open approach on that so people can see that and understand the issues that there have been?

Assistant Chief Minister (2):

I cannot personally talk on the decision to not make financial reports. A programme like I.T.S. obviously is a technology and digital programme, but serves departments. So financial reporting on

that I think would have been a decision perhaps made within Treasury and Resources, as to them as a user of release one. But I think we have to be frank about the benefits and challenges of investment in significant sums of money in I.T. I am confident that we have taken many lessons learned from this previous approach. We are not repeating them. I do think we need to be able to talk more broadly about how we are now following much better practice. Of course when you ask questions on that, I am happy to share.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay. Anything else on this?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

No.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Deputy Andrews, question 7.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Chief Minister, the panel notes that one of your priorities was to ensure that each Minister provided a report to the respective Scrutiny Panels that they are scrutinised by in December. However, this is also happening during a very busy time when the States are obviously sitting, and we were wondering: is there potentially any consideration for Scrutiny Panels to maybe be receiving a report at the lodging of the Government Plan instead next year?

The Chief Minister:

Next year rather than this year? So this is you are talking about delivery plans. Clearly we are working on an annual cycle here, so that is interesting feedback. Of course, I completely understand how the Government Plan and the scrutinising of it is quite an intense period of work. But perhaps would January be more convenient to members?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

So this is more to do with, say, the annual progress report for each Minister in terms of the workstreams that they have been working on. If the Scrutiny Panels are going to be informed in December, that is obviously coming towards the end of where the Government Plans is going to be debated. However, would it maybe not be wiser for Scrutiny Panels to be informed about the progress reports in September where they can have some more time to absorb what is going on?

The Chief Minister:

As part of the Government Plan scrutiny process?

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes, as well.

The Chief Minister:

I would have to ask whether there would be some technical difficulties. Obviously, we are not the full way through the year, so while there is quarterly monitoring it would ... the run-up to the Government Plan and finalising and publication of it is an extremely intense period for people working in government, I am sure you will appreciate.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes, indeed.

The Chief Minister:

Therefore it may be quite a challenge to provide that. Perhaps I would suggest January might be a better time, but I will look to those who have the job of pulling this information together. If you would like some further information ...

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Potentially this could be something maybe that we could follow up on at a later date.

The Chief Minister:

Yes, that is an interesting piece of feedback. Okay, I am sorry.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

No, thank you, Chief Minister.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Moving on to our next question area, which is for the legislative programme for this year. Of the legislation that is noted in your legislative programme with estimated lodging periods, could you just confirm whether you are likely to meet those that were projected there?

The Chief Minister:

At the moment, I can run through those and you have got Statistics and Census Law lodging in November, the ombudsperson, which is still aiming for a December lodging, and Control of Housing and Work, quarter 4 of this year, and then States of Jersey Law, that is also aiming for lodging in December. The Employment of States of Jersey Employees Law, that we do not currently have a date for, however, there are some internal protocols being written. I think we have internally got to

a place where we have almost achieved what was desired, and I know the former Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel asked many questions about this internally and that is perhaps some further work in progress. Would you like me to run through next year?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

No, let us stick with this year. We were next going to ask some questions just about each of those that you have just mentioned, except the statistics one because we had a briefing on that the other day but some questions on the ombudsperson.

The Chief Minister:

Okay.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, we recently received a useful briefing on that and followed up with a letter from yourself stating your intention to establish a Public Service Ombudsman in shadow form. What progress has been made on that and when can we expect to see that?

The Chief Minister:

As I said, the legislation is being finalised and we are due to lodge in December for a debate in the Assembly early next year, of course. Perhaps the panel might wish to scrutinise it. That will be for yourselves but this is a commitment, I think, made by the Assembly before the previous Assembly. It came in the ...

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

It might have been even before that. I think it was Deputy Alan Maclean ...

The Chief Minister:

He did but I think the Assembly agreed in sort of April, May of 2018 to progressing with this and it is about ensuring ... and it is a really important part of that piece of restoring public trust in Government, is it not, and offering that independent recourse?

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I think Deputy Farnham's question was getting at the idea of appointing a shadow Public Service Ombudsperson in the run up to the legislation coming into force so that they can bed in and establish the systems, is that ...

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, you said you would do that without delay in your letter, yes.

The Chief Minister:

I think that might have been the purpose of the briefing, to gauge your views and opinions in terms of the timing of that. Because without being presumptuous of the Assembly and its views.

