

4.2 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding assurance regarding outsourcing Health and Social Services maintenance and engineering services to private contractors:

Would the Minister for Treasury and Resources assure Members and representatives of the Health and Social Services employees concerned that planned changes to maintenance and engineering responsibilities brought about by reorganisation will not involve the outsourcing of services to private contractors?

Deputy E.J. Noel (Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources - rapporteur):

The transfer of responsibility for the maintenance of a number of community buildings within the Health and Social Services estate to Jersey Property Holdings will involve some work activities being transferred to J.P.H. These work elements are clearly defined within the approved service level agreement and under the defined landlord/tenant functions. As the Deputy is well aware, J.P.H. does not retain direct labour to undertake these work elements and therefore external contractors may be procured to undertake these tasks. As the Deputy is also aware, use of external contractors will not result in any Health and Social Services Department engineering redundancies. The Health and Social Services Department engineering teams are fully committed to undertaking the extremely important work of maintaining front line services for medical equipment by transferring some of the mandatory work activities to J.P.H. or release the existing Health and Social Services Department staff to undertake essential equipment maintenance functions and to ensure the best possible service is provided to the public of the Island.

4.2.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

How interesting. This is privatisation by the back door. Where in the modernisation programme or any other document produced since the last Strategic Plan has the Assistant Minister declared that we are going to privatise the public sector work force and does this not mean this is the first step?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

This is merely doing more for less.

The Bailiff:

Does any other Member wish to ask a question? No, then Deputy, please continue.

4.2.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Doing more for less by the use of privatised work forces which may or may not be under the same terms and conditions as the workforce operating today, and if they are doing more does that not mean there will eventually, if not immediately, be less work for the members at Health and Social Services to do?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

No, it is the opposite. They will have more time to do more front line essential services; and the non-essential services - the routine maintenance of buildings - will be dealt with by J.P.H.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

If I may, Sir?

The Bailiff:

Yes, very final supplementary.

4.2.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

How many private sector employees will be employed to do this work in this particular change and how many in total of the work force used by what is the department called, J.P.H., does J.P.H. employ in total?

Deputy E.J. Noel:

I have already said that Jersey Property Holdings do not directly employ any direct labour staff. Those details that the Deputy has requested I will obtain from my department and forward on to him.