

THE STATES OF DELIBERATION
of the
ISLAND OF GUERNSEY

18th May, 2020

Proposition No. P.2020/73

Committee for Employment & Social Security

Diffuse Mesothelioma Payment Scheme

SURSIS MOTIVÉ

Proposed by: Deputy JP Le Tocq
Seconded by: Deputy T J Stephens

To sursis the Propositions until the States of Deliberation is in a position to consider the Diffuse Mesothelioma Payment Scheme in context with other funding priorities in the post-COVID era through an agreed process to be established following approval of the States of Guernsey Recovery Strategy.

Explanatory Note

The Policy & Resources Committee notes that the Committee *for* Employment & Social Security is following a States' Resolution in proposing a statutory scheme of compensation to come into effect from 1 January 2021 for individuals who have been diagnosed with mesothelioma following exposure to asbestos in the Bailiwick. It further notes that it is estimated that approximately three payments will be made per year on average, at a total cost of around £100,000 annually.

However, since the principle of this scheme was agreed in 2019 and the policy letter was prepared in the first quarter of 2020, the States' financial position has been significantly affected by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Undoubtedly, there will also continue to be an impact on the States' financial position in future years as the global and local economic climate recovers and income receipts are restored. There will need to be a fundamental examination of all States' expenditure and re-shaping of the delivery of public services to ensure that services are prioritised and those delivered are as economic and resilient as possible, with resources focussed on priority areas with other services either reduced or ceased.

Therefore, whilst the Policy & Resources Committee supports the principle of introducing a Diffuse Mesothelioma Payment Scheme, it is of the view that the States should not be approving any additional expenditure commitments until such time as the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the overall financial position is known with the effect on income receipts determined; existing services and proposed developments have been reviewed and prioritised; and how the resulting deficit in States' finances is to be funded.

The Policy & Resources Committee is developing a recovery strategy for the Island with the support of the COVID-19 Recovery Advisory Group (CRAG). It will have a focus on the sustainable well-being of the community that must be underpinned by a vibrant and successful economy and efficient, accessible public services.

Further to its consideration by the States of Deliberation, the recovery strategy will inform the work of CRAG and the Committee in their evaluation and prioritisation of public services and current government policy initiatives already planned or in development. The timeframe for this work will likely run aligned with the 2021 budget preparation.