

Press Release

Date: 4th November 2020

Alderney public back changes to ambulance funding

A public survey has confirmed the States decision in principle to pay for the ambulance service from the budget rather than continuing with a subscription model.

The island's Policy & Finance Committee (P&F) agreed in July that the costs of the new integrated Ambulance and Fire Service should be funded by property tax as soon as possible, but resolved to engage with the community before confirming the decision.

Of 240 survey responders, just over three-quarters (76%) were in favour of funding the service from the budget.

Earlier this year, the States agreed to take on the management of the Ambulance Service and integrate it with the Fire Service, a move that allows a quality service to be delivered with efficiency savings. The existing service is subsidised with subscriptions of £40 a year for a single person, £95 for a family and a £250 call-out charge for non-subscribers.

However, P&F agreed in principle to fund the service through property tax in future in the same way as the Voluntary Fire Service is financed. This would mean an expected annual cost per household from under £20 up to £50 depending on size of property.

The survey was open to anyone, whether resident or visitor, for an extended period in which 220 people (92%) were permanent residents, 11 were second home owners and nine were visitors. The greatest response came from the 55-64 age group, while 48% of all those responding currently subscribe to the Ambulance Service and 17% had used the service in the last two years.

Among the comments received in the survey was that funding the service in this way was fairer, more effective, logical and cheaper per household, whereas the subscription model was out-dated and discriminatory against the most vulnerable.

The new service has received positive feedback from the St John Emergency Ambulance Service in Guernsey. Chief Ambulance Officer Mark Mapp recently met the ambulance recruits at a first responder course at the Mignot Memorial Hospital.

“All of the candidates passed the course which is testament to the individuals and their efforts,” he said in a letter to the States after the course. “It equally indicates the excellent standard the new volunteers have achieved in a small space of time.

“I suspect many eyes will be on Alderney because many other UK jurisdictions have or are looking at a collaborative model of Fire and Ambulance.”

P&F agreed at its meeting on October 29 to include the costs of the integrated Ambulance and Fire Service in the States budget.

Ends