

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY R.J. WARD OF ST. HELIER
QUESTION SUBMITTED ON MONDAY 24th MAY 2021
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 1st JUNE 2021**

Question

Will the Chief Minister provide members with a breakdown of all costs involved in holding the recent 'Ask the Ministers' live panel event broadcast on social media, including –

- (a) the cost of the film shown prior to the live event;
- (b) the hire fee for the studio; and
- (c) the projected costs for holding the remaining 7 'Ask the Ministers' events?

Answer

I am grateful for the Deputy's question as it permits me to expand upon the Ask the Ministers events.

One of the key lessons learnt during the COVID-19 pandemic has been the importance of direct engagement with the public. To that end, we held forty-nine press conferences in 2020, answered 4,574 media queries, engaged in over 700 interviews, saw nearly 30,000 additional social media followers and received 5.6 million views of Government content on YouTube. In addition, we received approximately 47.1m hits on our main Gov.je website. Following this engagement in 2020, we are looking to further build on this through 2021, recognising that the Covid pandemic has had an exponential impact on how we engage with the Public through social media.

The Ask the Ministers events are intended to provide members of the public with the opportunity to pose their questions directly to Ministers and also to give an opportunity to improve the understanding of the public over the functions of Government and responsibilities of Ministers. Separately, I understand that there will also be a program of engagement from the States Greffe in respect of Members' responsibilities, although I am not sighted on what form that will take.

In relation to the Deputy's specific questions:

- a) The film forms part of a wider project ('Your Government') aiming to highlight the work of Government departments, with individual videos intended for each department. Additionally, the footage is intended to be used for videos produced in-house and for recruitment, Team Jersey and My Welcome purposes. The total cost for all of this project is currently budgeted at £20,000.
- b) The studio used has been developed on the ground floor of 28-30 The Parade which is leased by the Government of Jersey. The ground floor was previously utilised for the regular press conferences and this function is intended to continue alongside the Ask the Ministers events. No hire fee has therefore arisen.
- c) Each Ask the Minister event is budgeted at approximately £3,599; this figure has been calculated by dividing the total projected budget across all eight events and includes the initial studio setup incurred ahead of the first event. It should be noted that much of the equipment and backdrop sourced for the Ask the Minister events can be used flexibly, and will therefore also be available for press conferences, other Government departments and arms-length organisations with some

cost recovery applied on the latter. The figure therefore represents a maximum cost as the utilisation of the equipment by Government or by ALOs will further reduce the cost per event.

The initial 'Ask the Ministers' appears to have been well received, and will undoubtedly evolve over the coming months. The first event has attracted a total of 9,000 views across the various social media channels.