

Chief Minister



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Senator Kristina Moore
Chair
Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel
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14 September 2020

Dear Chair,

Thank you for your letter dated 13 July 2020. I hope you will forgive the delay in responding to your letter, noting the summer recess, the pressures of COVID-19, and the ongoing work with the Government Plan. Please see answers to the questions posed, as below:

Introduction

The Government of Jersey's accounting and procurement systems do not hold much of the information required by P59/2019 in the format requested. As such, producing the report requires data to be extracted in varying formats from a number of systems together with manual collation and manipulation. This process is both time consuming (estimated officer hours to produce the recently published report were in excess of 300 hours) and prone to error, although every effort is made to establish the accuracy of the information and a rigorous quality assurance process is in place.

Consultants: Reporting in their use by the Government of Jersey (P.59/2019) – Report of the Chief Minister – December 2019 (R.63/2020)

Table 1: Consultancy Services Provided by a Supplier – expected end dates

1. In R.149/2019 various specified suppliers had an expected end date to be included in R.63/2020. However there appears to be no crossover for some of the suppliers into R.63/2020. Could you clarify what has happened to these suppliers?

A reconciliation has been performed between those suppliers named in table 1 which had expected completion dates within or after H2 2019. It was found there were a number of reasons for the same suppliers not to be shown in R63/2020 return:

- The suppliers were re-classified within table 2 as further review identified that they were named individuals working for those suppliers.**
- The cost in H2 was below £20,000**
- On review, some suppliers were reclassified as ‘technical specialists’ so excluded.**

2. In the Proposition (P.59/2019) it was requested that the final total cost of the engagement be specified. This information does not appear to have been provided for those contracts which have finished in R.63/2020 or R.149/2019. Would you be able to provide this information in the spreadsheets for those contracts which were completed in 2019?

As detailed in the narrative supporting Proposition 59 reporting, there is no centralised procurement record, making the collation of this information very difficult. To provide the information you requested would require dedicated resources manually taking each of the payment lines within JD Edwards system and manually identifying which orders related to which projects etc. The ITS programme includes a requirement for timesheet capability which will allow assignment of individuals time to projects. This will include consultants time, which will allow us to report this data from 2023. We are happy to arrange a private briefing to discuss and explain this further.

Table 1: Consultancy Services Provided by a Supplier – Note 3

3. All technical specialists such as architects and doctors have been excluded. Could you clarify why these specialists have been excluded as this would appear to contradict the requirements laid out in the Proposition (P.59/2019) which requested that the total number of consultants employed or engaged by the Government of Jersey for a contract value of £20,000 or greater be specified?

We do not consider doctors or architects or other technical specialists to fall under the definition of ‘consultants’ when we record and implement controls over this type of spending, therefore we made it clear these were excluded. Consultant doctors, for example, are recruited through an entirely different procurement process with different controls.

Table 1: Consultancy Services Provided by a Supplier and Table 2: Consultancy Services Provided by an Individual – travel costs

4. Can you clarify if the travel costs are included in the total cost specified in each table?
a. If not, could the Panel understand the total travel cost for suppliers and individuals for the report duration?

Travel is a difficult category to isolate and show. Arrangements with consultants vary; some use the HRG booking system and Government of Jersey will pay directly for their travel. Others may charge travel separately in their invoice and for other consultants it is not separated out but is included in their costings. Where an amount was shown in the ‘average monthly travel/accommodation paid by GoJ directly’ column, this related to amounts paid via HRG for individuals travel which were identified.

We are unable to provide the total cost of travel for all suppliers and individuals due to the varying ways this is recorded or charged and the lack of an IT solution to enable better recording and monitoring in this area. This should be improved through the implementation of ITS in 2023.

Table 1: Consultancy Services Provided by a Supplier and Table 2: Consultancy Services Provided by an Individual – Structured Needs Assessment and Post Consultation Analysis

5. Could the Panel review the criteria which is in place to define the Yes or No outcome?

The term ‘structured needs assessment’ is not a term used by the Government of Jersey in this area and has no definition within the Public Finances Manual. In order to support the objective of this request within the Proposition colleagues recorded ‘Yes’ where they could identify documentation that may meet the interpretation of the ‘structured needs assessment’ and ‘no’ if they could not.

Table 3: Fixed-Term Roles, By Department, For Individuals Paid at or Below Civil Service Grade 15.4 Salary- December 2019 total

6. Appears to include thirty-three additional roles specified in the departments than the total specified. Please could you confirm the correct figure and if this alters the amount paid column?

Apologies, the total was not updated following a change. All figures per department are correct but total should show 451. This does not alter amount paid.

