

2020.07.13

7 Deputy R.J. Ward of the Minister for Treasury and Resources regarding money allocated to hotels for possible quarantine needs: (OQ.197/2020)

Will the Minister advise how much funding has been allocated to hotels to pay for quarantine needs since lockdown began and what future spending, if any, is planned in this area; and will she circulate for members a list of any hotels that have either received, or are due to receive, such funding?

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

As of the latest weekly update about £358,000 has been spent so far by Health and Community Services to support accommodation for key workers who needed to isolate from other people in their household, had recently arrived from the U.K. or had a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19. Further costs are anticipated as part of the Island's test and trace programme and detailed forecasts are in the process of being developed. To the second part of the Deputy's question, the Government will publish a list of the suppliers that receive funding which will be circulated to Members.

3.7.1 Deputy R.J. Ward:

Just very quickly, it was just to ask what the criteria are for choosing the hotels. Is it on availability of rooms, *et cetera*, although it strikes me that quite a few hotels may have available rooms?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

From what I understand, the accommodation is provided to support essential workers who need to physically distance themselves from vulnerable people in their own households or are required to self-isolate in line with public health guidance, so it is really quite a strict structure. Initially the premises were booked using the Government of Jersey's travel provider and some accommodation providers offered free rooms for healthcare workers.

3.7.2 Deputy K.F. Morel:

Deputy Morel here, I had put in the chat to ask a couple of questions. I have had representations from local hotel owners who were overlooked by the Government when it came to booking hotels and so I was wondering if the Minister could explain how hotels were chosen with regard to booking accommodation with them for these workers and whether any consideration was given for smaller locally-owned hotels which are not part of chains, whether locally-owned chains or international chains?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

From what I understand the sites were selected following a process managed by Commercial Services that evaluated each site against the criteria of commercial viability, the proximity to the hospital, availability of additional services, food, laundry, health and safety and self-service options. It was quite a strict criteria in order to evaluate which properties could be considered.

3.7.3 Deputy K.F. Morel:

Were any rooms provided free of charge and, if so, what consideration was given for accepting these in terms of the lack of economic stimulus this gives to the Island?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

I am not aware that any were presented as free of charge or what was charged at all. This was done by Commercial Services and I do not have any information but have said to the questioner that the list of the accommodations will be provided to Members.

3.7.4 Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Just following up on Deputy Morel: will the Minister produce for Members a written document showing the criteria and how each of the hotels matched that, together with the amount of money that was paid to them, please?

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

This is work that will have to be done with Health and Community Services, who are the ones who are supporting the key workers certainly. I was going to say there is no time but there is certainly no intention at the very moment to do that sort of work but I am sure it can be done in the future.

Deputy M.R. Higgins:

Just in the interests of transparency, thank you.

3.7.5 Deputy R.J. Ward:

I thought I was going to miss it but I have not. It was just to ask for a timescale on when the list of the spends would be and whether we could include what has been asked for by Deputy Higgins, i.e. the criteria as to why the effective contract would have been given.

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

All I can say is that I will ask if that information can be given but, of course, a lot of the information is confidential as to why the hotels were evaluated. I cannot promise anything from where I stand at the moment but I will ask what can be done.

The Deputy Bailiff:

I think a timescale was asked for, Minister.

Deputy S.J. Pinel:

I was reflecting that in my answer, Sir, that I do not know what can be achieved in what timescale because it is quite a large piece of work and there is quite a lot of demand on officers' time at the moment, so I cannot give a timescale.