

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR TREASURY AND RESOURCES
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER**

ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY, 30th JANUARY 2007

Question

In light of the Minister's commitment to co-operation with scrutiny, would he explain why certain Treasury meetings with the contracted parties in the proposed sell-off of Jersey Telecom have not been minuted and, in particular, why there are no minutes of a meeting of 6th December 2006 between seven parties to discuss "the implications of the sale"? Would the Minister state how such procedures can be said to accord with good practice and explain how he considers that scrutiny can have access to full information in these circumstances?

Answer

It is by no means unusual business practice to hold informal meetings at which minutes are not taken. The meeting to which the question refers was an informal working meeting between a number of parties. There was no formal agenda, no Minister or Assistant Minister present and no decisions taken. In such circumstances it is quite appropriate for minutes not to be taken.

Quite clearly if one were to take the view that every informal meeting, or indeed discussion, between two or more parties should be minuted and scrutinised, the States machinery of government would quickly become unwieldy and inefficient. I do not believe such excessive bureaucracy is an appropriate use of taxpayer's money.

Equally, I do believe that any Ministerial decision should be properly recorded, and supported by suitable supporting background information. Any such decisions and related background papers should be and are made available for scrutiny.