

23.04.18

**15 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of the Chief Minister regarding the establishment of the Cabinet Officer (OQ.68/2023)**

Will the Chief Minister explain in what ways she considers the establishment of the new Cabinet Office to have been a success, whether she has any plans to change it in the future and, if so, what these plans are?

**Deputy K.L. Moore (The Chief Minister):**

We have achieved our objective of creating a Cabinet Office and we did it quickly within our first 100 days. This was an organisational change to improve accountability and co-ordination at the centre of government, which it has done. As announced last August, the Cabinet Office was formed through merging the former Chief Operating Office, Office of the Chief Executive and the Department for Strategic Policy, Planning and Performance. This practical step has achieved greater coherence and enabled us to put in place the new management structures quickly. We will now start to undertake the next stage, which is to look at how we can best focus the Cabinet Office on delivering improved departmental support and advice to the Council of Ministers in the most effective way. As part of this, we will ensure that Ministerial decision-making accords with the structures set out in the States of Jersey Law, namely through the Council of Ministers or through individual Ministers and their Assistants. We have not and will not be establishing any separate political decision-making structures grouped around the Cabinet Office.

**4.15.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

The Chief Minister has created a Cabinet Office but she has not created the Cabinet Office that was proposed in the P.P.C. subcommittee, in whose reports they say if a Cabinet Office is established the head of the Cabinet Office could be responsible for providing advice to the Council of Ministers and the chief executive to account to them for delivery policy initiatives. That sounds like 2 separate roles fulfilling 2 separate functions, whereas the Cabinet Office she has created has one person still doing both of those. So can the Chief Minister confirm that we will imminently hear from her the intention to establish a proper head of Cabinet Office, a Cabinet secretary or whatever you want to call them, as envisaged in that report?

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

I think we have already been over this ground once today and in my answer to the Deputy previously I talked about the potential for a Cabinet secretary and I referred to the fact that this is part of the review. But under the current structure we have been working within the structure that was existing, one that we, of course, inherited when we assumed office and all of those post-holders who were legally in the roles that they had been employed to do at the time.

[12:15]

**4.15.2 Deputy M. Tadier:**

Is there a model either somewhere around the Commonwealth on which the Chief Minister would hold up as an ideal to model the Jersey Cabinet Office on and, indeed, although it was not necessarily her conception as an idea, could she clarify what she thinks Jersey's current manifestation of the Cabinet Office is most closely aligned to in terms of other Executives around the world?

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

I do think that our Cabinet Office, and I have made it quite clear, is a work in progress at the moment. We have made our best steps and first endeavours to meet the recommendations of the Democratic Accountability sub-group. When we look across the world, of course, we are not unique but we are a complex organisation, as I have already said today, and there are other models to look to. Of course, we often look to Westminster, but then we can equally look to other small island nations for our inspiration and we endeavour to do so. Along with colleagues we have been reaching out to others who may be able to assist us in that.

#### **4.15.3 Deputy M. Tadier:**

Is there a tension between having somebody, a non-politician officer, on the Cabinet Office who can either be completely apolitical but nonetheless needs to effectively do the bidding of Ministers versus a different model where that officer may be politically partisan towards and sympathetic towards what is going on in terms of the policy direction of Government? What are the options that are available and the tensions that the Minister sees?

#### **Deputy K.L. Moore:**

The British civil service tradition generally tends to be one that civil servants are not partisan and they do not change as the Government changes. However, of course, there are other structures where a full change can be seen, and we see that in the U.S. in particular, do we not? Therefore, as part of the British system I would imagine that that is the structure that we would first and foremost look to.

#### **4.15.4 The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

Given that the Cabinet Office is in a process of implementation as was indicated earlier, could the Chief Minister confirm who is responsible for what was the old M. and D. (Modernisation and Digital) Department and is she satisfied that security arrangements are properly in place?

#### **Deputy K.L. Moore:**

Thank you for the question, Constable. Modernisation and Digital is currently sitting in the responsibility of the Treasurer as an Assistant Chief Executive. I think, despite ... apologies, sorry. I am perhaps getting my acronyms incorrect and that is now I.T.S., the Integrated Technology Systems project, that sits there. I am ably supported politically by both the Constable of St. John and Deputy Alex Curtis, who have taken a Ministerial role in that area.

#### **The Connétable of St. Brelade:**

I thank the Chief Minister for her answer.

#### **4.15.5 Deputy M.R. Scott:**

Could the Chief Minister explain her definition of success in terms of delivering the Cabinet Office, other than to say she has delivered it?

#### **Deputy K.L. Moore:**

Well, I talked earlier about delivering a functioning organisation that can meet political mandates and deliver on the agenda of the day for the public. Essentially, that is why we are all here, to respond to the public's requirements. The public at the elections talked about accountability. They also talked about efficiency, and through doing this process we hope to deliver a service that is best placed to meet those requirements that the public have demanded and that is what we are really focused upon doing.

**4.15.6 Deputy M.R. Scott:**

Could I please now ask: now that she has delivered the Cabinet Office, how has delivery of these things changed?

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

I think through the course of this morning we have identified that this is a work in progress. We have made some movements and there is still work to be done.

**4.15.7 Deputy L.V. Feltham:**

From what we know of the Cabinet Office, it sounds increasingly similar to the old Department of the Chief Minister, or Chief Minister's Department I think as it was. Can the Chief Minister confirm whether this is just a rollback to the previous iteration or whether this is a carefully designed department that has been put together in such a way to resolve certain issues and, if so, what is being resolved?

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

I think as structures evolve and change they can sometimes look like past structures because, of course, there is a limited amount of room for manoeuvre and people often come in with new ideas and those who perhaps have a longer corporate memory say: "Oh, yes, we saw that in the last decade or the one before that." So there will always be some element of that and some reflection upon what has been, but of course we are focused on looking forward, trying to find the best fit so that we can deliver the best possible services in the most efficient way that will benefit Islanders. Because ultimately that is why we are all here today and we hope that we will move forward and serve Islanders to the best of our ability.

**4.15.8 Deputy L.V. Feltham:**

Can the Chief Minister explain to us what is so efficient about this particular structure?

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

Well, it has been simplified somewhat and bringing a number of delivery points into the same structure. That has been a process and, as I have already stated today, it is a process that will now continue following recent events.

**4.15.9 Deputy M.B. Andrews:**

It seems to me within a 100-day period if you are planning to implement a Cabinet Office there potentially could be some mistakes that could be made. Most often when there is a decision that will be taken, Governments will have more time to implement things and to review that process as they go along. So, does the Minister agree that potentially there could be some inefficiencies that later potentially could be addressed due to the timeframe of the 100-day plan of implementation?

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

I think I have made it quite clear today that some change has been rolled out and delivered in short order. Other changes will take a longer time and further consideration, and that is the process that we are working to. We will endeavour at every point to make our most efficient and best decisions with what we are dealing with at the particular time. Progress and delivery of the best outcomes for Islanders is at the heart of that on every occasion.

**4.15.10 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:**

Can the Chief Minister explain exactly in what way accountability has been improved tangibly by this restructure, especially given that the functions of policymaking and delivery on policy are still held by the same office when the proposal originally made for a Cabinet Office was deliberately to split them so that accountability could be enhanced?

**Deputy K.L. Moore:**

When considering accountability, we generally think about the one Minister, one department structure that was agreed by the former Assembly. That is something that we are still working towards achieving and we have not forgotten about it. The question about policy and accountability for that is ultimately a political place because we as politicians are accountable to the public for delivering upon our policies. Of course, that moment is held at the ballot box with every member of the community who turns out to vote.