

### **3. Questions to Ministers without notice - The Minister for Home Affairs**

#### **The Bailiff:**

Very well. That completes oral questions on notice so now we come to questions without notice and the first period is to the Minister for Home Affairs.

#### **3.1 Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

The Minister will recall, I hope, an investigation begun by the South Yorkshire Police into allegations relating to a senior police officer and an alleged abuse within the Sea Cadets. This was, I recall, referred to by the former Acting Police Chief as potentially career-changing. Can the Minister advise as to whether those investigations and a stand alone report were ever completed, what was the outcome, and whether that report, if it exists, is available to Members?

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

I do not have any details in relation to this matter and the Deputy has not given me enough details to understand what he is talking about.

#### **3.1.1 Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

Perhaps the Minister should familiarise himself with the 62,000 word-statement of the former Police Chief which he had claimed he had read, so how he can not know what I am talking about I do not know, but could the Minister look into it and get back to me, please?

#### **Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

No.

#### **Deputy T.M. Pitman:**

It is a genuine question. This was brought up at a scrutiny hearing and if we are going to get this ridiculous, I must say, answer from a Minister, is there any point to this Chamber? Can you not ask the Minister will he not adopt a more sensible grown-up approach?

#### **Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

The matter was looked into in the past and I have no intention whatsoever of reopening it.

### **3.2 The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Maybe I shall have some more luck. I have been reading a lot about this whole area because of the scrutiny review into the BdO Alto Report and one of the things that has struck me is the issue of bullying and I read a paper, I forget by who, which shows quite clearly that example after example after example of bullying was tackled within the States of Jersey Police. My question for the Minister is when he said very publicly that bullying was an issue quite recently in the States of Jersey Police I want him to tell the Members how he came to this conclusion and why he made it so public and can he confirm that he now no longer holds this view?

#### **Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

The answer depends upon what period of time the Deputy of St. Mary is referring to. I am quite clear in my own mind that there were issues of bullying within the police force at times in the past. Indeed, the question of the Deputy itself rather reinforces that view.

#### **3.2.1 The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Can I have a supplementary, Sir? The question was how he came to the conclusion that bullying was still an issue and that somehow the Chief of Police who has now departed was somehow responsible for that, why he published it in the way he did and whether he can confirm that he no longer holds that view?

#### **Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

The difficulty with the question is I am not sure which period of time that the Deputy is referring to. I wonder if he could clarify that.

**The Deputy of St. Mary:**

Indeed, the comments that the Minister made about bullying in the police and the failure of the former Chief of Police to deal with it I took - and I think the majority of the public took - to be in recent times and the evidence that I have seen suggests that bullying was tackled very firmly by the team of the S.I.O. and the Deputy Chief Officer and the Chief Officer in the time just before. So the point is that the Minister seemed to be giving a view that was contrary to what was going on and I wonder whether he has now settled on the fact that he has withdrawn that view. I am not sure whether he has withdrawn that view or not.

**Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

I am still of the opinion that there was a culture of bullying within the police force at the relevant time. I am not thereby saying that that was the fault of the Chief Officer of the day but the fact is such a culture, in my view, did exist. I base that upon a number of issues, including complaints that were made against officers, some of which would have led to disciplinary hearings if they had not left the force.

**3.3 Deputy J.B. Fox of St. Helier:**

I would be grateful if the Minister would congratulate the States of Jersey Police and other officers for the reintroduction of police motorcycles. **[Laughter]** **[Approbation]** They are a marvellous deterrent for road safety and for crime and for the detection of crime. But I would also like him to convey my special thanks, being a retired specialist officer in the field, for the current officers for the design against crime that has been incorporated in a new St. Helier Town Park which I recommend that he visits with his Chief Officers and others so that he clearly sees that we have done things properly at the initial stages for the benefit of the community for the future. Can he please do the same for the new Police Headquarters?

**Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

I will most certainly do that. I am very grateful for the opportunity to say some really nice things about the States of Jersey Police Force. We have an excellent police force, which is excellently led, and I am very pleased to be able to say really positive things.

[11:45]

So often I have to respond to criticisms of the police force but on this occasion, I have with me, in fact, a photograph of the bikes with 2 officers which, with the permission of the Chair, I will pass around for those Members who wish to see them. I am delighted that we have been able to purchase 4 such cycles. They are 650cc and they will provide much greater flexibility and they are a terrific asset. I also want to agree with the questioner in commending the work of the Crime Prevention Officer, excellent work, in a design of the new Town Park.

**3.4 Senator F. du H. Le Gresley:**

Is the Minister supportive of the possible relocation of the Police Headquarters to the open section of Green Street car park or does he still consider that Lime Grove House was a better option?

**Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

I am supportive of the current plans in relation to the open area of the Green Street car park. This will provide a combined police station and headquarters on one site. On the other hand, of course, the provision will take longer to produce. There are various figures in relation to relative costs of the 2 schemes and I do not propose to comment on them today but I am wholly supportive of the proposals.

