

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CHAIRMEN'S COMMITTEE
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 12th FEBRUARY 2019**

Question

Will the President advise members –

- (a) what communications, if any, her Committee has had with the Council of Ministers regarding the maintenance and improvement of the Scrutiny function, particularly in connection with the adoption of the Government's Target Operating Model;
- (b) what the predicted budget required for Scrutiny is for 2019 / 2020; and
- (c) whether it is her assessment that adoption by the Government of the Target Operating Model will have any impact on the level and standard of scrutiny activity?

Answer

- (a) There are regular meetings held between the President of the Chairmen's Committee (accompanied by the Vice-President) and the Chief Minister at which relevant matters that are affecting, or might impact, the effectiveness of the scrutiny function are discussed. The meetings are usually held shortly following the monthly meeting of the Chairmen's Committee, during which matters to be raised from the scrutiny perspective are identified. These have included concerns connected to public sector reform. Letters are also occasionally exchanged (and published) on certain matters arising between meetings, for example with regard to Policy Development Boards and their impact on Scrutiny.
- (b) 2019 Scrutiny Budget (current)*:

PS0001 - Scrutiny General- Budget 2019		
PS0001 - Scrutiny General	Civil Service Perm Basic	545,606.00
PS0001 - Scrutiny General	Civil Service Perm Pension	76,159.00
PS0001 - Scrutiny General	Civil Service Perm Soc Sec	34,492.00
PS0001 - Scrutiny General	Facilities Hire	1,000.00
PS0001 - Scrutiny General	Other Fees	44,000.00
PS0001 - Scrutiny General	Transcription Costs	14,000.00
PS0001 - Scrutiny General	Advertising & Publicity	4,000.00
PS0001 - Scrutiny General	Meals & Entertainment	2,000.00
PS0001 - Scrutiny General	Other Travel	3,000.00
PS0001 - Scrutiny General	Hotel Accommodation	2,000.00
PS0001 - Scrutiny General	Conference & Course Fees	5,000.00
PS0001 - Scrutiny General	Other Administrative Costs	500.00
	TOTAL	£ 731,757.00

* the States Greffe budget for 2019 is being reprofiled in view of additional money received as a result of funding bids. This process is very likely to lead to more funding being made available to the scrutiny function.

2020 Scrutiny Budget:

In line with the process and timetable for the Government Plan, the 2020 budget is in development. Figures are therefore unavailable at this time. The process includes consultation with the Chairmen's Committee.

- (c) To date the Chairmen's Committee has been in agreement that, given the flexibility of having topic based Panel remits, the Target Operating Model of the Chief Executive itself has not directly and unduly impacted the effectiveness of the Scrutiny function. It might be noted also that the States Greffe, as a non-Executive department supporting the work of the States Assembly (including its Panels and Committees), is not directly within scope of that Model.

We do, however, hold some reservations about political accountability within the revised structure and our ability to clearly identify who controls relevant information with regard to timely access to it. We therefore maintain a watching brief and receive updates and presentations of relevant aspects of the plans from Government officials.

There are, however, pressing concerns about the growing impact on the quantity and quality of scrutiny work of insufficient staff resources within the Scrutiny section of the States Greffe, along with associated recruitment and retention challenges. Some of these do arise from wider aspects of the public sector reform programme, including new grade imbalances between comparable jobs and confusion over the apparent extension of a recruitment freeze to the States Greffe. Highly effective support provided by the small team of Scrutiny officials is a key influence on the standard of scrutiny that is undertaken by Panels.

We also face a significant budgetary challenges, see (b), notably with regard to a substantial reduction in the money available to source expert, objective technical advice and evidence. As President of the Chairmen's Committee I have raised these issues as matters of urgency with the Greffier and his team, as well as the Chief Minister. Both have been supportive. With their support it is hoped that satisfactory solutions will be established without undue delay.