

# STATES OF JERSEY



## **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2016 – 2019 (P.72/2015): TENTH AMENDMENT (P.72/2015 Amd.(10)) – COMMENTS**

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**Presented to the States on 5th October 2015  
by the Council of Ministers**

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**STATES GREFFE**

## COMMENTS

Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade proposes –

- To increase the net revenue expenditure of the Education, Sport and Culture Department by £40,000 and decrease the net revenue expenditure of the Chief Minister's Department (Communications Unit) by an identical amount in order to provide funding for the reinstatement of 24 hours a week French language teaching assistant in primary schools.

**The Council of Ministers strongly opposes Amendment (10) and urges States members to oppose the Amendment.**

### Summary of Council of Ministers' Comments

- The Education, Sport and Culture Department has identified improvements since the Deputy's previous proposition. The Department does not consider the Deputy's proposals are the most effective way to raise French standards in schools, and would prefer that schools retain the ability to buy in the additional support directly to suit their needs.
- The package of measures presented in the MTFP has been proposed to re-prioritise resources by reducing spending in some areas to invest in other higher priorities for Health, Education, infrastructure, economic growth and improving productivity.
- Each department has considered its priorities and submitted requests for additional funding alongside a spending review which requires savings and efficiencies across the States.

### Detailed Comments

The Deputy's proposition seeks to provide one hour per week access to native French language assistants in all States primary schools.

The Department agrees that learning a language, particularly during the early years, is valuable, both educationally and culturally, and should be part of a broad and balanced curriculum. Both the Minister and the Director of Education have stated this publicly.

Since the last MTFP debate, when the Deputy brought a similar amendment, there has been a greater focus on French teaching and greater prominence is now given to the subject. The number of children learning French in primary schools has doubled from September 2015. Under the new Jersey Curriculum, all primary school students now learn French from Year 3 to Year 6. Previously it was only mandatory in Years 5 and 6. Some schools have chosen to include the subject from Reception, and this is a long-term aspiration of the latest Education Business Plan. There is a definite commitment to languages in Jersey schools and significant progress is being made.

Following the amendment to the MTFP 2013 – 2015, the Department continued to employ French language assistants and the effectiveness of the scheme has been monitored. It was concluded that the existing scheme is not the most effective way to raise French standards in primary schools. The allocation of French assistants has to be administered centrally, which adds to the cost of providing the service. A great deal of time and resource is wasted in travel between schools, and the timetabling means that headteachers do not have the flexibility they require in scheduling French lessons and related activities.

Some schools already have in-house expertise and others would prefer to have the ability to buy in the additional support directly to suit their needs.

This supports the Department's aim to give schools greater freedom to deliver teaching and learning.

## **General Comments**

### Process of re-allocation and re-prioritisation

The Deputy is proposing a re-allocation of funding that has been carefully considered as part of a significant prioritisation process and spending review.

- The Council of Ministers has prioritised the proposals in the MTFP on the strategic priorities of the States.
- The prioritisation was carried out alongside an ongoing spending review, supported by external advisers, to identify savings and efficiencies both across the States and within individual department programmes.
- The Council of Ministers conducted a series of workshops and the prioritisation of available funding has evolved over a period of discussion and several iterations of the proposals before the final allocations were agreed.
- Each department has prioritised the available funding and we can't afford to cherry-pick certain savings or growth. We have to make decisions which align with our strategic priorities; this means that every department will be affected and has to contribute to the overall re-prioritisation.
- Further work is required to develop the detail for 2017 – 2019, but the Council of Ministers believes that it is presenting a balanced and sustainable package in line with the strategic priorities.
- The package of measures presented in the MTFP has been proposed to re-prioritise resources by reducing spending in some areas to invest in other higher priorities for Health, Education, infrastructure, economic growth and improving productivity.

## **Financial implications**

The States net revenue expenditure would remain the same. However, the Education, Sport and Culture Department's net revenue expenditure would increase by £40,000 and the Chief Minister's Department's (Communications Unit) net revenue expenditure would decrease by an identical amount.

Together with proposed Amendment (6), there could be a reduction in the Chief Minister's Department of £130,000 and equivalent savings would have to be identified. A number of savings within the Department have already been identified in the MTFP (£788,100), and together with Amendment (6) the further reduction would have a significant negative impact on the services provided and the programmes of work, including Public Sector Reform.

There may need to be a reduction in manpower in the Chief Minister's Department.