Group Director of Policy:

Just to give you an update, the States Employment Board are considering that tomorrow, and on the back of the letter that you exchanged, to show that certainly the panel are of the same view as the Chief Minister, that we should appoint in shadow form.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Okay, understood. Perhaps S.E.B. (States Employment Board) would update the panel following the meeting. Thanks. In respect of the Control of Housing and Work Law, can you provide a progress update and whether the law is still on course to be lodged this year?

The Chief Minister:

That is now in next year's legislative programme but Deputy Stephenson and I have a weekly meeting considering Control of Housing and Work Law issues and using the system that we do have to make changes that will help Islanders meeting issues that they have in this area. We have already brought to the Assembly the ability for unmarried partners to access employment. We have made orders to enable care workers to access licensed accommodation, helping them with the cost of living in a much-needed sector of our economy and service provision. With regards to the new legislation, which will help the law to be more responsive, that is underway for next year.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Okay. Can I ask for an update on the aspects of the Employment of States of Jersey Employees Law that will be prioritised and, again, the timeline for listing?

The Chief Minister:

As I said earlier, we do not currently have a lodging date for that. You will recall, I am sure, that a large part of what was identified as being needed to change was the discipline and the dismissal of the chief executive officer. That, as I said earlier, has been built into protocol and I was reminded, I think it was one of the first papers that were given to me when I entered office. There is an internal set of procedures now in place.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Okay. Just moving on slightly, it is written in the legislative programme that the amendments to the Employment of States of Jersey Employees Law were put in place effective statutory arrangements

to set out and monitor performance and standards for the chief executive officer role. Can you provide an update on that?

The Chief Minister:

Did you want to ...

Group Director of Policy:

As the Chief Minister was just saying, we have determined - and S.E.B. considered this and S.E.B. determined - it is not necessary to have that in legislation. As the Chief Minister said, there are protocols and contracts that would allow that.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Okay, so that is not going to be part of the legislation, okay. Thank you. Okay, and that is it from me for now. Thanks.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay. The next broad area of questioning is on government structure and governance, and the first question is from Deputy Andrews on that.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Thank you, Chair. The panel was informed during the previous hearing that the H.R. Lounge had been invited back by Government in relation to implementation of a renewed and better culture. We were wondering what has taken place since the last hearing.

Chief People and Transformation Officer:

Thank you, Chair. I am Mark Grimley, chief people and transformation officer. Just before the summer I met with the H.R. Lounge to start scoping out the document. During the recess they were away, so they are coming in in October. They will start with a desktop review in October and then they will follow up with interviews and submissions of evidence in November for a report by the end of November.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Okay, thank you very much.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay, fine, thank you. The previous P.P.C. (Privileges and Procedures) subcommittee on democratic accountability had spoken quite a lot about transparency and responsibility within government and that is something you have echoed as well. Can we ask what process is in place

to ensure that government-approved communications and publications are accurate and do not contain potential to mislead?

The Chief Minister:

Obviously everybody works and does their best to ensure that there is always an accurate and correct interpretation and of course sometimes the media also can make mistakes or put out interesting information. There is a sign-off procedure for press releases with Ministers and I think you may have some specific ...

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

There was one instance recently of a particularly controversial output. I cannot remember if it was through a press release as well but the focus of it was the social media post, and you can guess which one I am referring to here.

The Chief Minister:

The social media post, yes. I think it has been acknowledged that that was sent without the blessing of a Minister and in fact the timing was very unfortunate and it is much regretted that that was put out.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

How did that happen and what has been done to ensure that does not happen again?

Assistant Chief Minister (1):

It was authorised by a member of staff and so not by anybody in a Ministerial position. We have apologised several times to the teaching unions involved, most recently on Monday when we met all of the 3 teaching unions. We had said there would be no further communication until we have had a meeting with teaching unions on the Thursday that the release was made. It is regrettable that that post was there and it is regrettable that post was not taken down sooner.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I do not know if what was in that post was accurate or not but I know that it was contentious and I know that some contend its accuracy anyway. What is the process for compiling a post like that which contained statements of fact and data in it to ensure that it is accurate?