### **3.5 The Connétable of St. Helier:**

Deputy Fox has partly stolen my thunder or should I say my exhaust but I wanted to ask the Minister whether he would convey my thanks and the approbation of the House for not only the reintroduction of police motorcycles but the fact that we now have police officers on bicycles and perhaps most significantly, we have a very high visible police presence in the town [Approbation] and that is, of course, led by the Chief Officer of the States of Jersey Police himself and is indeed appreciated by town residents and town traders.

#### **Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

Thank you very much to the Connétable for that. Yes, things have definitely been moving forward in the right and positive direction in recent months. I am particularly excited by the fact that officers are out and about in town far more, not just because the public want that but also I believe that the fact that they are now talking to the public and dealing with the public on the streets in this way in a friendly atmosphere has changed their own perception of themselves in a very positive way. I really welcome that.

### **3.6 Senator T.J. Le Main:**

Recently the Minister was quoted in the *J.E.P. (Jersey Evening Post)* or in the media that there was an £8 million loss with the Lime Grove House saga. Can the Minister, in fact, inform the Assembly the where and how of this £8 million loss? If not, if the figures are wrong, will he be offering an apology to the Minister for Treasury and Resources?

#### **Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

The position is that as is fairly normal in public life, what I have said to the scrutiny sub-committee was misreported. The position was that at the time when I wrote certain emails that the information which I had was that the differential of cost between the proposal and the best other option at that time was £8 million and I was concerned about that but that figure subsequently came down to a lower figure and, indeed, now that we have done calculations and alternatives, it has come down to an even lower figure. But the difficulty is that once one is misreported in this way, once the media seize upon a particular thing, it is virtually impossible to correct it. I am grateful to the questioner for the opportunity to correct it.

#### **3.6.1 Senator T.J. Le Main:**

Could I just ask whether the Minister could quote what is the lower figure loss, please?

#### **Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

Well, I looked at some figures yesterday and it is a much lower figure. It depends precisely upon the issue as to how you value the various sites but it is a much lower figure. No doubt, that figure will become public.

#### **Senator T.J. Le Main:**

Is that figure available, just the lower figure?

#### **Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

Yes.

#### **Senator T.J. Le Main:**

£7 million?

#### **Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

No, no, it is less. On the figures I saw yesterday, it is less than £2 million but the precise figures ...

**Senator T.J. Le Main:**

Less than £2 million?

**Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

Yes, that is what I said. The difficulty is that it depends upon how you value various different sites which have become available and so on but no doubt it will be the subject of more detailed scrutiny later. My evidence is quite clear. It is not my fault that evidence was misquoted.

**3.7 The Deputy of St. Martin:**

I think the Minister should go on *Strictly Come Dancing*, is it, because his side-stepping is expert this morning. Can I ask the Minister about the Police Authority? Could the Minister give an update as to where we are with the law, how soon is it likely to be lodged and, if successful, how soon will the Police Authority be up and running?

**Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

I have been working very hard on this in the last 3 weeks and, indeed, had a meeting with the committee, their Connétables and the Comité des Chefs de Police last night. I am also in close consultation through my officers with the Police Association. It is my intention if I can to lodge the law prior to the end of my current term and we are very close to being able to do that but there are technical issues which have been raised even at a late stage which may not make that possible but certainly that still remains my intention if I can achieve it in the next fortnight. In relation to timing, of course, it would have to come up for debate. There is another law which has to come up for debate with it to remove the policing powers of the Connétable. That law will also need to be completed and lodged. There are certain technical issues which have arisen with that. That is within the province of the Comité des Connétables. Now, the position is that the 2 laws will have to be taken to the States virtually together and I anticipate that that might be able to occur by February in which case, with the current delays, the law should come back for registration by the Royal Court towards the end of next year and I would hope that it would be by Easter of the year after, 2013, that the Police Authority could be in position.

**3.8 Deputy M.R. Higgins:**

Could the Minister tell the Assembly where he has got to on the Discrimination Law and whether there is going to be anything done before he finishes his term of office as Minister for Home Affairs?

**Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

Well, I would remind the Deputy that in fact it was agreed at a recent debate that the responsibility for that law should pass from the Minister for Home Affairs to the Minister for Social Security. My staff have convened a meeting of interested parties with a view to a handover and I now pass it over to that Minister but that was, in fact, agreed, I believe, as part of the Business Plan debate in September.

**3.9 Senator T.J. Le Main:**

As the Lime Grove House proposal meant that Home Affairs and the police would be operating from 2 or 3 different locations, what is now the anticipated value of the operational savings by having a single site as being proposed by the Minister for Treasury and Resources?

**Senator B.I. Le Marquand:**

I do not think that these are viewed as being significant savings. If one has a single site, there will obviously be some advantages but that has never been put to me as a significant issue in terms of savings. There are 2 separate functions essentially. There is the Police Headquarters function on the one hand and there is what the present Chief calls the “cop shop” on the other hand, which is the cells and so on so I have no figures for that.