

2018.09.25

5.3 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Chief Minister regarding the findings of the Social Metrics Commission's report *A new measure of poverty for the U.K.*: [OQ...129/2018]

What consideration, if any, has the Chief Minister given to the findings of the Social Metrics Commission's report *A new measure of poverty for the U.K. (United Kingdom)* and their applicability to Jersey; and, if none, will he undertake to review that report and, in particular, the aim of reducing income inequality for children, lone parents and households containing a person with a disability?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré (The Chief Minister):

Yes, I am aware of the report and I am advised that it has merit in recommending improvements in how we measure people's financial circumstances. For example, it takes more into account assets and the cost of children. The chief statistician is considering this and I wonder if the Deputy would like to take it up with him and perhaps his own Minister. Thank you.

5.3.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Whether or not the measures advocated in this new report, which refer to poverty and not relative low income and distinguish between those 2 measures... whether or not they are adopted, can the Minister assure Members that the money is in place to perform an early Income Distribution Survey so that he may have a marker on which he and the public can assess his success in reducing poverty levels in the Island?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

We can never guarantee anything until we have got it in the hand, but I do refer the Deputy to the written question that was given to me earlier which sets out potential timelines and the fact that the revised business case of the Income Distribution Survey, if that is what we want to call it, has been submitted. My view is that it should be prioritised. I do not guarantee it but that is my view because I do not know the other competing requirements; always that case for the moment but we will find out in the next couple of months whether it is in hand. The game plan is that hopefully we can fund it; it is £200,000. It has not been done for 5 years. It will give us the base data that I think we are all looking for and obviously then it can be amended potentially March/April next year. It then has to be processed. That is the timeline. We will obviously have an update towards the end of the year. Thank you.

5.3.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Will the Chief Minister give his assurance to the House that he will try his best to make sure that this particular survey comes to the top of his priority list by the end of the year?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

I will certainly do my best to make sure it comes to the top, yes.