4.3 Deputy M.B. Andrews of St Helier North of the Chief Minister regarding a Public Services Ombudsperson. (OQ.90/2026)

Will the Chief Minister advise whether the Council of Ministers will pursue the introduction of a public services ombudsperson and, if so, when the role will be implemented?

Senator L.J. Farnham (The Chief Minister):

The Council of Ministers is yet to consider the matter of a public services ombudsperson proposal, but this will be placed on the agenda for the Council of Ministers to consider before the end of the year.

4.3.1 Deputy M.B. Andrews:

Can I ask the Chief Minister, why has this been deferred for later this year when the Council of Ministers had all summer to decide on whether to pursue the public ombudsperson?

Senator L.J. Farnham:

Firstly, it was a matter of prioritisation. The Council of Ministers' priorities for the summer were preparing and lodging the C.S.P. (Common Strategic Policy) and the Budget, as well as allowing new Ministerial colleagues to equate themselves with their departments and roles and responsibilities. Previous Member Deputy Scott, produced a report entitled *The Final Stage of Complaints Handling for the Public Services* and the findings of that report were considered by the last Council of Ministers towards the end of the term. The report itself was published earlier this year, not long before the election. The report defined an appropriate scope for the ombudsperson to achieve comprehensive coverage to avoid duplication, proposes to simplify and rationalise complaint handling, consider the cost containment and budget development, and the size appropriation of the service. It asked to consider governance frameworks for complaint handling, develop an implementation roadmap, and the report was very detailed and highlighted considerable policy development work required to establish a cost-effective ombudsperson. The report also highlighted the cost of the ombudsperson but also potential benefits for hearing public complaints in a more effective manner. That is quite a lot for the new Council of Ministers to consider following the report. So, as I said, I undertake to place that before C.O.M. (Council of Ministers) in due course.