

Access to Public Information Response

June 28th 2017

REQUEST UNDER THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION

Request sent on June 28th 2017:

Good morning,

Through a media enquiry earlier this week I asked a series of questions of Home Affairs about the opportunities raised in the PWC report by merging the ambulance/fire service.

The response fails to address the questions asked so I now are submitting them, with one additional question, for consideration under the code – clearly there may be some cross over with HSC in this too. In deciding whether to answer I'm hoping the public interest test will be seen to override any exceptions – this is, after all, a £600,000 savings opportunity we are talking about.

Why has the board already ruled out saving £600,000 by merging Fire & Rescue and the ambulance service?

What advice has it received from the services themselves on this option – do they support it? What advice has it received from its own staff on this option – is there support there for pursuing it?

Will you provide copies of any advice considered?

What were the pros in favour of the move, what were thought to be the negatives against it?

States of Guernsey response sent on June 30th 2017:

Why has the board already ruled out saving £600,000 by merging Fire & Rescue and the ambulance service?

The decision to continue to outsource the provision of an Emergency Ambulance Service to St John was supported by the Review into Guernsey's Future Ambulance Service which took place and was published at the end of 2015. The Review Report, which is on the States of Guernsey website at <https://gov.gg/gfas>, also considered whether the provision of a "States of Guernsey owned Ambulance Service" should be pursued as a priority.

In evaluating possible options the Review team looked at a number of possibilities, including a fully integrated Fire and Ambulance Service to be run by the States of Guernsey, and concluded that this was not the optimum model which should be pursued. Instead, the recommendation was to renew the contract with St John, but in a far more flexible manner to ensure that the Service could be developed to meet the needs of islanders in the future.

This proposal was endorsed in a separate Report from the Chief Fire Officer, which is also published as a supporting document to the Review Report on <https://gov.gg/gfas>.

Both reports highlighted that, whilst a combined Ambulance and Fire Service should produce efficiencies both financial and operational, in terms of management structure, support functions, shared facilities, (ie costs where there is some duplication), the risks involved in such a massive change were too high to contemplate undertaking at that time.

It should be noted that the figure of £600,000 potential saving quoted in the PWC Report does not take account of these risks, the substantial investment required, the cost benefits to the Health Service, nor of any “payback times” in relation to the investment.

The Committee for Home Affairs and the Committee for Health and Social Care met to discuss this matter on two occasions and unanimously agreed that the outsourcing of the Ambulance Service to St John should continue, and for the reasons I have already stated, should remain under the control of the Committee for Health and Social Care.

What advice has it received from the services themselves on this option – do they support it? What advice has it received from its own staff on this option – is there support there for pursuing it?

The Committee has previously examined the Future Ambulance Service report. The Chief Secretary, Home Affairs was a member of the Review team and agreed with the recommendations in the Report. The Committee also considered the Report from the Chief Fire Officer, which examined the potential amalgamation of the Fire and Ambulance Services.

Will you provide copies of any advice considered?

Both reports are in the public domain and available.

What were the pros in favour of the move, what were thought to be the negatives against it?

Again all outlined in the two reports.