

21.06.29

**3 Senator K.L. Moore of the Minister for Social Security regarding the deferral of £1.5 million for Discrimination Law safeguarding project (OQ.135/2021):**

Will the Minister advise whether she was consulted prior to the political oversight group's request to approve the deferral of £1.5 million for the Discrimination Law safeguarding project, as identified in the report R.105/2021 regarding transfers between heads of expenditure?

**Deputy J.A. Martin (The Minister for Social Security):**

Yes, Senator, I was consulted.

**5.3.1 Senator K.L. Moore:**

Could the Minister then describe the impact that this deferral will have on members of the community?

**Deputy J.A. Martin:**

We were told on 1st April that the money could be transferred because the work could not be done mainly due to COVID and it would not affect ongoing work. I have also been told that the work will carry on when it can happen. The rest of the disability strategy is gaining a lot of pace. We have dedicated officers. I am very proud of the work that is being done.

**5.3.2 Senator T.A. Vallois:**

Could I just ask the Minister to clarify, in terms of that money being moved and it being deferred to 2022, does that mean that there is a pause in the project or that the funding was in excess for the year of 2021?

**Deputy J.A. Martin:**

The money was in excess. The money could not be spent in 2021, again due to COVID. We were all assured that the projects being moved across from the capital would not be abandoned and they would carry on as and when the work could safely be done.

**5.3.3 Senator T.A. Vallois:**

Can I just clarify again with the Minister, in terms of the budget that was provided in the Government Plan was agreed during COVID last year? Is it because of what has happened with COVID this year, the reason for not needing that funding, or was the estimation for the project higher than what it should have been?

**Deputy J.A. Martin:**

I would not say the estimation was higher. As the Senator will know, she was in the room this last year when we were talking about the Government Plan probably through the summer, hoping there would be no COVID again. We all know what happened there. The money, as I said, just could not be spent. It will happen and I can assure the Senator of that.

**5.3.4 Senator K.L. Moore:**

Is the Minister content with the availability of staff in this area?

**Deputy J.A. Martin:**

I am not sure what the Senator is referring to. This is the first Government that has any money for the disabled strategy and we now have a full complement of staff delivering that strategy, inclusion officers and everything else. As I say, it is really going great guns. The implementation under the discrimination safeguarding law sits with Property Holdings and again I would imagine that work would go out to local construction. Is there ever enough local construction? That is the question.