Table 4: Fixed Term Roles, By Department, For Specific Roles above the Civil Service Grade 15.4 Salary – Note 3

7. The note confirms that earnings exclude employer pension contributions, where applicable (not all fixed-term employees have opted to join the pension scheme). Could you clarify the breakdown on those employees who have opted to join and those who have opted not to join the pension scheme? a. for those who have opted not to join the pension scheme can you confirm what the alternatives are which have been offered?

It is compulsory for all permanent colleagues, including those with salaries above £100,000 to contribute to the Pension scheme. Colleagues on fixed term contracts have the option to opt in or out of the pension scheme. Colleagues who have a fixed term contract may have a recruitment and retention (R&R) supplement, these requests are reviewed and approved by SEB prior to an appointment.

Of the 12 roles shown in Table 4 in the H2 2019 return, four colleagues opted to join the pension scheme, the remaining eight did not. Four of those eight colleagues were awarded an R&R supplement and the total value in that period (July-Dec 2019) was £71,492. R&R supplements are awarded on an exceptional basis in recognition of recruitment and retention difficulties relating to a particular role.

Table 5: Local Agency Staff – Total on Island Agency Cost H1 2019

8. Appears to reflect an addition of £9,910 in total costs. Please could you explain the reason for the increase?

The total on Island Agency Cost in H1 2019 return was shown as £3,392,856. In the H2 2019 return the local agency nursing costs were split out (£309,497), which was explained in the notes below. This left a restated cost of £3083,359, however, it is noted on review the report total read £3,093,359 which was a typo of £10,000 in the total line, all individual lines are correct.

Table 5: Local Agency Staff – Local Agency Nurses costs or HCS costs H1 2019

9. Appears to reflect a reduction in total costs against R.149/2019 calculations. Please could you explain the reason for the reduction?

There was a typo in local agency nursing costs H1 2019 it said £309,407 and should have read £309,497, this was a £90 difference.

Table 5: Local Agency Staff – Social Worker Agency Costs H1 2019

10. Reflects an increase of £557,519 against R.149/2019. R.63/2020 confirms this was calculated incorrectly in the prior return at £823,501 and now includes adult mental health social workers. Please could you confirm to the Panel if any other Social Worker agency costs have been omitted from the calculations? Proposition (P.59/2019)

On completion of the Proposition 59 H2 report, the HCS team identified that we should include adult social work so included and restated figures accordingly, ensuring full explanation and transparency. It is not believed that any other costs have been omitted.

11. Specifically requested information on the projects/engagements on which consultants are working or have worked in the preceding six-month period. Unfortunately, it appears that this information has not been included in the reports? a. Could you clarify the timeline for implementation into the report for this information?

The ITS programme includes a requirement for timesheet capability which will allow assignment of individuals time to projects. This will include consultants time, which will allow us to report this data from 2023.

Report Data

12. The Reports appears to be defined by user interpretation in various fields would it be possible for this to become more generic in content to assist the comparison of data?

We believe the narrative provided at the start of the report explains the lack of a centralised procurement record, which means collating the data for this report is very manual and is open to interpretation. It requires many different individuals across the organisation feeding into spreadsheets and answering queries, meaning there may be inconsistencies of approach across this report. This will not change until ITS solution is implemented from 2023.

13. R.63/2020 refers to COVID-19 which appears irrelevant to these reports as they were prepared for December 2019 should this be removed?

The writer of the section mentioning Covid-19 was trying to give an up to date picture of their programme at the point of completion, as we do for all the projects where contract end dates, for example, may have been updated from the position as at the end of December. We felt it was better to give a more accurate picture at the point of reporting.

14. Could you clarify the quality assurance process which the reports underwent prior to release?

The report was collated between Treasury & Exchequer and the Chief Operating Office. This was done through extensive consultation with all departments across the Government. The finance business partners fed in significantly to this process as well, reviewing and questioning where required. The draft report was then circulated to the Executive Leadership Team, including all Directors General, for checking and validation. Following these reviews, it was sent to the Chief Minister for final review before being submitted to the Greffier.

15. Could you clarify the retainer category criteria regarding reviews and assessments?

There are certain contracts in place where the method of engagement is through a retainer, which can be drawn down as appropriate. This would be applicable only to specific types of engagement, a few of which are listed in the Proposition.

16. In the future is it possible to provide the Panel with the spreadsheets of the data prior to the report being released in order that Scrutiny can review content?

Yes, spreadsheets could be provided if required.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Le Fondré', written in a cursive style.

Senator John Le Fondré
Chief Minister

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