

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. JOHN**
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 1st NOVEMBER 2011

Question

1. Would the Chief Minister advise whether local officers such as the Coxswain of the St Helier Life Boat, former lifeboat crew and also senior staff of C.I. Air Search, French Air and Sea Rescue services were invited to be part of the Managing a Major incident training on 6th and 7th October 2011?
2. Was our sister Island of Guernsey invited to send representatives to attend, and, if not, why not?
3. Were casualties from the local shipping disaster the St Malo contacted to give a first hand account of their experiences?
4. How many of those people involved in the exercise stayed overnight at the Radisson Hotel and what was the total cost of their accommodation, for both the off-Island and on-Island participants?
5. If local representatives, Channel Island Air Search, Guernsey and French Rescue services were not invited, will the Chief Minister be arranging a similar exercise to involve them and, if not, why not?
6. Does the Minister accept that seeking advice from UK experts as opposed to a pan Channel Island/French approach is less valuable, given that the latter are more likely to be involved in any incident in Island Waters?

Answer

1. The officers to which the Deputy refers were not part of the incident training event held on 6th and 7th October. The event was specifically designed for Chief Officers of Services and Departments in Jersey who could be called upon to lead and co-ordinate a response to a major incident. Officers such as those the Deputy mentions would be expected to be on active involvement rather than management and co-ordination.

Although not a legal requirement under Jersey Law, such training of a Gold Command Group is required under UK Law, and the Emergency Planning Council view is that this training is not only best practice but absolutely essential.

2. Whilst Guernsey would need its own Gold Command structure and training, a representative from Guernsey was a delegate to the event.
3. No. This was a generic exercise, and although the scenario in this exercise could have been land based, a sea based event was chosen to reflect the higher risk of a sea based incident in Jersey, and to involve as many officers as possible. The purpose of the event was for senior officers to work and learn together for any major incident.

4. 30 people stayed overnight for the event, 9 from off Island and 21 from Jersey. The total cost of the exercise was £19,811 with accommodation and meals accounting for £5,558.25, of which £2,642.40 was for off-Island participants (which covers two nights accommodation) and £2,915.85 for on-Island participants.

Had the exercise taken place off-island at an accredited Training Centre, the cost would have been about £1,750 per delegate. A UK based course would also necessarily mean that 24 Chief and Senior Officers would be off Island for 2 to 3 days, which would not only add further to the cost but would leave the Island exposed to greater risk should any major or minor incident occur during that time. In contrast, the cost for the exercise in Jersey was approximately £825 per delegate.

5. Whilst those the Deputy mentioned do not form part of the Gold Command team, the overall training plan means that further exercises at a more operational level will be undertaken to include these important elements of any joint response.
6. Certainly not. The presenters and trainers in this exercise are internationally recognised as experts in this field and the Emergency Planning Council believe that the safety of Islanders and visitors to Jersey is paramount and is deserving of the best possible advice. At an operational level it might indeed be appropriate to have such parties in attendance.