Assistant Chief Minister (1):

I think just in terms of accuracy of data, we agreed on Monday, once again as we had done in July, to work with the teaching unions to clarify numbers, particularly around vacancies. The Chief Minister said earlier that there were 8 supply teachers working; it is 8 agency workers who are

working. We have many supply teachers who cover for sickness and other needs but we have agency workers. The group have agreed to look at the numbers and to come up with agreed set of numbers. As I ...

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

But the people who put the post together, where would they have gone to get data like that?

Assistant Chief Minister (1):

The data ...

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Would they have gone to a government department?

Assistant Chief Minister (3):

If it is helpful, the current policy with social media posts, and not speaking to the individual example but the policy here, is that they would take the information that has been previously been through a sign-off process from a press release typically and then take information for social media posts in future, so that could be a few days down the line, potentially. I think one of the challenges in this instance, as well as being around timing and what may have changed in the period since the sign-off was taken, something that we have taken away from a policy communications point of view is that we have asked for those policies relating to social media to be reviewed in light of this.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay. Where do you anticipate that will get you in terms of changes?

Assistant Chief Minister (3):

That process is ongoing at the moment. I think there is certainly some learning that needs to happen around particular issues of sensitivity and timing. What we do not want to be in a position of is having a Minister having to sign off every single social media post because that is just not going to be practical for anybody. We may find that we have a need for even more communications people, which may not go down particularly well. We have just got to find a balance there and recognise that there are more sensitive issues than others.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

That helpfully leads me to my next question, which was how is the value from the Communications Directorate monitored and measured?

Assistant Chief Minister (1):

An interesting question and I suppose it is always an ongoing process, as you can imagine, with any delivery function. As time goes on there are periodical reviews of performance and output. The Communications Directorate is a service function for all States departments, so they are continually taking feedback from those who they are providing a service too as well. Members of staff, when the new director was taken on a couple of years ago, did go through a performance review process as well. It is very much an ongoing piece of work. As I have said publicly previously, the directorate will be part of the ongoing value-for-money work that happens within the Cabinet Office.

[10:00]

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

How is it determined that this model of Communications Directorate, which some have considered to be resource-heavy, is the right one for the Government of Jersey, to whoever is best placed for that?

The Chief Minister:

I think that is largely an operational matter and not really a policy matter. Of course from a high-level perspective, as I have said earlier today, what we seek is good value for money and the best quality services. This is a large organisation and it needs to communicate internally as well as externally. As a small nation, a lot of the work that the Communications Unit does is sharing information with Islanders, public health messages and other things. It is not simply focused on government policy and the work of government. The engagement work that we have committed to doing, and I think has been largely well received, is something that they support with. It was a matter of policy of the previous Government to bring some of those services in-house. If you compare what we have in terms of the Communications Directorate versus other places, you will find that having a crew who have filming capabilities and graphic design, et cetera, those are not in the team in other places. But the view was taken that this was the most cost-effective way to run that. I am sure that that will be constantly monitored by officials.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

With the, I think, very useful in-house graphic design and so forth, were they included in the figures of 35 and 42?

Assistant Chief Minister (1):

Yes.

The Chief Minister:

They were, yes. They will tell you that it helps to bring down the cost of delivering major documents and many of the things that we have to do as a matter of course.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

The logistics of that are far better as well but compared to other small-island jurisdictions similar in size to us, it is still quite a lot more than others have. Are you satisfied that it is necessary, numbers are necessary?

The Chief Minister:

We are driving value for money and monitoring our performance and progress. But you rightly identify that in other places certain services would be outsourced, but the decision was taken that this was better value to bring it in house. It means that that is where we are and so the numbers are the current numbers. Some of the figures that have been shared publicly by certain news organisations are perhaps not entirely comparing apples with apples.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Thank you.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay. The new interim C.E.O. (chief executive officer) is in place and in office and in the room, so I say welcome to him. But can I ask you whether a statement of works has been drawn up for that interim C.E.O. and, if so, what does this include and are whatever is in that deliverable in the interim period that that individual holds the office?

The Chief Minister:

We are really delighted to welcome Andrew to the public service. He is already proving himself, albeit only 3 weeks into the job, to be a great leader, a very focused person who achieves an incredible amount every single day that we encounter him. It is a great step forward, I think, for the public service to have a leader of this calibre. We have agreed a set of objectives for the first quarter of his time with us, and those will of course be measurable. We look forward to sharing an overview of them with you and meeting those objectives in the third quarter.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Can you give us any sneak peeks at this point?

