

5.7 Deputy T.M. Pitman of the Minister for Home Affairs regarding expenses incurred by the Wiltshire investigation.

Will the Minister clarify how the Wiltshire investigation incurred expenses of £200,700 in staff costs; £92,000 in travel; £82,000 in hotel accommodation and £39,100 in subsistence; where were these expenses incurred (Jersey or elsewhere); what grade hotels were used; and to how many individuals do the travel, accommodation and subsistence figures relate? I should say those original figures were from the Minister.

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

The terms of reference for the first Wiltshire investigation in relation to the handling of the Haut de la Garenne investigation were agreed by the Chief Minister's Department and stated that all reasonable costs incurred including funding for independent legal advice for the investigators will be met by the States of Jersey. The Wiltshire Police produced 2 very detailed and well considered reports, one in relation to financial management of that investigation and one in relation to other issues. The figures quoted by Deputy Trevor Pitman relate to the first Wiltshire disciplinary investigation on Haut de la Garenne but they are not the full figures for this. A breakdown of the full figures is contained in written answer 7. Up to 6 officers from Wiltshire were working on the investigation at any given time assisted by support staff. Generally they were returning home for the weekend and then coming back to Jersey. This of course increased the travel costs considerably but increased the hotel and other costs. The investigation ran for a number of months. When in Jersey officers stayed at the Radisson Blue Hotel 4-star, which is close to the office facility set up for them at Elizabeth Terminal, at £80 per night. My staff who dealt with all these matters felt it better to place them there, it was slightly more expensive than an alternative hotel, because of the close proximity which reduced travel time and costs of getting to and from work. More detailed information is contained in the written answer which is on page 7 of the written answers.

5.7.1 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

A supplementary. I thank the Minister for his answer. £82,000 for 6 individuals, as the Minister says £80 a night at the Radisson on average. Could the Minister tell us if he thinks that is good value for money because Jersey is only 9 by 5?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I am not sure what the implication of the question is. I have already indicated that my staff ...

The Bailiff:

The question is whether you think it is good value for money; that was the question.

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

Well, it was good value for money to place them at £80 per night so close to the place where they were working. That was the view taken by my staff.

The Bailiff:

Very well, final question then, Deputy Pitman.

5.7.2 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I am sorry but I think the Minister is responding - perhaps he does not mean to - but sounds a bit glib. My point is the public are going to look at this and they are going to wonder if they are funding some kind of celebrity lifestyle, £82,000 for so few people and Jersey is just 9 by 5. There is cheaper accommodation. Why was it not used?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I explained that because people were going back over the weekend that effectively what was happening, they were arriving, as I understand it, on a Monday, staying on a Monday night, Tuesday night, Wednesday night and Thursday night, and then leaving. So, they were only here for 4 nights. That was viewed as being the best approach. Members of this Assembly will of course remember that when I first came on the scene, which was after the initial arrangements had been set up, that I was being told that the investigation would be completed by March of 2009. In fact, of course, I did not get the first interim reports until October. So, it did take a great deal longer than was originally anticipated.