

2019.03.12

12 Deputy R.J. Ward of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding Supply Jersey: [OQ.63/2019]

Given the provision of a further £100,000 to Supply Jersey, what success criteria have been used to justify continued use of this provider?

Deputy S.J. Pinel (The Minister for Treasury and Resources):

This is not funding for additional services, it is for an existing contractual commitment to pay for annual support and licence costs for the government's procure-to-pay solution, called Supply Jersey. The government is required to make these annual payments for the duration of the contract. The contract for Supply Jersey commenced in June 2015 when the solution was accepted, following a pilot and has a maximum term of up to 8 years. The implementation to all government departments was completed in December 2018. Contingency funds and underspends have previously been used to fund the annual cost of maintenance and licences. The provider has given significant support to the Government of Jersey throughout the implementation of Supply Jersey, ensuring that there is access to key technical personnel at all times. The system provides a modern procure-to-pay solution and is used across all departments for ordering of goods and services that support the delivery of frontline public services to Islanders. The use of this provider will be considered as part of a wider review of States systems during 2019.

6.12.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I am pleased to see the review will come up. Just one second, there is a question at the end of this, I promise. I took some time just to put on social media about views of Supply Jersey that I have worked with myself; the vast majority were not positive. I will read one to you and perhaps you could comment: "It is one of the most ridiculous and convoluted processing systems I have ever had to work with; long-winded and time-consuming to use. The system was promoted as an Amazon of the States. It has created unnecessary stress levels, increased workload and restricted choice. We can no longer guarantee the best price for our purchases and some local suppliers have found it difficult to use, therefore, losing custom." Can I ask the Minister, please, as a matter of urgency to review the use of this system, as it may well be costing the States money that it can ill afford?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

I realise that Supply Jersey was piloted at Le Rocquier School, so, hence, possibly, the Deputy's involvement with it. We are reviewing it, as I said in my opening remarks, in line with the Government Plan. The contract has a minimum term of 5 years and will automatically continue for a further 3 years. During the 3-year period, the Government can terminate the contract, providing one year's notice of termination is given.

6.12.2 Deputy K.F. Morel:

I, similarly, have received representations from members of the public and, in this case, the business community constantly criticising Supply Jersey and their lack of understanding of the way businesses operate. Will the Minister for Treasury and Resources take measures to ensure that the people working in Supply Jersey gain a better understanding of the environment in which businesses operate and the deadlines, *et cetera*, that they need to work to?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

Of course, much involved with this expenditure is the annual maintenance costs, which are £73,254 and the annual licence cost, which is £33,395. I have already explained the terms of the contract and the benefits that, to date, have been identified, clearly not from the people that the 2 Deputies have spoken to. But, the days to pay suppliers has been reduced from an average of 31 days to 27 in 2018; they are paid far quicker on the BACS run, improved governance and accountability. I could go on but, clearly, across social media there have been some complaints, but I have explained the terms of the contract and until the Government Plan comes into base where it is reviewed I cannot really say much more.

6.12.3 Deputy K.F. Morel:

The Minister for Treasury and Resources said many interesting things, none of them answered my question, which was whether she would ensure that people behind Supply Jersey acquaint themselves with the way businesses operate and the environment in which they work.

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

Yes, I can go back to them but, as I say, it is being reviewed - I have said it 3 times now - with a view to incorporating it in the Government Plan, which will be this year.

6.12.4 Deputy J.H. Perchard:

My question is along the same vein as Deputy Morel's but, in short, will the Minister commit to ensuring that those users of Supply Jersey, such as those with a purchase card in schools, for example, are asked for their opinion on the service, before we renew the contract, or take any steps to improve it?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

Yes.

Deputy J.M. Maçon:

Deputy Perchard has asked my question.

6.12.5 Deputy R.J. Ward:

May I ask the Minister to please consult again with the users, as was suggested there, because the information I am getting - and it is not just from schools, and obviously other Deputies are - is that it is really not providing the service that we want and it could be costing us more and limiting sales to local companies, which is exactly what we do not want at the present time.

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

Yes, and I thank the Deputy and reiterate the commitment made to Deputy Perchard that we will, of course, look into this and I realise it is not just the schools.