

2018.12.03

8 Connétable D.W. Mezbourian of St. Lawrence of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding the prospective assimilation of the Customs and Immigration Service and the States of Jersey Police: [OQ.220/2018]

Further to the answer given to the oral question I asked at the last sitting, what evidence does the Minister have to prove that any assimilation of the Jersey Customs and Immigration Service and the States of Jersey Police will result in the service provided to the public by both agencies being as or more effective and efficient than at present?

Connétable L. Norman of St. Clement (The Minister for Home Affairs):

My department is working to a number of key principles including integration, collaboration, early intervention and prevention. These principles are well evidenced in delivering improved outcomes for the public. As the Constable knows, both the Police and Customs operate in law enforcement and already collaborate in certain areas and regularly work closely alongside each other. In order to deliver further improvements and ensure the service provided to the public is as efficient and effective as possible, there is a need to integrate further. This will bring together expertise, intelligence and information that will enable more effective operational and organisational delivery.

[15:45]

3.8.1 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

I wonder if the Minister will tell us what the underlying business case is for the changes?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

The underlying business case is to improve the service to the public in all areas of law enforcement to concentrate on prevention. Collaboration, cohesiveness and working together has got to be the way forward, not just in these services but in all services throughout the States.

3.8.2 Senator S.W. Pallett:

Will such an assimilation have any effect on staffing levels at the harbour, ports or around our coast and, if so, how will services change? Can he assure the Assembly that this will not put, in any way, the public at risk?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

Absolutely not. It is essential that the level of service provided to the Island, in the security of its borders and prevention of crime and detection of crime, is maintained at least at the current level and enhanced. That is my commitment and it has been my commitment since I took on this role and that will be maintained while I retain this office.

Senator S.W. Pallett:

I just asked whether there would be any change to services. Is that a no or yes?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

The level of delivery of service will be at least maintained and I expect, in due course, to be enhanced.

3.8.3 The Connétable of St. Lawrence:

In his answer to me on 20th November, the Minister said that the Customs and Immigration Service with others are essential for the well-being of the people of the Island. We have just heard him tell us that there will be no delays or there will be no impact on the travelling public

when they arrive at our ports if this assimilation goes ahead. Will he also confirm that there will be no operational changes by the work of the now Customs Department at the post office whereby they intercept illegal drugs to stop them flooding on to our streets and they also collect G.S.T. (Goods and Services Tax) for the Treasury? Will he assure us that there will be no changes and certainly no lesser service than we have now?

The Connétable of St. Clement:

I am sure the Minister for Treasury and Resources would be the first to have a right go at me if I suggested that the Customs should stop collecting or reduce their collection of G.S.T., and this is where integration and collaboration and co-operation between the Police Force and Customs comes into play in a big way. Customs are dealing with crime, detecting crime at the post office. They have a dog handler; the Police have a dog handler. The Customs have back office facilities; the Police have back office facilities. What we are looking to do is incorporating and assimilating those, integrating those so they can be as efficient as possible in solving these crimes, in detecting these crimes and intercepting the drugs which the Constable refers to. As I said, there is absolutely no intention whatsoever to reduce the level of service provided by Customs and Immigration and the States of Jersey Police.