The Chief Minister:

It is very clear in the job spec that we wanted to focus on delivering value for money, best quality services, a high-performing organisation that is well-led, and we are looking to deliver that.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Yes, and you just said just before that that that would be measurable; how is that being measured and how is the conclusions of that measuring being displayed?

The Chief Minister:

There will be items within the objectives that we will be able to identify and measure because we feel that that is important. We also will be able to see in the longer term the impact on the organisation and its structure. We have already seen, and obviously this is not in relation to this role, but using the Be Heard survey and the feedback that we are getting from our team members who are all motivated by public service and doing the right thing for the Islanders of Jersey; we will be able to see that feedback too.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

But who does that measuring? What part of the organisation does that measuring and then finds them?

The Chief Minister:

The vice-chair of the S.E.B. is very much someone who focuses on looking at the data that is collected and the number of appraisals that are done and the performance management aspect of that. I do not know if you want to add anything ...

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Just to be clear, it is S.E.B. that is doing the measuring?

Assistant Chief Minister (1):

There will be various measurements, some of which will be covered by the S.E.B. and others by the Chief Minister and the departments.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay, thank you. Could you update us on the work that is being done in preparation to define the role of what will become the permanent C.E.O. and changes that you envisage on that? I think we have briefly discussed one previously that will no longer be in legislation. But more broadly, how is that work going?

The Chief Minister:

In terms of going out for advert or the permanent contract ...

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

No, the actual role of the C.E.O., irrespective of who ends up having that job, what powers they have and where those lie and what delineations there are?

The Chief Minister:

Consideration, it is understood that consideration of the structure was one of the pieces of feedback that we received from the former chief executive and of course that work is just beginning to assess how we operate best as a public service to provide best possible value for money and the best quality services to Islanders.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay. How do you envisage the lines of accountability to and from the C.E.O. being in future, compared to what they are now?

The Chief Minister:

I think it is early days and I think that that is part of the work that we will be undertaking.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

But is the current role of C.E.O. too accountable or not accountable enough? What direction are you going to look to push it in?

The Chief Minister:

You are welcome to invite the current incumbent to ...

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

It is a political question, I think.

Assistant Chief Minister (1):

There are no major changes to the role profile planned, just an update in priorities in line with the new Government Plan, I would suggest.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay, thank you. Now on to the appointment process. What lessons have been learned from previous appointment processes and how have they been taken into account when looking for future permanency?

The Chief Minister:

I think that is largely an operational matter but I think that we have recently gone through a very successful process in appointing the interim chief executive. We have reflected quite positively on the way that that was conducted. I would ...

Acting Chief Minister (1):

The plan would be to use the same approach as for the interim, so a dual agency and in-house. We believe that worked well and we believe it will serve us well in the future.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay. What is the timeline looking like that for now?

Assistant Chief Minister (1):

We would hope to be going out within the next 6 weeks.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay. For getting a permanent C.E.O. in place?

Assistant Chief Minister (1):

We have got a C.E.O. with a contract, an interim C.E.O. with a contract, so we would need to manage that and also manage any notice period.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay. Is there any flexibility in that contract if things do not go to plan and you need some extra time?

Assistant Chief Minister (1):

It is a discussion we would have to have.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

In relation to the recruitment and development of the permanent C.E.O. role, do meetings of the advisory groups still take place and when was the last meeting held?

The Chief Minister:

Advisory group ...

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

An advisory group was established to assist with the recruitment and development of a permanent C.E.O.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

We had had some papers from this before about explorations about how the role should be constructed.

The Chief Minister:

I do not ...

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

There were minutes that were not minutes and then became minutes that we had asked for.

The Chief Minister:

Sorry, I do apologise. Right, yes. That advisory group has not met for a little time. I think it fed into the interim role and the creation of the recruitment plan and that was a very successful thing. It is a group that can be called to action if required but we have not met recently.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Okay. Are you likely to still be utilising the advisory group in the development of the permanent role?

The Chief Minister:

I think largely, as Andy said, we are pleased with the way the recruitment process went. We do not at this point consider that there will be any major changes. I think they did a good job. They gave some valuable input on a specific and relevant point.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Okay. Just moving on, during a previous Ministerial hearing we had with the Minister for Treasury and Resources, he shared a politically-contentious concern in relation to the principal accounting officer responsibility being part of the chief executive officer role. What deliberations have taken place about the future of this?

