

2.7 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of St. Clement of the Chief Minister regarding software replacements in 2013:

Would the Chief Minister explain what software his department wishes to replace in 2013 at a cost of £663,000, how many PC's are involved and why H.R.I.S. (Human Resources Information Services) requires replacement after a relatively short time at a cost of £740,000?

Senator P.F. Routier (The Assistant Chief Minister - rapporteur):

Information Services are partway through a £1.4 million project to replace the existing ageing desktop software with Microsoft Windows 7 and Office 2010. The project will replace Windows XP, Office 2003 and 2007. This upgrade will, as well as being operationally necessary to ensure ongoing capability, also provide several benefits: improved security, improved performance for users, more efficient centralised support, rapid and efficient deployment of future upgrades and the potential to save costs on future desktop equipment requirements. This upgrade currently will be working across 3,800 workstations across all departments. With regard to the H.R.I.S. system which was implemented in November 2007 by Shared Services in Treasury and Resources and sought to consolidate H.R. (Human Resources) databases from the previous committee system, a subsequent independent review of H.R.I.S. took place in 2010 which determined that the current system design was inappropriate for the future needs of the States of Jersey given the developing vision for the reform of the workforce.

2.7.1 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

Regarding the H.R.I.S., we are told on page 132 of the plan that we are about to debate, it is 5 years old and has not been fit for purpose during its lifetime. Could the Assistant Minister explain why it has not been fit for purpose and is there any comeback on the suppliers. In relation to the...

The Bailiff:

I think one question at a time if you would, Deputy, because otherwise it gets too complicated.

Senator P.F. Routier:

I can only obviously endorse what is already written in the report that the Deputy comments on. It was unfortunately a system which is not fit for purpose and it is recognised... there was a report done in 2010, which a couple of the conclusions from it was that the system is expensive to run for limited benefit received and leads to unnecessary time wastage. There are a number of deficiencies which could lead to erroneous decision making or lead to errors in salary calculations. H.R.I.S. is not tailored for multi-disciplinary organisations like the States and there are a long list of things which do identify that the system was not fit for purpose. With regard to any comebacks on who provided the system, unfortunately because it was a grouping together of all our existing systems and it was tailor-made for it, it is not really something that we can go back on. We just really need to go forward and scope for a new system which is in the plan for the future.

2.7.2 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

It seems to me that this is the third expensive set of H.R. software that we have got. We had JD Edwards, we had H.R.I.S., now we are starting on another. Would the Minister find out and come back to the Assembly and tell us exactly how much money we appear to have wasted on systems that do not work?

Senator P.F. Routier:

Firstly, I should point out that the JD Edwards was not an H.R. system as such. It was more accounting processes across departments, but in saying that, the Senator is obviously making a valid question. There is a continual rolling budget for improvements to equipment across the

States and we need to recognise that it is an expensive thing to be operating. It is recognised that our current system is not fit for purpose and we need to move forward.

The Bailiff:

The question was though, Minister, would you be willing to say the cost of these 2 items which are no longer fit for purpose? That was the question. Would you be willing to work out and tell people what the cost of these 2 systems that the Senator mentioned was?

Senator P.F. Routier:

I can certainly ask the department to look at what that cost is, but I think it will be extremely difficult, because what it was doing was bringing together various systems across various departments and I think to get that cost finalised might be tricky, but certainly we will do our best to provide that information.

2.7.3 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

The Senator states that JD Edwards was not meant to be used for H.R. purposes. My Public Accounts Committee was looking at JD Edwards and it was one of the selling points of that particular system. Would the Senator kindly look that up and confirm my understanding of that? I am very disappointed that he says that it is going to be so difficult because, as we said last session, can we please have a little more of can do and not cannot do?

[10:30]

Would the Assistant Minister not agree that it is time for can do and not cannot do?

Senator P.F. Routier:

I certainly agree that it is time for a can do attitude with regard to this and hopefully what we are moving forward with is a can do approach to ensuring that we do have a good system in place for H.R. to take that forward. The Senator does refer back to the JD Edwards and what the Public Accounts looked at in the past. The functionality for human resources in the JD Edwards was an add-on, which was not something that at the time was included in what the States department took into the system. It needs to be recognised that the move from having 24 pay groups and 6,500 staff spread across various departments was quite a big change to move to the H.R.I.S. system and unfortunately it has not, as I say again, proved to have been the right choice at that time. We are now in a position where we recognise that and we need to go forward and have a new system.

2.7.4 Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier:

What evidence can the Minister produce to this House today to suggest that the next system will be any more fit for purpose than the last one?

Senator P.F. Routier:

I thank the Deputy for that question. Certainly when the funds are agreed - hopefully over the next couple of days - for providing a new system the scoping work will be carried out. I have a lot of faith in the new team in the I.S. (Information Systems) Department and the H.R. Department and they were working to bring forward a new system. I can give an assurance they will give their best endeavours to ensure the new system is appropriate.

2.7.5 Deputy G.P. Southern:

An assurance then but no evidence today that a new system will be any better at doing its job than the last one, which appeared to be a total mess.

Senator P.F. Routier:

The scoping work will start as soon as we know that the money is available and as long as this House provides the funds for the work to be carried out it will be properly funded and properly managed.

2.7.6 Deputy S.G. Luce of St. Martin:

The answers that the Assistant Chief Minister is giving us are not really satisfactory or pleasant listening this morning. Could I just ask him how long has this system not been fit for purpose and why has action not been taken sooner?

Senator P.F. Routier:

I can only agree with the Deputy that it is not very pleasant having to give these answers as well. It is having been made aware of the situation myself only in the last few weeks but the department... a review was carried out in 2010 which identified that the system is not appropriate and fit for purpose. Obviously the process of bringing forward new plans and new budgeting is where we are today and hopefully we will be able to move forward.

2.7.7 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

I have 2 parts of the question if you will allow it. Firstly, the H.R.I.S. system, with £750,000 to replace it, it is clearly an expense of the States. Can the Minister assure me that this has been looked at so that in the future similar mistakes will not be incurred? Secondly, regarding the operating systems, I presume that it was an upgrade from XP to Windows 7 and possibly Office needs upgrade as well. If it was only XP the sum of £663,000 would upgrade around 26,000 PCs. If we include Office suite, probably over 3,000 PCs. Can the Assistant Minister assure us his department is getting value for money because it does not seem like it?

Senator P.F. Routier:

Sorry, I have forgotten the thread of the first question now.

Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

The first part of the question, on the H.R.I.S. £750,000 was saved. Can the Assistant Minister assure us that we have learnt from this and similar mistakes will not reoccur?

Senator P.F. Routier:

Certainly, I think the officers in the departments are very aware that there have been some expensive mistakes made in the past with regard to this. We need to ensure that they are given support for taking forward the new system and we can give them as much encouragement and support to make sure that they scope the new system effectively. I can assure the Deputy and Members that we will be keeping a very close eye on the way it goes forward in the future. With regard to the upgrades: various departments have been on various systems, whether it has been XP or Windows of the various years. The value for money is something which we need to rely on in the department to ensure that they are getting value for money and I know that they are under a lot of pressure to ensure that is the case and we will be doing the best we can to ensure that we do get value for money.