

2.1 Deputy K.C. Lewis of St. Saviour of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding the implementation of the Sex Offenders Register:

How does the Minister propose to make up the shortfall of £185,000 in implementing the Sex Offenders Register?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand (The Minister for Home Affairs):

I remind Members that the Sex Offenders (Jersey) Law 2010 is an important piece of legislation which will greatly reduce the risk to children and vulnerable adults which is represented by known sex offenders. The shortfall aspect: firstly, in relation to 2011, there is, as I indicated when I took the proposition to the States for the law, a shortfall of £184,000 in relation to posts in the Probation and Children's Services. About £120,000 of this can be funded from under-spends caused by slippage in the law coming into force and the establishment of the Vetting and Barring Bureau and the rest will have to be found between the agencies involved. There is also the issue of the anticipated court and case costs of £700,000 which will need to be found from the general Court and Case Costs budget or from the central provision for exceptional expenditure. In relation to 2012 and 2013, the additional £184,000 and £700,000 has been approved, in principle, by the Council of Ministers but is subject to States approval in the 2012 and 2013 Business Plans.

2.1.1 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Is the Minister happy that this important piece of legislation will come in on time?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

Well, I would be happy if it does, but that is a matter for the States to decide next week.

2.1.2 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier of St. Saviour:

Can the Minister tell us whether the figures he has arrived at represent the absolutely worst scenario that his department envisages, or whether they are based on an actual study of how this law has been implemented in other jurisdictions and the anticipated rate of appeals, *et cetera*?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

They are based upon the best guesstimates from the Judicial Greffe and from the Law Officers' Department of what they think may happen in Jersey. But I would point out to Members that the guesstimate has quite substantially changed from the guesstimate which I put before the Assembly when the law was passed, but it is based upon Jersey conditions because we have different rules in relation to legal aid and costs and matters of that nature.

2.1.3 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

As a supplementary, could the Minister tell us what percentage of people placed on the Register he expects, for example, to appeal?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

The figures of estimates are all contained in P.175, in fact. I am rapidly looking at that to see if I can glean the answer. I am afraid I cannot straight off the top of my head without needing a few minutes delay, but it is all there.

2.1.4 Senator J.L. Perchard:

Is the Minister able to stand here confidentially and tell the States Assembly that the only place he can find £187,000 is from this particular budget? Is this a case of Ministerial shroud-waving and has the Minister got his priorities right?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I do not think I have waved any shrouds. I am just answering a question and explaining where we are going to get the money from. We certainly will need to get the money; this is an important piece of legislation.

2.1.5 Deputy K.C. Lewis:

I think Senator Perchard has stolen my thunder on that one. Basically, will the Minister treat this as an absolute priority above all other items on his portfolio?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

No, I will not do that. This is a very high priority, but there are public safety issues, such as the police and the fire service which, obviously, are absolute priorities in terms of core activities and although this is very important, this could never be viewed as important as those core activities.