

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER  
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 28th SEPTEMBER 2010**

**Question**

“Will the Minister act to suspend any further action on the granting of additional postal licences until the employment and universal service provision issues at Jersey Post have been resolved, and if not why not?”

**Answer**

The Postal Services Law (2004) has as its preamble the statement: ‘**A LAW** to abolish the exclusive privilege of the States in postal services’. The Law takes a pro-competition stance and gives the Minister certain duties, to perform his functions in such manner as he considers is best calculated to protect and further the interests of users of postal services, and to perform them, **by promoting competition** among persons engaged in commercial activities connected with postal services in Jersey. Other duties refer to promotion of efficiency, economy and effectiveness; to consider the economic interests of Jersey; and to impose a **minimum of restriction** on persons engaged in commercial activities connected with postal services. The Minister must also have regard to any special needs of persons who are disabled or have limited financial resources or have particular needs.

To effect this the Minister has a power to direct the JCRA on matters of social and environmental policy in postal services, but he does not have a power to prevent the JCRA from issuing a licence under the Law. As Members will note from the description of duties just mentioned, the Law states that the Minister should impose a **minimum of restrictions by promoting competition**. As such I simply cannot interfere with the lawful duties of the JCRA under the Law. What I can do, and have done, is revisit the Universal Service Obligation (USO). Analysis of the responses to the public consultation is near completion. If the results support a redefining of the USO then I will ask the JCRA to ensure that this is taken into account when it makes a decision on licensing third parties, indeed, I intend to present the results of the consultation to the States together with the comments of the JCRA so that the States can have an informed debate on the future of postal services in this Island. That is a debate that needs to take place, but it needs to take place in an informed way once the consultation report has been completed. I expect the department to have this ready by the second week of October.