

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
BY DEPUTY G.P. SOUTHERN OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 22nd JUNE 2010**

Question

“Given the Minister’s commitment to improving energy efficiency in the Island, what justification, if any does he have for the 5% (£54,000) reduction in energy efficiency grants in proposal PE-S4 of the Comprehensive Spending Review?”

Answer

I am absolutely committed to establishing a way forward for the Island to become as energy efficient as is practically possible for two reasons. Firstly the efficient use of energy tackles fuel poverty for those vulnerable people who have to spend a disproportionate element of their income on keeping warm. Secondly the efficient use of energy will lessen the carbon emissions attributable to Jersey and accord with our commitment under international agreements to work towards reducing our emissions. I hope to present an Energy Policy Green Paper to the States later this year which will provide a direction that the Island as a whole can follow to improve overall energy efficiency

Turning now to the 5% saving for 2011 from the Energy Efficiency Grants, the CSR process involves careful examination and prioritisation of all the areas of activity within which P&E are involved. It was particularly challenging to carry this out for 2011 against the background of existing service and grant commitments in the timescale that the CSR process demanded.

The CSR process requires an overall 10% reduction in Departmental Spend based on 2010 budgets. In order to do this, all areas of expenditure have been analysed. It is not appropriate in such exercises to ring fence areas from these pressures as this creates a disproportionate pressure on other activities.

As a result the grants the Department provide have also been reduced in line with CSR expectations.

The Energy Efficiency Service currently targets improvements to low income groups. The initial target group comprised those eligible for the Cold Weather Payment and/or those in receipt of the Westfield (65+) Health scheme. The Service has provided, without charge, advice and measures such as wall and loft insulation to approximately 800 homes. Whilst the scheme continues to target newcomers to the initial target group it has recently expanded its eligibility criteria to cover everyone on Income Support which potentially will cover a further 5,000 eligible households. Furthermore, the scheme has opened a new work programme that covers community buildings and Parish sheltered accommodation that caters for people who mirror the target group, these include non-for-profit organisations like residential care centres and charities like Les Amis. A further 80 properties are currently being addressed through this programme which began recently.

I considered it appropriate to save some 5% of the grant fund in 2011 as being a saving that could be made without significant impact on the delivery of the Energy Efficiency programme.

I am committed to deliver many activities within the natural and built environment. I am confident that my CSR strategy for Planning and Environment will not only preserve front line services, but will also result in a more effective department in the longer term but delivered at lower cost.