

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY DEPUTY J.H. YOUNG OF ST. BRELADE
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 4th MARCH 2014**

Question

Will the Chief Minister inform the Assembly whether the Council of Ministers recognises the role of democratically elected members of the Assembly in contributing to the policy proposals of Ministers before they are adopted as official States' policy and, if so, would he inform the Assembly in detail of the arrangements the Council of Ministers has made, and currently relies upon, to ensure it is fully aware of the opinions of non-executive members in policy development?

Would the Chief Minister further state whether any non-executive members of the States are included in any the multiplicity of policy or working groups established by Ministers, whether across ministerial departments or within a single department, state whether these groups are operational or for policy formulation and if there is no involvement of non-executive members, what proposals, if any, does the Chief Minister currently have under consideration to address this issue?

Answer

I recognise the essential contribution non-executive members of the States Assembly can make to the development of policy.

This happens in a number of ways. There are formal groups that develop policy, such as the Access to Justice Review Advisory Panel, the Regeneration Steering Group and the Health Transformation Ministerial Oversight Group. There are also workshops held to debate the development of major initiatives like the Strategic Plan, as well as informal discussions. I am aware of many meetings between Ministers and Members to discuss policy. This week, all States Members have been invited to workshops on the development of "Preparing for Our Future", the framework being produced for the future development of policy, and the clear intention is to make this process inclusive, bringing in the views of non-executive Members of the States.

I said when standing as Chief Minister that I would support a reinvigorated Scrutiny function. During this term of office I believe Scrutiny has operated more successfully, which is essential for effective government. As well as the Scrutiny process, there is a requirement for Ministers to be accountable to, and to listen and respond to, the States Assembly. In my view, this, and the fact that we have no party politics, all makes the Executive branch of government highly responsive to the States Assembly as it formulates policy, perhaps more so than elsewhere.

The Machinery of Government Review Sub-Committee: Final Report, presented to the States Assembly on 9th September 2013 by the Privileges and Procedures Committee (R.105/2013) concluded that, whilst the States have little appetite for a direct return to the committee system, the range of work conducted by all 3 branches of government is sufficiently challenging and diverse as to provide ample opportunities for all Members to contribute. The Review recommended that Members should benefit from a formal mechanism through which they might express an interest in serving in a particular executive or non-executive capacity, supported by a brief rationale for wishing to pursue those particular roles. This recommendation has been supported by the Steering Group taking forwarded the Review recommendations and I hope that this will gain the support of the States Assembly in due course.