

3.13 Deputy G.P. Southern of the Chief Minister regarding the involvement of Atos in the reform of the public sector:

Will the Minister describe for Members his vision for the public sector and state how the involvement of Atos will contribute to the achievement of this vision?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand (Deputy Chief Minister - rapporteur):

The Chief Minister's vision for the public sector, as outlined at the States Members' briefing on Tuesday of last week and articulated in a Strategic Plan, is that it is responsive to the needs of customers and flexible to change. It must be as efficient and effective as possible, provide good value to the taxpayer and needs to engage and empower staff to improve services. Furthermore, it is vital that the organisation is based on key values of honesty, integrity and trust so both our customers and staff are respected and respectful. One aspect of the reform programme is to further enhance customer services. The States has multiple processes that operate in many areas where we interact with businesses and the public as a first step on the road to reform. Atos have been engaged to map all the ways the States connect with its customers and make recommendations for potential improvements to simplify and streamline the way in which the States provides its services.

3.13.1 Deputy G.P. Southern:

The States are about to spend a third of £1 million on the consultation from Atos and yet according to the written question 2 in the other Members' desks, we are not to see the tender document, the terms of reference or any specification of what we are getting for that third of £1 million. Will the Assistant Chief Minister agree to release the terms of reference under which Atos are being paid a third of £1 million of taxpayer's money in order that we see what we are getting for that money?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

I am the Deputy Chief Minister but I think that is a matter for the Chief Minister to decide and certainly I will refer that back to him.

3.13.2 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Secondly, in the absence of having seen the terms of reference, the fact is that Atos has a substantial stake in the privatisation of the service delivery in the U.K. - significant, hundreds of millions of pounds that it makes its money from – and we are taking advice from them. Are we not paying them to tell us to privatise particular services in order that they can bid for their own advice?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

As the written answer makes clear, Atos does a very wide range of things. They have been contracted here to provide a report on specific areas. Frankly, whether or not they are involved in privatisation elsewhere as part of their organisation does not seem to me to be relevant to the issue as to whether at the end of the day when decisions are made what will be the best way of delivering services which is consistent with the social policies of the Council of Ministers. I do not think the 2 really tie in together.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

If I may, a supplementary.

The Deputy Bailiff:

A final supplementary.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

The questions are very short today.

The Deputy Bailiff:

There will be plenty of more questions in quarter of an hour.

3.13.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

The answer provided to the written question suggests that privatisation is one of the options to be considered. If Atos recommends privatisation of particular services, will that advice be followed?

Senator B.I. Le Marquand:

An evaluation would have to be taken. The issue as to what services might be appropriate for privatisation is a complex decision in any given case, because it is not just a matter of whether we can get things done more cheaply, we also have to take into account social factors.

[11:30]

We cannot have a situation where by privatising services we will effectively be getting them done by people who are going to come into the Island, thus displacing people in the Island who have existing jobs. All those factors have to be taken into account. It is a complex decision in any given matter but I am not sure that Atos is going to make recommendations as to any method of delivery. As I have said before, they have simply been asked to map the different ways in which things relate. I do not know that recommending that it would be better to provide by prioritisation would be relevant to that.