The Chief Minister:

It was contentious at the time. It was something that was considered by the advisory group. At the moment, on balance, there is a no-change position but we would welcome the views of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel. It is something that remains under consideration.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Okay, thank you.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

One area where there has been change was the establishment of the Cabinet Office and there has been plenty of discussion in the past about where a C.E.O. would sit in relation to that Cabinet Office. You have established that office and you have established it as it is. Are you expecting to make any changes to how that office is formatted when a permanent C.E.O. is recruited into that or are you going to maintain it as it is?

The Chief Minister:

We are looking at that. Leadership structure is something that we want to do because you have raised the question yourself about the P.A.O. (principal accounting officer) role and whether there should be a Cabinet Secretary as well. I think that that is one of the issues that remains under consideration.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Under consideration because you think it sounds like a good idea and ought to be explored or to explore it to rule it out.

The Chief Minister:

As I said earlier, there are always pros and cons and it is a balance to weigh up, is it not? I think we received some clear feedback about the role, the size and scale of the role and the number of direct reports, and so it takes some time to reflect and gain considerations from relevant people.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

If you are thinking of any changes to that, when would we be likely to hear about them or if you rule out any changes to it, when would we be likely to hear about that?

The Chief Minister:

I think we would keep you updated; it is a very important matter. If there were any material changes to be made, then you would be high on our list of people to come and talk to.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay, thank you.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, a very quick question, if I may and in your capacity as chair of the Hospital Political Oversight Group. It was recently announced that 5 independent advisers had been appointed; can you just quickly outline the recruitment process and what is their rate of pay per meeting?

The Chief Minister:

I am aware of, I think, 3 non-executive directors ...

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I think there were 3 external and 2 brought on from the Health Department.

[10:15]

The Chief Minister:

Internal. It is important that we have a strong body that ...

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

No, I am not questioning that, I was just particularly interested in the recruitment process and what they are being paid to attend a meeting.

The Chief Minister:

I do not think I have the number to hand to give that to you. But I believe there was a recruitment process that was underway and perhaps the people and transformation officer can give you the details of that. I am of the view that they offer very good value for money, although I am not able to share with you the exact figure at this moment in time but ...

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I wonder if any of the officers know. I have been told it is £1,000 a meeting but I wonder if anybody could clarify that. I have also tabled a question but perhaps Mark might help.

The Chief Minister:

A question, okay, I have not seen that.

Chief People and Transformation Officer:

Chair it was overseen by the Jersey Appointments Commission; it is a Ministerial appointment. We will have to get back to you on the rates there.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Okay, thank you.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Deputy Andrews, this final section is following up on the government programme for 2023.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes, thank you very much, Chair. Chief Minister, I think there are probably members of the public who are maybe raising concerns about the planned government expenditure that will be forecast for 2024. What would you be saying to those critics who are maybe concerned about the Government and a plan for expenditure?

The Chief Minister:

The Government Plan as a whole, it is a big number, but we have had to take considerable time to consider a huge number of growth bids that were put before us when we began the work considering the Government Plan. I think where we have ended up is a balanced approach so that we can deliver an effective public service that offers Islanders great value for money and the best quality services that we can. In order to do that we have had to invest in specific areas; there is a real impact on Islanders' lives and that being health. As you know, we have invested in a turnaround team who are still working with us and they have brought in a financial recovery programme to deal with the escalating costs that are providing a challenge to health organisations across the world. We feel that they have come up with some really sensible measured ways that we can control our costs but also ensure that we are looking after our staff and delivering the best quality services that we can for Islanders.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

As you say, Chief Minister, there have been obviously a number of growth bids that have been seen, especially for this Government Plan. However, looking, for instance, at technology and making sure that public administration is more efficient, are there any specific areas across the government where technology is maybe being invested in to improve public administration in this Government Plan?

The Chief Minister:

There certainly are.

