

2026.09.08

5.8. Deputy L.V. Feltham of St. Helier Central of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding additional funding the Minister would seek through the 2027 Budget process (OQ.69/2026).

Further to the Minister's recent comments to ITV News that Health and Care Jersey will require additional funding, will he advise what additional funding he is intending to seek through the 2027 budget process?

Senator T.J.A. Binet (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

A couple of weeks ago, I raised the idea of establishing an economic growth fund with the Council of Ministers so that work on growing the economy could start during 2027. Given that I consider a first-class health service to be an essential component of an attractive place to live, visit and to invest, I included additional funding for the health service. These discussions are ongoing but the principal target areas are waiting list reductions, the development of a cancer centre, a replacement of essential equipment, existing hospital maintenance, and a sum of money for the continuation of the New Hospital Facilities Programme beyond Christmas 2026.

5.8.1 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

Can the Minister be more clear as to whether he has presented business cases to Treasury and how much money he has asked for?

Senator T.J.A. Binet:

No, I certainly have not presented a business case. I have opened a discussion about the possibility of establishing a fund from which money could be withdrawn, subject to approval of appropriate business cases.

5.8.2 Deputy M. Tadier of St. Brelade:

Is the Minister saying that the amount of funding given will determine the model and the services that he wishes to provide, or will he go to the Council of Ministers and say: "These are the services I wish to provide, this is how much they will cost, and this is how much money I will need"? Which of those 2 is the scenario we are talking about?

Senator T.J.A. Binet:

I will try and clarify my situation. There is an ongoing discussion about standard funding for the health service, and that is what it would have normally been had I not made this additional suggestion. What I am suggesting here is that we put together a fund of additional monies for growing the economy. I consider the health service to be an important part of that economy. That fund would be available for the projects that are put forward and approved in that initial stage, subject to those business cases being accepted.

5.8.3 Deputy M. Tadier:

I think the Minister is conflating 2 different issues. We are not talking about growing the economy here, we are talking about health funding. So would the Minister specifically comment on - he mentioned a cancer unit in Jersey in the future - could he clarify what his vision is for cancer treatment in Jersey and what that would comprise of? For example, would it have radiotherapy on-Island? Would it have chemotherapy? Would he still be envisaging for people to travel? What would the cost model be for that? Is it funded? Is it something that is supported by the Council of Ministers?

The Bailiff:

Well, Deputy, the question is about additional funding and not the detail of cancer services.

Deputy M. Tadier:

What I am trying to do is interrogate something the Minister said in his initial question answer, and I am using that as an example. I would like to know about the components. I do not know if the Minister wants to sit down while I am talking. The question is all of these components which he has either referred to now in his initial answer, are they predicated on the fact that they will be funded fully in the Budget? That is what we are trying to get to the bottom of.

Senator T.J.A. Binet:

Forgive me, but I do not think I am conflating anything at all. I think having a really good health service, if we are going to attract people to come and live here and work here and invest here, I think we need a first-class health service. We do not have to have a first-class health service; we can have one that is OK and we can just carry on as we are and deliver that. We can deliver an average health service. But what I am suggesting is that if we want to grow the economy, health is an important part of that and we should put more effort into making it better. Yes, a cancer centre is part of that process. We have only just come out of an election, so I have been working with all of the various people that are putting this together, and we are at an early stage. As I said, discussions are ongoing and I am very happy to report to the Assembly how those discussions progress as we go. I do not have all the answers as a finished proposal at this point in time because I simply have not had enough time to work on them. But I make absolutely no apology for the work that I am doing or the suggestions I am making.

5.8.4 Deputy T.A. Coles of St. Helier South:

Subject to another ITV article, it has highlighted that nearly 2,500 people are waiting for elective surgeries and nearly 10,000 people were waiting for diagnostic tests. If the Minister is not being proactive in requesting additional funding, how does he anticipate reducing these waiting times?

Senator T.J.A. Binet:

I will simply answer that by saying I do not think there can be a better demonstration of me being proactive than to be saying I want more money for the health service.

5.8.5 Deputy T.A. Coles:

But does the Minister not realise that this then has to be requested through the Budget process and that is what we are trying to get answers on?

Senator T.J.A. Binet:

Of course I accept that, that is why I introduced it as part of the Budget discussions.

5.8.6 Deputy H.L. Jeune of St. John, St. Lawrence and Trinity:

We have been told, as an Assembly, that the Budget will be lodged within 3 weeks. Does the Minister feel that he will be ready and his proposals will be part of that within 3 weeks?

Senator T.J.A. Binet:

I think the best thing I can say there is that I certainly hope so.

5.8.7 Deputy H.L. Jeune:

If he is not able to, does the Minister have alternative ideas of how to ensure that there will be additional funding for Health?

Senator T.J.A. Binet:

I think I will have to cross that bridge when I come to it. I cannot think of any off-hand, but I shall do my best in the coming 3 weeks to make sure that we secure as much money for Health as we possibly can.

5.8.8 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

In the news item, the Minister for Health and Social Services said that the waiting times were currently completely unacceptable. Given, as Deputy Jeune has rightly pointed out, we are a matter of weeks away from the Budget being lodged, what is the process that the Minister for Health and Social Services

is following? Has the Treasury given the Minister for Health and Social Services a process in order to request the amount of money that he needs? Why is there not a business case that has been produced at this point in time?

Senator T.J.A. Binet:

I am sorry, but I find this is just a bit of a nonsense. We have only just come out of an election. There is an awful lot of work going on. I have worked as much as I can throughout the summer to put as much forward as I can. I have put a lot of effort into the proposal that I have put to the Council of Ministers. I simply cannot do any more than I am doing, and if that is not good enough there is not much else I can say.

5.8.9 Deputy L.V. Feltham:

I do not think the Minister answered my question. I asked what process the Treasury had asked him to go through.

The Bailiff:

Yes, what process have you been asked to go through by the Treasury in relation to this additional funding? That is the question you have been asked.

Senator T.J.A. Binet:

I have not been asked to go through any process. I have put a proposal forward to the Council of Ministers and it is under discussion. Nobody has told me that there is any other process required for that to happen, and it has been happening, so I am ... perhaps the Deputy can tell me what she thinks I should be doing that I am not doing.

[11:00]