

# Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel

## Meeting No. 14

5th June 2006

1st Floor Meeting Room, Morier House

Present Deputy G. P. Southern, Chairman  
Deputy A. Breckon (for item 4 only)  
Connétable M. K. Jackson (not present for items 1 and 3)  
Deputy J. A. Martin  
Deputy K. C. Lewis

Apologies

Absent

In attendance Carol Le Quesne, Scrutiny Officer  
Nathan Fox, Scrutiny Officer

Ref Back	Agenda matter	Action
1.	<p><b>Minutes of Meetings.</b></p> <p>The minutes of Meeting No. 11 of 28th April 2006 and Meeting No. 12 of 3rd May 2006 were approved.</p> <p>Notes of meetings with Dr. C. McPhail, the Comptroller and Auditor General, Mr. C. Vautier, and Mr. P. Donovan were also approved.</p>	
2.  <b>Chairman's Committee 19.05.06 Item 6</b>	<p><b>Briefing on the role of Scrutiny Officers</b></p> <p>The Panel received Mrs. K Tremellen-Frost, Scrutiny Manager, to brief members on the role of Scrutiny Officers, following a discussion on this matter by the Chairman's Committee.</p> <p>The Panel was informed that differing expectations existed within the membership of Scrutiny as to the role of officers. The Panel was referred to the job description of the role, and the noted that officers were considered to be working 'alongside' members.</p> <p>The Panel and the Scrutiny Manager agreed that this Panel was an example of effective co-operation between members and officers, and that neither had any points of concern to raise in this regard.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Progress of the 'fulfilment' review</b></p> <p>The Panel noted that it was now aware of numerous companies that had received time-limited licences to trade, and that more might have been issued. The Panel was interested in the effect that these were having on companies, and what plans they had made to continue their business in the future.</p> <p>Officers were directed to approach several companies with the intention of inviting them to a future meeting of the Panel in order to discuss these matters.</p>	

	<p>Officers provided to the Panel files containing all information so far received in respect of this review, collated into a single file for ease of reference.</p>	
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>The forthcoming debate on the Panel’s projet P.61/12006</b></p> <p>The Panel noted that its projet entitled ‘Jersey Post Incorporation: cost/benefit analysis, investigation and responsibilities of JCRA’ (P.61/2006) was to be debated by the States on 6th June 2006.</p> <p>The Panel considered a document for the information of States members received from the Economic Development Minister detailing the ‘rebuttal’ to the projet.</p> <p>It considered that this debate was significant to the future of a vital public utility, and that it would not be appropriate for debate to be curtailed prematurely. The Chairman therefore sought approval from the Panel to request that the States suspend Standing Order 84 (Proposal to close debate) as permitted under Standing Order 80 (Proposal to suspend Standing Order). The Panel approved this course of action.</p> <p>The Panel also considered that it might become necessary to conduct an element of the session ‘in camera’ as this would allow detailed figures in connection with Jersey Post’s current operations and predicted future profits to be made available to the assembly. The Panel agreed that a member should call fro the session to move into camera as permitted under Standing Order 81 at the appropriate time.</p> <p>The Chairman intended to contact the independent advisor to the Economic Development Minister and the Treasury and Resources Department., Mr. R. Syvret, in order to determine if he might have any further information pertinent to the debate.</p>	<p><b>GS</b></p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Officers evaluation of the ‘Postal’ review</b></p> <p>The Panel noted a review produced by the Scrutiny Officers in respect of their experience of the review process. The Panel approved the points made therein, and noted two points in particular, that the period of time available to conduct the review was extremely short, and that there were difficulties in the interpretation of accounts.</p> <p>Although amendments could be made to existing projets with a two week lodging period, ‘stand-alone’ projets from Scrutiny were required to be lodged for six weeks. Panels could have matters referred to them for a period of four sessions, usually spanning eight weeks.</p> <p>Therefore, if a matter was referred to a Panel, which decided to lodge a ‘stand-alone’ (non-amending) projet of its own for concurrent debate, it would have a period of two weeks in which to undertake a review and develop the projet.</p> <p>In order to correct this disparity, officers were directed to prepare a paper for the approval of the Panel to be passed to the Chairman’s</p>	<p><b>NJF</b></p>

	<p>Committee. This was to request the Chairman's Committee to recommend to the Privileges and Procedures Committee that it bring a projet to the States to increase the number of sessions that matters could be referred to a Panel to six, giving a period of twelve weeks to carry out a review, and to reduce to two weeks the necessary period of lodging for propositions from Scrutiny which specifically related to matters referred to a Panel under Standing Order 72 (1) or (2).</p> <p>The Panel also decided to address the concerns over accountancy advice. Officers were directed to make enquiries as to the cost engaging a firm of audit accountants to provide occasional advice to Panels undertaking reviews involving accounts. The Panel directed that several companies be approached in order to ensure that value for money would be obtained.</p> <p>This draft report was to be submitted to the Panel at its next meeting.</p>	<b>NJF</b>
6.	<p><b>Documents for possible consultant analyst</b></p> <p>The Committee recalled that its 'Postal' review had called for an independent cost / benefit analysis of incorporation prior to action being taken to remove Jersey Post from States control.</p> <p>The Panel wished to ensure that this could be carried out at the minimum cost to the island. To this end, it noted a list of all documentation supplied by Jersey Post and the Department to be made available to any consultant tasked to carry out a further cost-benefit analysis of the incorporation of Jersey Post.</p> <p>The Panel clarified that it would not violate confidentiality to provide any analyst with a list of the titles of documentation, while allowing them to obtain the documents themselves.</p>	

**Signed**

**Date**

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**Chairman Deputy G. P. Southern**  
**Economic Affairs Panel**

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