

2.12 Deputy M.R. Higgins of the Chief Minister regarding the publication of the details of the contract with Matt Tapp Associates:

Will the Chief Minister publish full details of the contract, if any, with Matt Tapp Associates and fully explain the company's role in the suspension of the former Chief Officer of the States of Jersey Police and various news releases relating to Haut de la Garenne and, if not, why not?

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

Matt Tapp Associates were commissioned by the former Chief Executive of the States of Jersey with the knowledge of the former Chief Minister on 8th October 2008 to produce a report with the following single term of reference: "To make an assessment of the external communications activity pertaining to the Haut de la Garenne investigation (February 2008 to October 2008)." This work was agreed by correspondence between the former Chief Executive and Matt Tapp Associates. There was no formal contract but Matt Tapp Associates were paid through the usual order invoice process. The Matt Tapp report was received on 23rd November 2008, which was after the date of the initial suspension of the former Chief Officer of the States of Jersey Police.

2.12.1 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Can the Chief Minister confirm, though, that the information that Mr. Tapp gave them on 8th November was part of the justification used as part of the suspension process of the Chief Officer of Police?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I find myself in the same difficulty as the Minister for Home Affairs, I am being asked the justification for the decision made by the previous Minister for Home Affairs and whether the information ... what information was used in order to make that decision and assessment. As I have said, the actual report was not received by the Chief Executive until 23rd November and therefore it seems to me ... I do not see how that report could have been used in that initial decision making process.

2.12.2 Deputy M. Tadier:

Can the Chief Minister either confirm or look into the very serious allegation that the document used on 12th November was in fact part of the Tapp report and it was presented to the then Minister for Home Affairs, Deputy Andrew Lewis, as the Met. report and Deputy Andrew Lewis was misled, and that this is a very serious allegation if it is true. It is an allegation that might result in a chief executive officer having to resign or even a deputy police officer having to resign. So can the Minister either confirm whether this is true or, if not, look into those allegations?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I am not sure, I am being asked to comment on an allegation coming from where with relation to a report which was only received by the Chief Executive on 23rd November, which was a good number of days after the decision to suspend was made. If the allegation had substance I should have thought that Mr. Napier, when he reviewed the initial suspension, would have considered it and therefore it potentially would have been in his report. I do not recall any comment in that regard in that report.

2.12.3 Deputy S. Pitman of St. Helier:

Would the Chief Minister tell Members who paid the media consultant Mr. Tapp? Did it come out of the police budget, Home Affairs or the Chief Minister's Department?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

A very good question. The invoice which I have in front of me was addressed to the Chief Executive, approved for payment by the Chief Executive, he being the accounting officer of the Chief Minister's Department. I can therefore simply make the assumption from those 2 facts that it was paid from the Chief Minister's budget.

2.12.4 Deputy S. Pitman:

Does the Chief Minister know how much the report cost and, if not, would he endeavour to provide this information to Members?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

As I said in answer to the Deputy's earlier question, I have the invoice in front of me and therefore, yes, I do know how much it costs. I am assuming the Deputy would like me to tell her? Yes, okay. The cost of the report was £2,500 before V.A.T. (Value Added Tax), including V.A.T. obviously that comes to £2,937.50.

2.12.5 Deputy T.M. Pitman:

I hope you are not going to say this is too wide of the mark, but could the Chief Minister liaise with his Minister for Home Affairs to ascertain whether there was another consultant's report on media, during the Met. report, which rubbished a lot of what Mr. Tapp came up with?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I can, of course, consult with the Minister of Home Affairs but the Deputy is raising issues of which I am unaware.

2.12.6 Deputy T.A. Vallois:

Could the Chief Minister explain why there was no contract agreed between the Chief Executive and Matt Tapp Associates?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I cannot, simply to say it is a small amount and therefore one would not necessarily have a formal contract as such. However, as I said, it was agreed via email correspondence. I have not been able to locate that email correspondence but if I, in due course, am able to do so then I imagine that that will give the details of the instruction to carry out the work. Having said that, of course, as I have said in my opening answer, the terms of reference for that piece of work was the sole one which I outlined.

2.12.7 Deputy T.A. Vallois:

Supplementary? Can I ask the Chief Minister whether, in actual fact, it is within an accounting officer's right to fulfil a service under public administration without having a formal contract agreement, even though he is a budgeting officer. However, being able to be accountable for that going forward, or if the Public Accounts Committee wanted to pick that up then could he explain to me whether it is within policy to do so.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

The Chairman of P.A.C. (Public Accounts Committee) has a very good point. As I have said, I have not been able at this point, in the short time available, to locate the emails whereby it was requested that this work were undertaken. Of course the Chief Executive Officer is accountable, P.A.C. are entitled to review all the accounts and question officers upon their duties with regard to spending, that is absolutely right and proper, and I am obviously able to say today as I have done, that this work was instructed, undertaken in the course of that work. That is part of accountability which is right and proper.

2.12.8 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Will the Chief Minister liaise with the Minister for Home Affairs and publish both the Tapp Report that was commissioned on 8th November and 23rd November so we can do a comparison between the 2 because I believe they were one in the same.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

Two points of interest there, and I noted from the Order Paper that a previous questioner asked the Minister for Home Affairs about a report which was written on 8th October. As I said here, the Chief Executive instructed the production of a report on that date, but that report was only received by him on 23th November. Therefore, I am not sure to which report, on 8th October, the Deputy might be referring. When it comes to publication of the Matt Tapp report which was received by the Chief Executive Officer on 23rd November I shall ask for it be fully redacted. I understand there might be approval process required by Matt Trapp and Associates but I will certainly endeavour to publish that report in a redacted form.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Just a supplementary on that. Just a point of clarification for the Minister in particular. The Minister for Home Affairs might be able to obtain the report of this commissioned on 8th, which was the one that was supposed to be for the States of Jersey Police. So if we can get both of them we would be much further on.

The Bailiff:

Very well, we will come next to a question which Deputy Trevor Pitman will ask of the Minister for Economic Development.