

23.10.17

**9 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South of the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs regarding disruption to the gas supply (OQ.209/2023)**

Will the Minister advise what assurances, if any, she has received from Island Energy that the recent disruption to the gas supply will not happen again during the winter months?

**Deputy H. Miles (The Minister for Justice and Home Affairs):**

As I said in previous answers, I met the chief executive officer of Island Energy group yesterday in person to seek assurances from the company. I was assured by her that the company have identified the issue which caused the recent outage and the company have identified specific steps they can take to prevent this incident recurring. They are undertaking a full root cause analysis and will be seeking to review the lessons learned during this incident. The company have committed to providing Government with a formal report further to this being completed.

**4.9.1 Deputy T.A Coles:**

Will the Minister then outline what support packages she will have in place and prepared should this fault occur again during these colder winter months?

**Deputy H. Miles:**

As I have said previously, Island Energy are a private company and it is down to them to provide the necessary support to their customers. In all cases the Government will do what we can to support Islanders but Island Energy is a private company, they are responsible for managing the situation and for communicating with customers and Islanders.

**Connétable M.K. Jackson of St. Brelade:**

Could I raise the défaut, please, on the Connétable of St. Mary?

**The Bailiff:**

Yes, the défaut is raised on the Connétable of St. Mary.

**4.9.2 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

Does the Government have a contingency plan in place that it would seek to invoke and apply in the event that a similar outage, as has happened recently, occurs in the winter months where for many, particularly elderly people, in our community waiting over a week for their heating to come back on could have severe detrimental impacts on their health?

**Deputy H. Miles:**

Consideration is being given to how the current incident of the gas outage needs to be factored into future strategies. We have a crisis resilience improvement plan and I have also asked that the Jersey Resilience Forum Executive and Delivery Group work together to ensure that our critical national infrastructure partners, including the utility companies, have reviewed their business continuity plans with a particular focus on the safety and the welfare of Islanders.

[10:45]

**4.9.3 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

Can we take it from those answers, therefore, that the Minister has absolute confidence that in an event where a similar outage happened in the colder months that there would be some contingency able to be provided quickly to safeguard those vulnerable in our community so they would not have to suffer from the cold if it were going to take days to put the heating back on?

**Deputy H. Miles:**

One of the reasons that I have written formally to Island Energy is to understand the arrangements that they have in place to assess the risk of a further occurrence, to prepare and maintain an emergency plan, and to prepare and maintain communication arrangements to all and inform the public. At this current time, Island Energy assured the Government that they have those measures in place. I will reassess that situation when I receive further information from Island Energy on the questions that we have asked.

**4.9.4 Deputy L.V. Feltham:**

Following the recent outage and following the Minister's conversations with the C.E.O. of Island Energy, can she confirm if she has given any instruction that the corporate risk register should be updated?

**Deputy H. Miles:**

I have given no such instruction at this time.

**4.9.5 Deputy L.V. Feltham:**

Can then the Minister confirm whether she has had an update or a briefing on the corporate risk register, what risks refer to prospective outages such as this, and what mitigations the Government has in place to allay such risks?

**Deputy H. Miles:**

This is a fast-moving incident and I would expect that the corporate risk register would be updated and Ministers would be briefed accordingly. This is an incident that has only happened within the last 10 days and Government have been trying to ensure that Island Energy fulfil their responsibilities.

**4.9.6 Deputy T.A. Coles:**

Given what has been said, is the Minister's department satisfied with the communication provided by Island Energy to their users?

**Deputy H. Miles:**

I think Island Energy themselves will be the first to admit that the communication with Islanders could have been better and I share that view.