Assistant Chief Minister (2):

Yes, I can talk to that. We are not seeing the same type of programme as I.T.S. but what we do have is a programme of work for the government digital platform, which really looks to provide the interface for citizens to the government. On the one hand this lines up with a digital strategy for government that we are working on in our Digital Strategy Leadership Group. It focuses not just on

improving things for citizens but on efficiency and on better outcomes. When a citizen is interacting digitally with a process, it provides us the opportunity internally to rethink: are the processes being used in any given department, right, are they seeing this? That is where we find efficiencies, I hope, and then create better outcomes. You want a seamless service for many citizen and organisation interactions with government. We are pursuing still the records transformation project, which is around the large-scale scanning and digitisation of a lot of our content. We have taken a very different approach to the previous Government, delaying and stopping the invitation to tender on what would have been a large consortium project and looking to embed the change element of digital within government, delivering it somewhat slightly slower but, hopefully, working with departments, looking at their processes, looking at how they use information and being far more strategic in saying your process may be paper-based, you may have records that are paper, how do we change that part of the organisation? There are a range of programmes, existing funding for records transformation, government digital platform and, of course, revenue transformation. I am taking a keen eye across areas outside of Modernisation and Digital to ensure we have a joined-up approach to what should be ... including Transform, which is of course Social Security, to ensure we deliver through digital better change better outcomes but ultimately a more efficient operating of services.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

For instance, when we are looking at the Government's spend for 2024, I think it is nearly £1.2 billion, how do we also manage making sure that there are cost efficiency savings as well in some areas where maybe before spending was a bit reckless, shall we say, under our predecessors?

The Chief Minister:

We have running through this value-for-money programme, which is about looking at things differently. So when we talk about delivering an efficient public service what we are talking about there is using the technology that we have available to us today and to do what we do but better. This is not a service cutting programme. This is a productivity and efficiency programme because we have a great public service, many dedicated people working to deliver services. Of course the majority of those are in front line areas, such as health, education and our blue light emergency services.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Thank you very much, Chief Minister. We also note as well that there is a letter that was sent to the panel after the previous hearing, and there was some intent to see a revised organisational change policy in relation to tracking business case objectives. We were just wondering what progress has been made in that area?

The Chief Minister:

I am running through the filing cabinet to think of the exact letter that you are referring to, but you are talking about business cases as they come to the Government Plan. I mean we have managed to produce the annexes to the Government Plan simultaneously, which met one of the recommendations.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

I will just try and help here. So after the previous hearing we normally write to Ministers with the questions we did not get round to asking, so that is where that ... and I do not blame you if you do not remember the exact terms that were in it. But we were told that: "The Government are currently in the process of writing a revised organisational change policy that will include tracking the business case objectives and effectiveness of change." Somebody, I think, might remember that. So that might be helpful.

The Chief Minister:

Our people and transformation officer has stepped up to provide that.

Chief People and Transformation Officer:

This came from a recommendation following the target operating model where the C.S.S.P. (Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel) in their previous People and Culture Review identified that the business change ... the business plans for the organisational change was not clear about what it was trying to achieve. So what we have done is in the organisational change policy, we are in the final stages of consulting on it, we are being very clear about change management, the objectives and how you measure from the changes that are made to the benefits being delivered. So you have to be upfront when you are making those changes. I think the key criticism of the T.O.M. (target operating model) was it was focused predominantly on structure rather than trying to change the organisation and the objectives of what we were trying to achieve. So that is in consultation at the moment.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Thank you very much. Of course with the Corporate Services Panel's previous government review there were 24 recommendations that were made, and 15 were either accepted or partially accepted. But one of those recommendations was about making sure that the Government Plan was accessible for young people and children. So I was just wanting your views on whether you believe that that recommendation has been pursued and delivered?

The Chief Minister:

That is something that I think is still being worked on. You will have seen we have produced a summary document, but I could hand over to Megan.

Director of Delivery and Improvement:

In addition to the ...

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Sorry, just name and title for the tape.

Director of Delivery and Improvement:

Yes, Megan Mathias, director of delivery and improvement. Apologies. For children and young people, the next step that we have taken is to produce a concise version of the Ministerial Plans in a shorter form. They are being finalised at the moment. We are working with colleagues in C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills) to make sure that that is then shared and used for discussion.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Okay, thank you very much.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

You may be able to help us with some of the supplementaries on that.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Yes, indeed. In terms of recommendation 2, what improvements, if any, have been made for the Jersey Performance Framework indicators?

