

## **OPENING STATEMENT BY BDO ALTO – 15 JULY 2011**

In March 2009 we were engaged by the Minister and the Accounting Officer for Home Affairs to undertake a review of use of financial resources during Operation Rectangle, this being the codename for the States of Jersey Police's investigation into historical child abuse.

It is solely the role of the States of Jersey Police and the prosecuting authorities to investigate allegations of child abuse and to bring perpetrators to justice. Our review of the financial aspects of the States of Jersey Police's investigation is not relevant to those investigations and prosecution processes, and did not in any way inhibit the furtherance of those investigations and prosecutions.

Sadly it appears necessary to reiterate this point given allegations made on certain Internet blogs that our Report has somehow been used to discredit the investigation of historical child abuse, and to instead direct attention onto management of the enquiry itself. We sincerely hope that this Scrutiny Review process corrects these and any other misconceptions relevant to our Report.

In terms of the drivers behind our work – all departments of the States of Jersey are subject to ongoing audit and review. These processes are designed to ensure that taxpayer money is spent wisely and is properly accounted for. It also enables lessons to be learned to facilitate continual improvement in the quality of public service whilst balancing the need to derive value and efficiency from spending.

Our review, commissioned in March 2009, was not about the historical child abuse investigation *per se*, it was not about criticising any one individual, and it was not in any way linked to an inquiry being undertaken by Wiltshire Police.

We were simply engaged to review and report upon the costs incurred by the States of Jersey Police in their Operation Rectangle investigation, which remained ongoing at the time, and to consider whether rules and procedures governing expenditure were effective and were being properly adhered to.

Whilst Operation Rectangle was a deeply distressing investigation for all of those concerned with it, as well as for the Island community generally, it is not the first and it will not be the last complex, distressing and highly emotive investigation that the States of Jersey Police will deal with; that is their job.

However, the size of Operation Rectangle was unique in Jersey, as was the level of expenditure; I add at this stage that the level of spending drew attention from a very early stage from both within and outside of the force. Our review sought to understand the level and nature of costs incurred, to consider the robustness of financial governance surrounding that spend and to make recommendations to assist in the management of the costs of future major police operations.

The States of Jersey Police force is a professional police service. As a result, and irrespective of the size and nature of any particular investigation, it is necessarily conscious of the need to manage its finances in accordance with financial policies and directions in place.

In this case there was no instruction to spend outside of established policies and frameworks or to ignore financial controls. Rather the Chief Minister made a commitment to provide all necessary resources to the investigation; and by doing that he provided an assurance to the victims, the people of Jersey and the States of Jersey Police that this investigation would not be constrained in any way by a lack of financial resources.

In our opinion, the Chief Minister's statement did not remove the need for that spending to be properly planned, monitored and reported upon, nor did it provide for the usual rules governing spending to be disregarded.

As a result of our detailed review we prepared a Report that contained a total of 19 recommendations. This provides a point of reference for Home Affairs and the States of Jersey Police when considering how to implement appropriate financial governance in future major police investigations.

That is the background to our review and Report, and I hope this provides some further context to this Sub Panel prior to us answering their specific questions.