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6 Connétable K. Shenton-Stone of St. Martin of the Chief Minister regarding oversight of Government of Jersey departments by Ministers: (OQ.169/2019)

In light of the OneGov reorganisation, what measures, if any, has the Chief Minister taken to ensure that every department within the Government of Jersey is overseen by, and therefore the responsibility of, a Minister, in order that there is clear oversight of each department and a figure of authority to whom the public can reach out?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré (The Chief Minister):

When I was elected Chief Minister I took the new structure, which had been previously approved, and mapped it to Ministers and Assistant Ministers to ensure the development of greater experience, which I am sure particularly the Assistant Ministers are presently relishing, and better cross-departmental working. Remember, the whole purpose of the new structure is to break down the silos that previously existed, so it is a different way of working; it integrates policies from a political perspective and an operation and delivery perspective. But it is true that for anyone used to the former departmental structure and that way of working that may be difficult, but we are already starting to see the benefits and I hope that assists the Connétable.

3.6.1 The Connétable of St. Martin:

The question arose because at your most recent Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel quarterly hearing you outlined that the Minister for Social Security had jurisdiction of only a number of parts of Customer and Local Services. The information for what authority elected Members serving as Ministers have over their respective departments is not clear or easily available. So I would say that therefore the public deserve to have a clear understanding of what authority Ministers have over their departments and which departments are largely the responsibility of the non-elected executive.

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

Under the structures, ultimately all Directors General for all departments do report to relevant Ministers. To use the C.L.S. (Customer and Local Services) as an example, most of the services do sit under the Minister for Social Security but, for example, it also includes the library, which sits under the Minister for Education. But I will say that obviously there is a mapping, so firstly there is information online, as we know. The States website from that perspective of the Gov website is being updated and there is likely to be - sometime during quarter 4 - there will be a revised thing, which I hope will make life easier. I do have to issue a mapping document as well, which is in hand, but was slightly delayed because of certain political changes that have taken place recently, and that just needed to be updated. But there is categorically ministerial responsibility for all operations that are taking place, but bear in mind that mainly Ministers set the policy.

3.6.2 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

For the benefit of the public who are probably a little confused about the whole new system, has the Chief Minister seen benefits to OneGov or benefits that we are starting to see and, if so, would he give examples?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

This is always an interesting question that comes through. In summary, the short answer is yes. From a financial perspective the overall change programme is budgeted to cost, or was estimated to

cost, between £8 million and £9 million as a one-off cost. At the moment, we have agreed a programme of £24 million of efficiencies; that is to be delivered by early-2020, of which to date about £12 million to £16 million have actively been identified and are being worked through. That does, by the way, to really emphasise this, include the cost of what is referred to as interims. So essentially the worst-case scenario as of today is that we will have achieved £12 million to £16 million recurring at a cost of £8 million to £9 million. I would hope Members will regard that as a good return on investment. The longer-term period, so that is my worst-case scenario, the departments are tasked with delivering in early 2020 a total of £24 million and then we are working on further savings to be going through as targets during the period of the Government Plan. Once the Government Plan is published, I think before debate, we will be issuing more details on some of the breakdowns of those figures. But at a higher level what I really want to emphasise is that while it is going through a transformation programme that is unsettling for people, at a financial level we are starting to see the benefits of that. They are real and tangible. Also anecdotally, and I do emphasise “anecdotally”, we are getting some feedback as well at an H.R. (human resources) level that people are starting to see the benefits of the working-together proposals, but there is still further to go.

3.6.3 Senator S.C. Ferguson:

I appreciate that there is going to be £24 million of efficiencies and so on and so forth. Can the Chief Minister give just the odd example of efficiencies that we have so that the public can understand what is happening? There must be something that he can put his finger on and say: “We are going to do this or that more efficiently or with fewer people” or what have you? Please can we have an example or 2?

[10:30]

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

I might even be able to give 3. The restructuring of Customer and Local Services, C.L.S., has eliminated about £400,000 I believe of recurring costs as a saving by eliminating duplication. A minor example is by putting attestation forms online that is a calculated saving of around £30,000 a year. Two other generic examples, one is the processing of certain types of invoices that the Treasury, or what used to be shared services, deal with, a proof of concept is demonstrating potentially an 80 per cent saving in manpower in that particular area. In terms of one of the areas that is being developed is talk of where, for example, particular types of assets we are only using 30 or 40 per cent of the time and through reprogramming, through rescheduling things, we can start using them 60 to 65 per cent of the time. Those are relatively easily achievable targets but they will generate definable benefits. I hope that assists the Senator in her question.

3.6.4 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

A number of Members, myself included, are somewhat puzzled by the roles of Assistant Ministers. For example, Deputy Maçon here is an Assistant Minister in Education, Social Security and Health, and others are spread around as well. Is the Chief Minister going to give them legal powers for the areas that they are dealing with so that we can hold them to account or are we still holding the different Ministers to account?

Senator J.A.N. Le Fondré:

Therein lies a longstanding question, which goes well before me, in terms of what is the ability of the Assembly to hold an Assistant Minister to account or the Minister. Usually, if an Assistant Minister has a particular delegated area of responsibility and the Assembly ask a question, I would normally

expect that to land on the Assistant Minister. It is usually the questioner who determines whether they want the Minister to answer the question or not. What I will also add is that the reason I spread Ministers, and I can see a couple of them looking at me at the moment with slightly quizzical expressions, but when we started one has to remember that 18 Members left this Assembly last time around, which is quite a chunk in terms of loss of experience, and so what we had to do and what I have tried to do is, by splitting the roles of Assistant Ministers across different departments, was to make sure that for the future, a little bit of future-proofing, hopefully the Assistant Ministers have experience in more than one department. But it is also around, for example, breaking down the silos and trying to make sure that essentially the Assistant Ministers are sometimes the linchpins between different departments across a theme. So, for example, Senator Pallett is dealing with mental health and also then that ties in quite nicely with wellbeing in schools, which is his other responsibility. There will be others in there where we have deliberately gone across the ministerial structures to ensure we have some cross-departmental working. That is done at the political level as well and that was done deliberately in a very short period of time when I was putting the structure together.