

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY M.R. HIGGINS OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 20TH JUNE 2017**

Question

Further to his answers to written question 1(313) and oral question 1(328) on 6th June 2017, will the Chief Minister clarify his role in the decision of the Minister for Treasury and Resources to withdraw 'Future Hospital Funding Strategy' (P.130/2016) and, in particular, will he advise whether or not he was advised by the Minister that the Minister wished to carry on with the debate and the funding proposal as it stood; and whether or not he informed the Minister that he would not support the proposition if it were not withdrawn?

Answer

The Treasury and Resources Minister has formal responsibility for funding the hospital project, but he acts with Ministers, in particular with the Chief Minister.

In the lead up to the withdrawal of 'Future Hospital Funding Strategy' (P.130/2016), the Chief Minister was invited to a meeting called by the Treasury Minister on Monday 22nd May, 2017, to discuss the funding strategy and forthcoming debate, where the Treasury and Resources Minister opened the discussion by stating that he wished to carry on with the debate, while recognising that further discussions with Ministers was appropriate.

In discussing this, the Treasury and Resources Minister, the Chief Minister and other Ministers, noted that a new approach to borrowing the hospital had been presented the previous Friday 19th May.

The findings of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, as commissioned by the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel, was also discussed. This report recognised the merits of combining borrowing with some reserves, but suggested that we should wait until the project costs and risks become clearer before deciding on the final funding blend.

In considering all this, some Ministers felt a delay to the debate would be beneficial because bringing the funding strategy together with updated budget and outline business case as a package would deliver a better outcome; and others wished to proceed with the debate. This is the nature of decision-making, where Ministers frankly and freely discuss what the best course is.

During this, the Chief Minister was not in a position where he would not support the proposition if it continued, but did believe, for the above reasons, that withdrawal was the best course.

The Treasury and Resources Minister agreed to withdraw the proposition, understanding the positions outlined.