

2.7 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains of the Chief Minister regarding a review of the States departmental structure:

Would the Chief Minister state whether the Council of Ministers is actively reviewing the States departmental structure and, if not, whether he intends to do so in the near future?

Senator I.J. Gorst (The Chief Minister):

Subject to the States approving the Strategic Plan, which contains a priority to reform the public service, departmental service areas and structures will be subject to review as the services provided to the public are examined to ensure that they are delivered in the most cost effective and efficient way.

2.7.1 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

I thank the Chief Minister for his answer. Could he give a timescale as to when this work might be completed?

[10:30]

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Slightly more difficult to answer that. I am not able to say when it will be completed, but obviously it will be started as soon as the Strategic Plan, which I hope will be approved, is approved. There is some work already on-going with regard to culture change in the organisation, modernisation and looking already at where we can work differently across departments and within departments. Of course, the airport and harbour redevelopment and working together is already up and running. That is a good example of what we perhaps need to roll-out elsewhere. So these things will take time, but the important thing is we get started and start ensuring or allocating departments that can work differently and work better with other departments.

2.7.2 Deputy G.C.L. Baudains:

Again, I thank the Minister for his answer. Could I ask him, is there a dedicated working party doing this work or are we in the possibly unfortunate situation of Ministers doing it in their spare time?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Perhaps I could reassure the Deputy. It appears to me that Ministers have no spare time. The Deputy raises a very good question. Once the States have agreed the Strategic Plan, there will then be the knotty issue of delivery which needs to be considered by the Council of Ministers. We have had some early thoughts, but we need to develop those. One of my preferred ways of ensuring appropriate delivery is to set up working parties, perhaps in the way the Deputy was considering when he asked his question. So, that will be the next strand of work. But, it seems to me that setting up a working party like that is a good way of ensuring that we deliver for our community.

2.7.3 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

My written question, number 5, to the Chief Minister was asking about savings that had come through the C.S.R. project, but it is also linked to the whole idea of States structures and the structures we have. The Chief Minister has provided an answer showing the savings that they have made, but he has not been able to answer it yet. He says he will do so by the end of the week. I had better explain my question. The first question was how many jobs have been lost and the savings generated from salaries and benefits? The second part of the question was how many jobs have been created in the same departments in the same time period and what do they cost in salaries and benefits? So, we can see a true figure. Will the Chief Minister also include in his answer the invest-to-save figures, so that we can see what the true figures are overall?

The Bailiff:

Deputy, I am afraid at the risk of incurring Deputy Martin's wrath, I cannot see that that question relates to the question at the moment.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Just trying, Sir.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Perhaps he would like to ask it later, Sir.

The Bailiff:

Yes, there are questions without notice to the Chief Minister. Deputy Le Hérissier?

2.7.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

In his initial review of the matter, would the Chief Minister say whether or not he has come to the initial view that there are problems with some of the big mega departments and that he is considering splitting them up and, if so, which?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I think my aim would be to reduce the number of departments not to increase them. To give his question a serious answer, no I have not. I think it is much more complex than that, because in my view there are certain things which are happening across departments which could be brought together. The question is which department will they sit in, rather than just hiving bits off and creating lots of extra departments. That would seem to be going in the wrong direction and perhaps make Government more inefficient.

2.7.5 Deputy M. Tadier:

The Chief Minister will be aware of a Sub-Committee which is looking into the machinery of government, part of whose terms of reference includes the structuring of the Civil Service and how we as a government deal with them. Has the Chief Minister given any consideration as to how the work of the Sub-Committee might dovetail with any possible future work which the Chief Minister and Ministers may at some point do?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I have not, because I have not yet got the Strategic Plan approved by this Assembly. However, the Deputy makes a very good point and the work would need to be done in co-ordination with that sub-group of P.P.C. to ensure that there is no crossover and that both pieces of work know exactly what they are aiming at achieving.