

STATEMENTS ON A MATTER OF OFFICIAL RESPONSIBILITY

5. Statement by the Minister for Economic Development regarding a review of the Licensing (Jersey) Law 1974

5.1 Senator P.F.C. Ozouf (The Minister for Economic Development):

Members will be aware that I commissioned an inter-departmental review of the Licensing Law earlier this year. The review is being steered by a political panel comprising representatives of Economic Development, Health, Home Affairs, Transport and Technical Services, and the Parish of St. Helier. The Licensing Law has been reviewed a number of times but division and competing interests in the past have prevented substantial progress. This licensing review is different. In order to provide a balanced opportunity for the most interested parties to influence the drafting of the Green Paper, discussions have been held with numerous stakeholders, including the various different parts of the industry, their trade organisations and other States departments. The result is a far greater depth of knowledge regarding not only the need for change in this Island but an understanding of what has gone right and what has gone wrong in other jurisdictions. A complete consensus between all of these groups is, I am afraid, an impossible task, but there are broad areas of agreement, not least of all that a new law should be simpler and less bureaucratic. In order to assure myself that these views are fully considered within the Green Paper and not merely as a consequence of it, I considered it best in the circumstances that publication of this Green Paper be delayed until the end of June in order for the proposals to receive structured consideration. To offset this delay I am considering a slightly reduced period of consultation and the response to the Green Paper of 6 weeks. This reduction should not impact on the ability of the public to respond as the process has already received wide publication in the media and I fully expect it to receive a far higher than normal level of interest and participation. These responses will be considered over the summer period and a White Paper will be published in the early autumn. A final decision on the way forward can then be made after the elections when the proposals will be taken to the new Council of Ministers for endorsement before being taken to the States in early 2009.

5.1.1 The Deputy of St. Martin:

I concur with what the Minister is saying and I also am not surprised that this review is taking considerable time. I thought he was really being optimistic in thinking it was going to come forward by July or September this year. But, in respect of the Green Paper, could I ask that the Minister will ensure that the Green Paper is circulated to States Members, particularly those who have an interest in the subject so we are able to partake in some of the consultation process?

Senator P.F.C. Ozouf:

I am happy to give the Deputy that assurance. He says the deadlines are optimistic. Deadlines are also issues that crystallise minds and I have to say it is the looming deadline of the draft paper that made sure that there was a vigorous discussion with all the competing interests, which are of course there in number. I am happy to confirm to the Deputy that I will circulate in the earliest possible time the draft to ensure that there is appropriate consultation with States Members.