

2.6 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of St. Clement of the Chief Minister regarding departmental restructuring.

Given that 3 months have passed since the Chief Minister in response to my question regarding departmental restructuring on 11th December 2012 agreed to issue a paper updating Members on the issue, could he advise not only what is being done and how advanced the work is but also who is involved in doing it?

Senator I.J. Gorst (The Chief Minister):

Yes, since I gave a briefing to States Members in autumn, an extensive engagement programme regarding reform has been undertaken involving some 2,500 States employees. As I said in December, we are focusing on service redesign, workforce modernisation and cultural change. The Council of Ministers is due to receive that progress report next week which will highlight the achievements to date and identify the future deliverables focusing on the next 18 months while also looking at the longer term. I will then arrange for a briefing for States Members shortly after Easter to outline these deliverables.

[10:15]

2.6.1 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

I am grateful to the Chief Minister but I do not believe he advised me who was involved in doing this work because, as he will be aware, I have concerns that the people doing the work may not be the people that are going to give us the type of change that we possibly need. Could he also, while he is on his feet, advise whether, in fact, the restructuring will be starting from a clean sheet or is it merely a re-juggling of existing resources?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

There are a number of strands of work. As I have said in this Assembly previously, Atos were used to undertake a customer mapping exercise, which I think the Deputy might think of as a clean sheet of paper but it actually seeks to understand the interactions currently with the public and therefore develop systems which are going to deal with those interactions more effectively and efficiently and is a very good piece of work which shows that there can be significant improvements, and some would say, that was clear previously. There can be significant improvements in cost and the customer service experience by changing to a more electronic means of serving customers.

2.6.2 Deputy T.A. Vallois:

The Chief Minister, in his first answer, mentioned the service redesign and cultural change. Does he agree that the corporate approach of I.S. which is Information Services, Human Resources and Property Holdings is fundamental to the service redesign and the cultural change to the States of Jersey and that without the help of a central corporate approach, departments will not be able to deliver?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Yes, I do, and as I have said to the Deputy on previous occasions, it is a number of years since those particular areas were centralised and I think it is fair to say that they have not worked in the way that we would like to have seen them work in the past. Because of the way that the government is structured and the legal structure round individual departments being able to act autonomously without the requirement for them legally to work with the central function, then I think that is where we have seen some dysfunctionality so we need to address that issue while at the same time working in a co-ordinated approach across departments but those central functions are absolutely critical.

2.6.3 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

In view of the Chief Minister's answer, would he say that the fault is arising from culture or from leadership?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I am sometimes perceived, I believe, as a little bit of a "softie", perhaps even a Liberal. **[Members: Oh!]** That is because I personally believe that culture is important and getting culture right in an organisation means that then you can go on to deliver more effectively and more efficiently and change structure. People can feel pride in where they work and the jobs that they are doing so I think that we have got a large challenge, particularly around culture to start with, and then once we start to get that right, we will see delivery improve and change as well.

2.6.4 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

I will not engage in the Australian joke about culture. I am afraid that I am getting the message from the Chief Minister that we are looking at small detail and moving the chairs around on a ship that is not fit for purpose. Could the Chief Minister agree or otherwise that he is going to look first of all at what services the government should be providing and follow that by deciding how best to deliver them rather than just reshuffling what we presently have?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

If only life were quite that straightforward. As I said, culture is very important. We need to promote and change the culture that we currently have but be in no doubt, work is already ongoing in some departments to show how they can do things differently and so Members will see that when I give my briefing at Easter and I think I can say publicly that Social Security are really at the forefront of changing the way they are delivering services and they should be congratulated for that. Members may be aware that the Minister for Economic Development spoke about departments. That will ultimately lead to us looking to see whether okay we have got a function happening in department one, the same function happening in department 2 and the same function happening in department 3. If we improve all those 3 functions, we ultimately get to the point where we can say we just need one.