

2015.12.01

4.13 Deputy S.Y. Mézec of the Minister Chief Minister regarding outsourcing in respect of the Transport and Technical Services Department:

Would the Minister advise what consideration, if any, has been given to the idea of outsourcing the majority of the Transport and Technical Services Department and what consultations, if any, have taken place with the workers' representatives?

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

All States departments are reviewing the way they provide services as part of our reform programme and all are facing budget constraint over the period of the Medium Term Financial Plan. My colleague, the Minister for Transport and Technical Services, is leading on his department's change programme. They have started a programme of reviews and are looking at all options for delivery, including outsourcing. Some of the work has started and informal union discussions have taken place. Formal consultation with staff and unions start this week and the first round of briefings, as I understand it, will be on Thursday and Friday.

4.13.1 Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Supplementary. I had to change the wording of my question from what I initially wanted to ask but it obviously refers to the recent freedom of information request where the summary report was released about the review of States activity; stop, reduce and outsource, which seems to entertain the idea of outsourcing and I believe its words are: "It is recommended that a strategic decision be made that T.T.S. will exit service delivery and begin to outsource all of its activities as soon as possible." What consideration to that recommendation, as of yet, has been had and does he, on the face of it, believe that that is a sensible recommendation that he would seek to pursue?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I think I have already answered that.

Deputy S.Y. Mézec:

Well, could he answer it in a way that is easier to understand then please? Yes or no basically.

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I have said all States departments - that includes T.T.S. - are reviewing the way that they provide their services and that includes reviewing the option of outsourcing.

4.13.2 Deputy J.M. Maçon:

The Chief Minister stated that the functions are being reviewed. When is the timescale for those reviews to be completed?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

As I also said, we are talking here about T.T.S. and the Minister himself has got a question, question 16 - I am sure we have time for it - and he will be able to provide, I am sure, all the details to satisfy Members' questions.

4.13.3 Deputy G.P. Southern:

When the Chief Minister and his Minister for Transport and Technical Services have succeeded in outsourcing the vast majority of their services will he be negotiating the closure of the Acorn

Nurseries in Trinity at the same time because they will have precious little market on which to supply handicapped and people with learning difficulties in work to maintain their living standards?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

That is the Deputy's assertion. I do not accept it. The Deputy has heard what the Minister for Social Security has said in answer to his question earlier. The Minister for Social Security has the full support of the Council of Ministers in ensuring that there is appropriate provision of sheltered employment as well as open employment provided by the Jersey Employment Trust. Ministers are well aware of the symbiotic relationship between the services that T.T.S. currently provide and the services that J.E.T. provide and they will continue to work to ensure that sheltered employment is provided for.

4.13.4 Deputy G.P. Southern:

Does the Minister accept that the outsourcing policy is based on a free market or is he going to curtail that market to make sure that Acorn, in particular, with its sheltered workshop, is kept going?

Senator I.J. Gorst:

I am not sure I accept the premise of that question either. I stand by what I have said, that Ministers, with the full support of the Council of Ministers, the Minister for Transport and Technical Services and the Minister for Social Security are working towards ensuring that there continues to be sheltered employment and we see no reason why sheltered employment cannot continue to be based around the services that J.E.T. is currently providing in relation to the services that T.T.S. are providing as well in the market gardening sphere.