

2019.06.04

13 Deputy K.F. Morel of the Minister for Children and Housing regarding the number of contracts awarded to Altair by the Government of Jersey: (OQ.143/2019)

Further to the Minister's response to Written Question 206/2019, will the Minister state how many contracts have been awarded to Altair by the Government, or the Board, since 1st January 2017 and the total value of these contracts; and advise how many of these contracts were awarded without a tender process?

Senator S.Y. Mézec (The Minister for Children and Housing):

Three contracts have been awarded to Altair by the Government, or the Policy Development Board, since 1st January 2017 with a total value of £147,730. All 3 contracts were awarded without a tender process.

4.13.1 Deputy K.F. Morel:

As all 3 of those contracts were awarded without a tender process, could the Minister confirm whether they had a value between £25,001 and £100,000 and, if so, were 3 quotes obtained, as required by Financial Directions and were any of those quotes from Jersey-based companies?

Senator S.Y. Mézec:

I will give the exact figures for the 3 contracts. There was a key worker housing report phase 1, which was £24,950; there was a key worker housing report phase 2, which was £24,930; and there is the wider support for the Housing Policy Development Board, which is £97,850. Alternative quotes were not sought. This is in line with Financial Direction 5.1. I have a printed copy of that Financial Direction, which I am happy to hand to the Deputy, if he would find it useful to examine it. But I am confident that the rules have been applied as they are in this circumstance.

4.13.2 Deputy K.F. Morel:

It is very interesting to note that Financial Direction, I believe it is probably 5.1, it might be 5.5, I do not know which, states that anything over £25,001 needs to get 3 written quotes. 2 of those tenders were for £51 short of that and £71 short of that. It does question why those convenient amounts were put into the tender. Is the Minister concerned that contracts are going without tender - while in line with Financial Directions - they are going to one company? Sorry, let me start again. Is he concerned that 2 of those quotes will not have had other quotes supporting them and he did not confirm whether the £97,850 contract came with 2 other quotes, as required by Financial Directions?

Senator S.Y. Mézec:

Sorry if I was not clear on that last point; I thought I confirmed in my answer that was not the case, that the alternative quotes were not sought there. The Deputy is right that there is a usual process, depending on the amount a contract is worth that he has described. However, if he reads Financial Direction 5.1, there are exceptions to this and justification has to be provided for why those exemptions have been met. He will be able to see that if he reads Financial Direction 5.1, and if he has any further points of clarification on how that decision was reached, I am happy to provide him with that. I am personally satisfied that the right decision has been made. I think we have the right organisation on board for this and it enables us to meet our timetable for performing this very important work.