

# Environment Scrutiny Panel Meeting 16

30th May 2006  
Blampied Room, States Building

Present Deputy R.C. Duhamel (Chairman)  
Deputy G.C.L. Baudains (Vice Chairman)  
Deputy Le Hérissier  
Deputy S. Power (Arrived 9.20 pm.)

Apologies Connétable K. A. Le Brun of St Mary

Absent

In attendance I. Clarkson, Scrutiny Officer  
M. Robbins, Scrutiny Officer

Item (Ref Back)	Agenda matter	Action
1	<p><b>Pre-meeting briefing</b></p> <p>The Panel held a preliminary discussion to confirm possible lines of questioning.</p>	None
2	<p><b>Draft Strategic Plan 2006 – 2011</b></p> <p><b>Attendance of Senator F.E. Cohen, Minister for Planning and Environment.</b></p> <p>The Panel received a delegation consisting of: Senator F.E. Cohen, Minister for Planning and Environment; Mr. J. Richardson, Chief Executive Officer, Planning and Public Services Department; Mr. C. Newton, Director of Environment, and Mr P Le Gresley, Assistant Director - Development Control.</p> <p>Deputy R.C. Duhamel recalled that the Panel had reviewed the draft Strategic Plan 2006 – 2011 in March 2006. That review had been conducted in accordance with a report produced by the Strategic Planning Manager, Chief Minister's Department and considered on 9th March 2006 by the Council of Ministers. He advised that the purpose of the meeting was to allow the Minister to comment on the process that led to the inclusion of commitments and aims falling within the Minister's remit.</p> <p>Senator F.E. Cohen explained that he had held many meetings with officers, and with the Director of Planning in particular, to discuss the draft Strategic Plan. Many meetings had been held on a formal basis, while others had been informal. When asked to comment on the effectiveness of the planning process leading up to the production of the draft Plan, the Minister advised that he regarded it as an aspirational document. He further expressed concern that some States members were being tempted to delve too deeply into the Plan or to require excessive detail to be inserted, thereby altering the status of the document to that of a business plan. The Minister acknowledged that some members were already of the view that the status of the draft Strategic Plan fell midway between that of a political party manifesto and a business plan. Although he agreed that there was an argument in favour of presenting the report to the States, rather than lodging the item 'au Greffe' and requiring it to be debated, the Minister maintained that the principle issue with the Plan as drafted was</p>	

the omission of a preamble clarifying the aspirational status of the document. He added that the inclusion of such a preamble would have afforded the Council of Ministers a clear opportunity to confirm beyond doubt that the Plan would never be used to curtail the supremacy of the States Assembly.

Turning to the specific objectives contained within the draft, Senator F.E. Cohen stated that there were probably insufficient funds available to deliver all the objectives within existing financial constraints. Accordingly it would be necessary for individual Departments to prioritize. This process would nevertheless be available for the States to scrutinize when the Business Plan was lodged later in the current year.

When questioned as to the level of direct ministerial input into the process, Senator Cohen advised that he had secured the inclusion of commitments that would improve service delivery, increase awareness of good design, raise the standard of newly built homes and secure environmental gains. The latter point was reinforced by the Director of Environment, who reported that he was very happy with the overall level of priority given to environmental objectives. Senator Cohen also informed the Panel of an idea which he initially called a "Citizens Programme" which would look for public contributions on energy and resource saving and recycling initiatives with the intention of promoting sustainability.

A discussion followed on perceived inconsistencies in the level of detail contained within the draft Plan. Senator F.E. Cohen and the Director of Environment both advised that objectives for which a strategy had already been formulated had tended to be described in greater detail than those for which a strategy had yet to be devised.

The Panel questioned whether the incorporation of the Economic Growth Plan (P.38/2005 refers) would affect the ability of the Council of Ministers to deliver a programme of sustainable development. In response Senator Cohen contended that any question as to whether the the Economic Growth Plan was a sustainable strategy should have been addressed during the relevant States debate in 2005.