Director of Delivery and Improvement:

I believe some members of the panel may have had a technical briefing from the chief statistician and team. But if not we can make sure that there is one. There is an ongoing piece of work that the chief statistician is leading making sure that the performance indicators are pared back. Sticking with all of those that are in Future Jersey and maintaining that link but, recognising that there was an awful lot of them, reducing the number down, and then presenting that information more clearly, for example, with red, amber, green on the website so that data could be more easily used by Scrutiny, by the public, as well as by Government.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Also one of the other recommendations that was mentioned about making sure there was a golden thread to ensure that all areas were connected. Has this been something that has been pursued?

Director of Delivery and Improvement:

Yes. In the annual report and accounts this year, there was a section which tried to set that out in terms of the fit between the different elements of the government programme and the thread, and the link between them. We then used some of that wording, you will see is the same in the Government Plan this year. That is the key element of it.

Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Thank you very much. Thank you, Chair.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

We have mentioned a version of the plan for children and young people, and you have mentioned a summary document as well. What effort is being made to explain the Government Plan or its targeted highlights, I guess, to different demographic groups in our society?

The Chief Minister:

I think the documents themselves have been widely publicised and available on different platforms. The summary document is a very helpful overview. That was, I believe, meeting the recommendations. We constantly try to engage with different groups in the Island.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

One example of a group, you have the Older Persons Living Forum; just out of interest is there any engagement on that kind of front as well?

Director of Delivery and Improvement:

I do not know whether that Government Plan in brief document that you mentioned has been taken and is a subject on the agenda for them, but we can get back to you on that.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay, thank you.

Assistant Chief Minister (1):

Those abridged versions are available in the Parish Halls.

Director of Delivery and Improvement:

Yes.

Assistant Chief Minister (3):

And there will be wider communications plan in place that will talk to some of that, which we are happy to revisit and help to answer that perhaps a bit more.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

That is everything from me. Anything else?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Just a quick comment on the Government Plant. The format of it, even for those experienced with figures and things, is quite difficult to understand for a member of the public, if they want to drill down into any details. Perhaps thought could be given to how that might be simplified.

The Chief Minister:

I am aware that a lot of work has gone in this year to make it as an accessible a document as possible. It is a very large and dense organisation doing a lot of different things. We take that as feedback and thank you for it.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I am not sure there is an easy answer.

The Chief Minister:

We will continue to work to be the best version of ourselves. I do not know if you wanted to add to that.

Director of Delivery and Improvement:

Just exactly what the Chief Minister said, we believe we have made some improvements this year. As you say, it is quite a challenge to do with the complexity of the subject matter. We work with Treasury colleagues all the time to try to do it and very much welcome feedback and ideas on that.

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Thank you very much.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Okay, thank you very much. That brings us to time unless there was anything that you did not cover in any of your answers that is helpful to have a final opportunity to raise, but do not feel you need to if you do not have anything.

The Chief Minister:

I note that you are currently undertaking your People and Culture Review, which I of course welcome, having led the previous iteration. I think it is an important and valuable thing to do. So I thank you all for that.

[10:30]

Because it is quite a task. Obviously one of our key elements is improving culture within our organisation, and being a values-led organisation has been something that the States Employment Board has also taken very seriously. We have noticed that you are starting to receive submissions to your review, which is a good thing, and we welcome those. We welcome all of them, in fact. I believe one has drawn some particular attention from yourselves with regard to the States Employment Board, and I simply wanted to say that we welcome those comments. As we have talked earlier today, investing in our health service has been an area of particular focus for this Government because we consider that our health services and those people who work within it are of vital importance, not only to the public service but of course to the Islanders who benefit from them. A longstanding issue within health services, not just here but elsewhere, has been cultural issues and that is something that we stand ready to support our healthcare workers with. We have brought in alongside the turnaround team a freedom to speak up guardian, who now reports into the States Employment Board and to the assistant chief executive so that we can encourage people to talk about culture because we value its importance. I would simply say with regards the comments that the chair of the Health Advisory Board has made to you, that we welcome his raising these issues because we consider that that is an important part of leadership in encouraging others to say what they want to say because we want Islanders, as a whole, to feel that they are able to speak up and to be heard by anyone. So we will be obviously discussing the contents of that letter at the States Employment Board this week, and we can simply welcome that and we very much look forward to engaging with you all in your People and Culture Review as it continues.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

We will have a review-focused hearing on that too, on some of those points. Thank you all very much. Thank you to all of our officers who have supported this hearing, and thank you to anyone who has been tuning in online to watch it. On that I call the hearing to a close.

[10:33]