

3.12 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of St. Clement of the Minister for Economic Development regarding budget allocation to Jersey Finance Limited:

[Aside] Would the Minister or Assistant Minister give Members a breakdown of the proposed allocation of the £850,000 vote for Jersey Finance Limited in last year's budget and indicate what the remaining balance is at the present time?

Connétable G.W. Fisher of St. Lawrence (Assistant Minister for Economic Development):

A total of £850,000 was allocated in the economic development budget for the promotion, diversification and further development of the financial services industry in the Island. Of this amount, £750,000 is allocated to Jersey Finance Limited with the balance of £100,000 essentially held by economic development for contingency purposes including possible additional law drafting resources if required. Members will recall that the financial services industry can contribute some £220 million, which is roughly half, of the total States' revenue each year. The promotion, diversification and development plans, of which Jersey Finance is a part, are aimed at maintaining and enhancing these public revenues. Jersey Finance Limited produced a fully costed annual marketing plan and a 3-year business plan which were presented to States Members at their briefing - the Jersey Finance Limited briefing - at the RJA&HS (Royal Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Society) last month. The Deputy was not at the briefing but nevertheless is very welcome to see the plans. For 2006, in summary, these promotional activities include the annual conference in London, 4 to 5 sector-specific events in the UK and Europe focusing on key areas such as funds and trusts, a high profile visit to the Middle East which is currently taking place, a planned visit to the Far East later in the year and joint venture presentations with the Society of Trust and the State Practitioners, known as "Step", in Dubai and Hong Kong. The annual grant of £750,000 for 2006 was paid to Jersey Finance Limited in late February. Expenditures for this amount are fully confirmed and committed for 2006. The majority of the States' grant is spent on specific promotional activities. An element is nonetheless used to fund the infrastructure of Jersey Finance Limited as clearly without an infrastructure no activities can be undertaken. The balance of infrastructural costs is met by industry contributors. Thank you, Sir.

3.12.1 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

Supplementary, if I may, Sir. Yes, it is true I was not at that meeting, Sir, but I do find it difficult to attend 5 to 10-year strategy plans that occur every year. The question I have here is, the Assistant Minister referred to trips to the Middle and Far East. I would like to know how much of the funding in question that we are talking about, if any, is being spent on Jersey Finance's Middle Eastern excursions such as the current trip to Bahrain and Dubai, either to finance travel arrangements or even perhaps to lubricate business deals as is the norm in that part of the world. If the latter is the case, do we have a quantification of the likely return on our investment?

The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

Well, Sir, first of all there was no criticism of the Deputy intended, in saying that he did not attend, it was simply that because he was not there he did not get the information that was issued at that briefing. Secondly, so far as the costs involved are concerned, I understand that the visit to Dubai - the current visit - is costing some £23,000 but I am assured, in conversations I have had with the Minister over the

telephone in the last couple of days, that business generated already in Abu Dhabi, is far in excess of that cost and will cover it many, many times over. I spoke to the Minister again this very morning on another matter but we discussed that and already in Dubai, I am told, they have generated well in excess of the costs in Dubai. So, the costs seem to have been well covered. I do not have any breakdown of the detail of those because obviously it is happening more or less as we speak but it sounds, from what I am told, that the visit has been extremely successful.

Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

I thank the Assistant Minister for his reply.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Time has expired and therefore, I am afraid, there is no more time for any questions. Can I just, from the Chair, make a point which I have made once or twice, though in passing, and perhaps the Deputy Chief Minister could take this back to the Chief Executive. The departments have drafted very long answers. Very often there is a long preamble which has got nothing to do with the question but is all about saying how well the department is doing. The answers must be focused. Standing Orders speak of a concise answer. It is up to the civil servants and the Ministers to ensure that answers are concise. The rule of thumb which was adopted previously was one and a half minutes a maximum. I appreciate occasionally it is necessary to go beyond that on a matter of particular complexity but that is the target which Ministers should have in mind. On future occasions the Chair may be stricter in enforcing.

[Interruption]