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5.7 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of St. Helier of the Chief Minister regarding the allocation of funds to the work of the Jersey Independent Care Inquiry:

Can the Chief Minister advise the extent to which the funds allocated to the work of the Jersey Independent Care Inquiry have been utilised, how much remains, whether he is aware that the Inquiry has indicated any concerns that more funds may be required and if so what he is prepared to do, if anything, to ensure such funds are made available to enable the Inquiry to complete its work?

Senator I.J. Gorst (The Chief Minister):

At the end of December 2015 the Inquiry had spent approximately £12.6 million of its £13.7 million budget therefore leaving £1.1 million remaining. The panel has not indicated any concerns to me that more funding is required.

5.7.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

The Chief Minister will no doubt be aware of the reports in the media which have suggested exactly what the Chief Minister has just confirmed there, that there is not a huge amount of funding left but those reports also indicated that they had heard that the inquiry was now attempting to scale their operation by reducing the use of freelance staff and other measures including potentially having to change venue for the inquiry. Could the Chief Minister confirm whether he has heard anything about this and if he believes that could have a potential impact on the time it will take for the inquiry to eventually report back?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

A lot of questions in there. This Assembly voted and agreed extra money for the inquiry. A budget process was set up. The inquiry confirmed that they would agree with that budgeting process. They appointed somebody to oversee that budgeting process which is, I think, the Inquiry's secretary. My staff are due to meet with the Inquiry secretary in a fortnight's time so I am sure that if there are issues that need to be addressed they will be raised at that point in time rather than just listening to or gaining information from the media. There is, which I would have hoped was well known, that the current premises that are occupied their lease comes to an end so they will need to move in due course but that is something that was clear from the start of the Inquiry and should not impinge in any way upon the work of the Inquiry.

5.7.2 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Can I thank the Chief Minister for his helpful answer? Once he has spoken and can see the clearer picture with regards to this information would he be prepared to make sure that he keeps States Members updated so we know whether or not there is anything to be concerned about, and so put our minds at ease when that information comes to light?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

So the Deputy knows what the process is if the Inquiry did require more funding, and I have no reason to believe that they should and I hope that they will not because there is a budget process set in place and they have confirmed that they can live within the budget that has

been provided. However in an extreme case where it might not be there would be liaison between my staff and the Inquiry secretary, and that issue would come to the Council of Ministers and I see no reason why we could not keep this Assembly updated.