



# Scrutiny Management Committee

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## **President's Observations- Public Hearing with the Committee *for* Health & Social Care**

The Scrutiny Management Committee (SMC) held its latest public hearing with the Committee *for* Health & Social Care (HSC) on the 5th of April, 2017.

This public hearing forms part of the Committee's series of regular public hearings with all Committee Presidents which aim to explore progress being made on the implementation of government policy and to inform the SMC - and the public - on issues which may require further or more formal investigation and review.

The Panel was comprised of: Deputy Chris Green (Chair), Deputy Peter Roffey and Non-States Member Mrs Gill Morris.

Following the Public Hearing, the President of the Scrutiny Management Committee has published these personal reflections below outlining the new and significant information that was uncovered during the hearing, together with his own observations.

1. Deputy Heidi Soulsby, the President of Health & Social Care (HSC), indicated that a £300,000 contract has been signed with KPMG to undertake a wide ranging review of possible models of future health and social care for Guernsey. The Scrutiny Management Committee notes that Jersey commissioned KPMG to do a very substantial review of its own health system in recent years. Effective Transformation of services will clearly take a lot of preparation, investment, careful planning and thought to get right. SMC still has some concerns, however, that transformation may, in practice, mean some service level reduction in particular areas.

2. There did appear to be a lack of clarity between HSC and the Committee for Policy & Resources (P&R) on the likely savings on HSC expenditure beyond 2018. Deputy Soulsby did indicate that HSC would have a budget reduction of £2 million in 2018. The position for 2019 currently appears unclear. How this all reconciles with the BDO review - which was relied upon by the President of P & R and the States' Treasurer at our hearing in 2016 as a basis for a "significant contribution" from HSC towards the short term savings programme - does not seem crystal clear at the moment. Any potential uncertainty here should be resolved quickly given the potential impact on public finances. The current lack of a shared understanding on the quantum of savings regarding the largest spending Committee within the government should be addressed.

3. Deputy Soulsby also expressed her concerns that any savings made may not necessarily be available for her Committee to re-invest in future initiatives, particularly long-term, transformational ones. That is certainly of concern to the SMC as well.

4. The President did confirm her belief that the financial forecasting and budgeting capability of her Committee has now significantly improved since 2014 and she has increased confidence in her Committee's ability to manage their budget allocation. This is a very welcome indication. The largest spending Committee within government absolutely must have full access to effective management and financial information to operate efficiently.

5. The President of HSC conceded that, in her view, access to the primary health care system is currently inequitable and that this may well have a substantial impact on the healthcare system more broadly. This was a very frank and welcome admission from the President. This is an area that requires further investigation in the SMC's future work programme; initially, this may be encompassed in the ongoing review of "in work" poverty.

6. On the new Medical Specialist Group (MSG) contract, the President of HSC said that it offered increased flexibility and better value for money. However, one concern SMC has is over the fact that the resources to monitor and manage the new KPI's effectively under the contract have not been firmly identified and agreed as of yet. Deputy Soulsby also confirmed that the monitoring information under the new MSG contract would be made public. This was another encouraging indication. Clearly, this is an area of focus for SMC going forward. It is essential that transparent mechanisms are in place to monitor government spending on this scale.

7. The HSC President did not believe that the Alderney Health & Social Care Services were "in a parlous state" and she believed that they had improved over the last twelve months. Following questioning, it appears that the Committee had made only very limited progress on the Marshall Review recommendations relating specifically to Alderney. This could also be a focus of the SMC's work in future.

8. On Children's Services in Guernsey, Deputy Soulsby commented on the complexities of the current system, but believed that the service had improved over the last two years. When pressed on the need for some independent validation of such service improvements, she indicated that there are no current plans to review Children's Services independently, including open access to the reviewer of individual case files, despite the significant concerns expressed in the recent Parry and Marshall reviews. SMC is aware that Jersey, perhaps unsurprisingly, has had 8 independent reviews of their Children's Services since 2006. In these circumstances, the SMC will have to reflect at length on whether there is a case for commissioning a further review of this area with individual cases being looked at.

**Deputy Christopher Green**

**President of the Scrutiny Management Committee**

**6<sup>th</sup> April 2017**