

STATES OF JERSEY



COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY: HISTORICAL CHILD ABUSE – ADDITIONAL FUNDING (P.20/2015) – AMENDMENT (P.20/2015 Amd.) – COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 23rd March 2015
by the Chief Minister**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Inquiry must be allowed to complete its work unhindered, and the proposition as lodged seeks to strike the right balance between respecting the essential independence of the Inquiry and presenting words which are sufficiently clear in relation to cost matters to provide the necessary reassurance to both the Assembly and the Public.

The procedural terms of reference were designed in consultation with the Chairman and Panel to assist in this regard.

Sub-paragraph (c)(ii) requires the Committee of Inquiry to have regard to costs and ensure it operates within its agreed revised budget limit of £13.7 million. This places responsibility on the Panel and reflects the Panel's own forecasts of costs going forward. It is recognised that some of the costs for the Inquiry are variable, and so there is a possibility that there might be a need to return to the Assembly to agree further funding if a line of enquiry under a particular part of the Terms of Reference required, for example, further witness hearings which cannot be predicted at this time. It is clear, therefore, that this does not put a cap on spending, but instead provides the Assembly and the Public with a clearly defined decision point in the future, should costs rise above the Panel's own current forecast.

Sub-paragraph (c)(iv) provides a point in time (not later than 31st December 2016) when the Assembly should receive the Panel's Report. The timing for the final report is the suggestion of the Panel itself. It has been designed to give the Panel 12 months after the cessation of the currently anticipated public hearings, and to allow for possible slippage in the timetable in the event of new evidence being discovered. It is reasonable for the Assembly to expect the product of the Inquiry to be available within this timeframe so that its findings and the resource implications can be considered in a planned way.

Sub-paragraph (c)(v) requires the Inquiry to make full use of all the various published and unpublished reviews, court cases, investigations, etc. ("the Reports"), without seeking to adduce additional oral or written evidence on the matters already covered by these reports where there is no additional benefit in doing so.

Financial and manpower implications

The amendment diminishes the opportunity to seek to manage costs, yet states that there are no additional financial or manpower implications arising from the amendments. The Assembly are aware that there are very few additional sources of funds available other than the Strategic Reserve, and there is the vital need for financial prudence in the foreseeable challenging economic environment ahead.

Statement under Standing Order 37A [Presentation of comment relating to a proposition]

These comments were submitted to the States Greffe later than the noon deadline on Friday 20th March specified in Standing Order 37A as the Chief Minister was engaged in meetings and only able to finalise the comment after the deadline.