

Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel

Meeting No 54

12th December 2007

Present Deputy G. P. Southern, Chairman
Deputy J. A. Martin
Deputy K. C. Lewis

Apologies Deputy A. Breckon
Connétable M. K. Jackson

Absent

In attendance Elizabeth Kingston-Walsh, Scrutiny Officer
Nathan Fox, Scrutiny Officer

Ref Back	Agenda matter	Action
1.	Minutes The Minutes of the meetings held on 28th November 2007 were approved.	NJF
2. Item 2 28.11.07	Draft Price and Charge Indicators (Jersey) Law 200- The Panel recalled that, during a speech to the assembly on 7th November 2007, the Economic Development Minister had indicated that he would favour the display of GST on receipts. The Panel directed officers to contact the Economic Development to determine which Minister would be bringing the necessary proposition to the assembly.	NJF
3. Item 4 28.11.07	Rural Economy The Panel recalled that the 'rollup' of the Single Area Payment to glasshouse growers had cost the taxpayer approximately £1.3 million. The Panel noted that anecdotal evidence suggested that there had been a number of planning applications for development of glasshouse sites in the Island, and it queried whether the 'rollup' was an appropriate use of funds, given that growers who left the industry were likely to be receiving considerable sums for development land. Officers were directed to cross-reference all growers who received 'rollup' funds with planning applications for development of land, and to bring the results of this research back to the Panel at its next meeting.	NJF
4. Item 12 28.11.07	Draft Price and Charge Indicators review evaluation The Panel recalled that while reviewing the evaluation of this review, the Chairman had indicated that he was dissatisfied with the terminology used in the questionnaire section entitled 'Advisers', which contained the question ' <i>Was the adviser</i>	

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	<p><i>unbiased?'</i></p> <p>The Chairman considered it detrimental to the reputation of Scrutiny as a whole to suggest that biased advisors might be engaged, and furthermore were such an adviser to be employed the relevant Panel would be unlikely to recognise the bias involved.</p> <p>The Panel noted that officers, having liaised with the Scrutiny Manager, had amended this section to remove the word 'unbiased'.</p>	
5.	<p>Economic Development Department Business Plan 2008</p> <p>The Panel discussed the ongoing review of the Economic Development Department Business Plans. It noted that it did not yet have the finalised cash limits for the Economic Development Department Business Plan 2008. Officers were directed to obtain these figures and provide them to the Panel at its next meeting.</p>	NJF
6. Item 9 28.11.07	<p>The Role and Funding of Jersey Finance Limited</p> <p>The Panel recalled that calls for evidence had been published in the Jersey Evening Post (JEP) and in 'Business Brief', a JEP-run business magazine.</p> <p>The Panel noted that a complaint had been made to the JEP by Jersey Finance Limited (JFL) on 29th November 2007 in respect of the original advertisement. It was suggested that the statement in the advert that '<i>Jersey Finance Limited was originally intended to be self funding</i>' was inaccurate. The Panel was informed that the Chairman had instructed officers to amend the wording to read '<i>the Panel understands that Jersey Finance Limited was originally intended to be self funding</i>'. This assertion was based on evidence contained in the incomplete record of discussions relating to the formation of the company.</p> <p>The Panel approved the decision of the Chairman.</p> <p>The Panel noted that two responses to the call for evidence had been received, from the firm Charles Clarke (who were currently reviewing the effectiveness of JFL's board), and Dr. D. Kirsh.</p> <p>Public Hearings into the matter were due to start at 10.00am on 17th December 2007, and accordingly officers distributed a Public Hearing schedule to the Panel.</p> <p>The Panel noted that further information had been received from JFL under confidential cover, and that confidentiality agreements were to be signed retrospectively in the case of some documents. On a related matter, the Panel agreed that it would be appropriate to hold some sessions '<i>in camera</i>' should the witnesses so wish, but further agreed that Section 3.2a (xiv) of the Code of Practice on Public Access to Official Information (which exempted policy in the course of development) would not apply to matters discussed in the period 2000-2003, in which the Panel was currently interested.</p>	
7.	Employment and Training Opportunities in Jersey	

	<p>The Panel received amended terms of reference and an amended scoping document for this review.</p> <p>The Panel decided that this matter should be deferred and directed officers to place it on the agenda of the next meeting for consideration.</p>	NJF
8.	<p>Scrutiny Annual Report</p> <p>The Panel received a draft of its submission to the Scrutiny Annual Report for 2007.</p> <p>The Panel decided that this matter should be deferred and directed officers to place it on the agenda of the next meeting for consideration.</p>	NJF
9.	<p>Future meetings</p> <p>The Panel received a draft schedule of major dates in Business Plan activity for 2008, together with a draft schedule of its meetings for the first half of 2008.</p> <p>The Panel decided that this matter should be deferred and directed officers to place it on the agenda of the next meeting for consideration.</p>	NJF

Signed

Date

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Chairman Deputy G. P. Southern
Economic Affairs Panel