

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS
BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. JOHN
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 16th NOVEMBER 2010**

Question

Would the Minister advise whether internet facilities are available to inmates at H.M.P. La Moye and, if so, are the facilities in all or selected cells; how is internet usage monitored by prison staff; how has this been funded and from which vote and does the Minister consider that this is an appropriate use of public money at this time?

Answer

Prisoners do not have access to the internet. They have access to limited information taken from the internet which is loaded on to the Prisoner Network by the Prison Librarian with the same restrictions as apply to the Prison Library. Prisoners cannot use the system either to communicate with the outside world or with other prisoners.

Over the last three years the Prison, in partnership with a UK company, has developed the Prisoner Network, which is available in every normal cell.

The Prisoner Network provides:-

1. Access to the central teaching and training programmes so that prisoners can work on these in their own cell
2. An information link between the individual prisoners and the Prison Management for direct exchange of information in electronic form
3. Access to television channels

The benefits of this being available in each cell are huge both in terms of improving teaching and training and in terms of improved communication between the prison management and individual prisoners with a resulting reduction in the staff costs of running the prison.

Each normal cell has a screen and a built in computer, together with a keypad, a mouse and a biometric reader (to ensure that prisoners can only access their own system).

The central information system was planned in any event. The decision to extend this to each normal cell has involved the purchase and fitting of 162 complete units at a cost of approximately £125,000, or approximately £770 per unit. However, if this had not occurred then the switch over to digital television would have required the purchase and fitting of 162 televisions to replace the existing televisions.

Because the system has been treated as developmental by the partner company, all the hardware and software which has been provided has been provided at cost and most of the development work has been done at this company's expense.

The extension into each normal cell was financed from underspends which were created from a reduction in the number of staff who were recruited and also in overtime payments.

I view this project as a major success. By wisely controlling staff resources a saving has been made which has then been invested in an improvement both to the access of prisoners to training and education programmes and in communications between prisoners and management with resulting further savings in the delivery of education programmes.

This is an example of good and creative management and an excellent use of public money which has been allocated to the prison.