

**STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES
COMMITTEE ON 1st APRIL 2003**

Since the Policy and Resources Committee decided to adhere more closely to the Code of Practice on Public Access to Official Information and to adopt the same procedures followed by all other States Committees in not circulating minutes covering items on its confidential or 'B' agenda, consideration has been given to ways in which the Committee can operate more openly and can involve States members in its policy deliberations.

On 4th March 2003, I responded to a question posed by the Deputy of St. John, that:

- (a) the Committee would be considering the entire issue of information dissemination to States members, the media and the Public at its meeting on Thursday 6th March 2003, and;
- (b) the Committee would be bringing forward proposals as to how it intended to ensure that States members, the media and the Public are more fully and more accurately informed than ever before, in the very near future.

At its meeting on 6th March, the Committee considered a range of options, together with advice it had received from the Bailiff, the Privileges and Procedures Committee, the Attorney General and the Greffier of the States. The outcomes of that meeting, though perhaps not as conclusive as I would have liked them to have been, were:

- (a) the Committee noted that its proposal for a 'President's Question Time' would be included in a review of Standing Orders of the States of Jersey by the Privileges and Procedures Committee;
- (b) the Committee agreed to suggest to the Privileges and Procedures Committee that an interim, or trial, alternative approach could be for the President of the Policy and Resources Committee to be permitted to make a regular 'update' statement to the Assembly followed by a period, of say, 10 minutes, during which questions without prior notice could be allowed on the content of such a statement. I understand that the Privileges and Procedures Committee has expressed some reservations on this suggestion and it has been agreed that both Committees meet shortly to explore those concerns and to see if this particular idea, or indeed any other, is worthy of further detailed investigation; and,
- (c) the Committee noted that, in any event, all members of the States are able to access the signed 'Part B' minutes of any States Committee including Policy and Resources, upon application to the Greffier of the States, provided that such access is required in accordance with their duties as members of the States.

For the immediate future and while this background work is being undertaken, the Committee has also agreed that:

- (a) it will make 'Part A' of its agendas proactively available to the media, States members and the public, by direct means and by publishing them on the Policy and Resources and/or States of Jersey websites;
- (b) it will continue to place as much of its business as possible on 'Part A' of its agenda, recognising that there will inevitably still be a few occasions when this would not be appropriate;
- (c) it will make a conscious decision at each meeting on whether 'B' items, once discussed, can be transferred into the 'A' minutes; and,

- (d) it will hold regular structured 'briefing' sessions with States members and, as appropriate, the public.

I am determined that the way the Policy and Resources Committee will operate in respect of the provision of information and through consultation, will provide an example to, and lead the way forward for, other Committees.

Finally, I confirm that the Policy and Resources Committee intends to keep this Assembly fully up to date with progress in this area and will, as necessary, be consulting with members as we move forward.