The Chairman asked Senator Cohen whether he was able to recite the vision statements contained within the Strategic Plan. The Senator accepted that he could not, stating that social responsibility was the key to the success of the attaining of the aspirations within the document and that he accepted that the term 'Standard of Living' would have been better worded 'Quality of Life'.

The Minister and his officers, having been thanked by the Panel for their attendance, withdrew from the meeting.

The Panel instructed its officers to prepare a draft Comment to the draft Strategic Plan 2006 – 2011 for consideration at a subsequent meeting.

IC / MR

3

**Draft Strategic Plan 2006 – 2011**

**Attendance of Deputy G.W.J. de Faye, Minister for Transport and Technical Services**

The Chairman welcomed Deputy G.W.J. de Faye, Minister for Transport and Technical Services and Mr. J. Richardson, Chief Executive Officer, Planning and Public Services Department.

Deputy R.C. Duhamel recalled that the Panel had previously conducted a review of the draft Strategic Plan 2006 – 2011 in accordance with a report produced by the Strategic Planning Manager, Chief Minister's Department and considered on 9th March 2006 by the Council of Ministers. He further advised that the purpose of the meeting was to allow the Minister to comment on the process that led to the inclusion of commitments and aims falling within the Minister's remit.

Deputy G.W.J. de Faye reminded the Panel that he had been an arch critic of the previous Strategic Plan. Accordingly he had sought to assist in the production of a more worthwhile document covering the period 2006 – 2011. To that end he had held approximately 5 dedicated meetings with officers to consider the draft. His Assistant Minister, Deputy J.J. Huet, had also been actively involved in the process. Deputy G.W.J. de Faye regarded the final document as a significant stride forward. Furthermore, the Minister advised that he maintained a close working relationship with the Minister for Planning and Environment.

When questioned as to the level of direct ministerial input into the process, the Minister explained that he was particularly pleased to have secured a commitment to reconsider new reclamation sites, notwithstanding potential issues arising from the RAMSAR designation of the foreshore to the East of La Collette, St. Helier. He added that the Council of Ministers had been particularly keen to include other Departmental priorities, including the Solid Waste Strategy and a forthcoming liquid waste strategy.

The concept of sustainable development was raised. Although the Minister considered that there was a place for sustainable policies within the Strategic Plan, he advised that the issue had not been raised formally during the formulation of the plan. Moreover, he was of the view that it would be inappropriate to make sustainable development the focal point of such a plan at the present time.

When asked whether economic growth was being pursued in order to fund social issues such as increasing pension deficits, Deputy G.W.J. de Faye advised that his primary concern was migration and population growth. He maintained that his Department had sufficient resources to cope with demand based on current population levels; however, he added that any significant increase in population levels might have an adverse impact.

A discussion followed on liquid waste policy. Deputy G.W.J. de Faye advised that he would be bringing forward a policy in due course and that the Panel would be invited to comment on it.

On the matter of transport policy, the Minister submitted that the States had previously suffered from a lack of foresight in this policy area. He recalled that the production of the Island Plan 2002 had failed to prompt a significant debate on traffic and he contended that the forthcoming transport strategy would provide a radical new approach. Having acknowledged that the most pressing transport issue was the excessive volumes of commuter traffic on roads between 8.00am and 9.00am, the Minister advised that provision of more buses at that time would not solve the problem in isolation. Moreover, it was clear that it would be difficult to find a use for those additional buses at other times of the day. It was also suggested that new environmental tax measures might assist in managing traffic levels in future.

IC / MR

Deputy G.W.J de Faye and the Chief Officer, Transport and Technical Services, having been thanked for their attendance, withdrew from the meeting.

The Panel instructed its officers to prepare a draft Comment to the draft Strategic Plan 2006 – 2011 for consideration at a subsequent meeting.

Signed

Date

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Chairman, Environment Panel

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