

2024.02.27.

13.2 Deputy J. Renouf of the Chief Minister regarding a new Common Strategic Policy (OQ.35/2024)

Will the Chief Minister advise what his plans are for bringing forward a new C.S.P. and state whether he intends to amend the Government Plan 2024-2027?

Deputy L.J. Farnham (The Chief Minister):

The new Council of Ministers is required to bring forward its Common Strategic Policy within 4 months of taking office, but we are aiming to do that in a slightly shortened timeframe. Work is underway. We do not plan to change the Government Plan that was approved by this Assembly in December 2023, although we may wish to prioritise some spending within the current expenditure envelope. Members will know that we are obliged to lodge a Government Plan every year and this will be lodged in accordance with the normal timescale.

13.2.1 Deputy J. Renouf:

Could the Chief Minister state whether it is his intention to produce Ministerial Plans as was done under the previous Government?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

We have not decided that yet. We have been looking at the previous Ministerial Plans and the previous Common Strategic Policy and looking at the work that has been done there; looking at, can I say, some of the good work that has been done by the previous Government, so we are still balancing that to see what we are going to bring forward.

13.2.2 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:

Can the Chief Minister explain the process that has been followed so far to develop what has been developed so far of the new C.S.P. and whether all Ministers have contributed to it?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

We are in the early stages of that. I believe we have 2 meetings of the full Council of Ministers. We have another meeting planned for Thursday and a number of other meetings after that. I believe all Ministers have been present. There might have been one or 2 apologies sent. However, I will ensure that all Ministers are involved in the compilation of the plan and it will not be presented until the Council of Ministers are content and happy to support it.

13.2.3 Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:

Is there a timeframe on when it may be brought to the Assembly?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

We have 4 months. We are the best part of a month into that, I would like to bring it forward before the 4-month period is up. I would say 6 to 8 weeks would be realistic, but reserve our position on that because we want to make sure we get it right.

Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:

Could I ask a point of clarification, Sir?

The Deputy Bailiff:

As long as it is not another question.

Deputy L.K.F. Stephenson:

Is it 6 to 8 weeks from now or 6 to 8 weeks having said that we are already a month into it?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes. Chief Minister, do you want to clarify that?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

Yes, 6 to 8 weeks from now, I predict.

13.2.4 Deputy J. Renouf:

When the Chief Minister develops the Common Strategic Policy with his colleagues, will it be his intention to use it as a basis for collective responsibility within the Council of Ministers? Could he outline his thoughts on how strict he will be enforcing a policy of collective responsibility based on the Common Strategic Policy?

Deputy L.J. Farnham:

I plan to work with the Council of Ministers on a merit-based system. We have a Council of Ministers that represent a good political balance of this Assembly and the Island. Ministers are clear that we have to have good debates around the Council of Ministers' table and we have to win the debates on their merit to deliver the best outcomes for Islanders. I have never been a supporter of collective responsibility in our system. I believe Members and Ministers should be given the choice to vote freely wherever possible. Having said that, unity in the Council of Ministers, with all Ministers, is important, so I hope we can reach compromise and support each other when we bring propositions to the Assembly. I will not be enforcing full-collective responsibility, mainly because we do not have a legal mandate to do that.

The Deputy Bailiff:

Before we move to question 3, I can announce the outcome of the election for appointment of Members of the Planning Committee as follows: Deputy Ahier 30 votes, the Connétable of Grouville 21 votes, Deputy Moore 16 votes and Deputy Jeune 13 votes. Therefore, Deputy Ahier and the Connétable of Grouville have been appointed as Members of the Planning Committee. Members will note that the ballot box in relation to the Associate Member to represent the States in the British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly has now left the Chamber and is in the process of being counted.

Female Speaker:

Sorry, are you able to clarify those numbers once more; I thought I misheard?

The Deputy Bailiff:

Yes. Deputy Ahier 30 votes, the Connétable of Grouville 21 votes, Deputy Moore 16 votes and Deputy Jeune 13 votes.