

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHAIRMAN OF  
THE PRIVILEGES AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE  
BY DEPUTY R.G. LE HERISSIER OF ST. SAVIOUR**

**ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 28th MARCH 2006**

**Question**

When does the Committee intend to bring the Freedom of Information Law to the States and does the Committee accept the restriction in paragraph 5.1.4 of the draft Strategic Plan, that the Law “will incur no additional cost to the States”?

**Answer**

The Privileges and Procedures Committee (PPC) has already considered a first draft of the Freedom of Information Law and a consultation document containing that draft will be sent out for consultation very shortly.

The Committee considered the restriction in paragraph 5.1.4 of the draft Strategic Plan and does not believe it is appropriate. PPC advised the Chief Minister of this in a letter dated 14th March 2006, in the following terms -

*“PPC was concerned to read Strategic Initiative 5.1.4 which states “Present a Freedom of Information Law which will incur no additional cost to the States for approval by the end of 2006”. PPC is currently bringing forward a draft Freedom of Information Law and we should, in fact, be in a position to circulate a consultation document (including the draft Law itself) very shortly. You will be aware that the matter of resource implications has been one of the most controversial and disputed aspects of the proposed Law. Although estimates of the potential costs vary, all parties involved to-date have agreed that some additional cost to the States is inevitable, if only because there is likely to be a requirement for one additional member of staff in the office of the Data Protection Commissioner (who will become the Information Commissioner). Senator Syvret, who is taking the lead on this matter for PPC, confirmed to us last week that there would definitely be some cost to the States if the Law is introduced. PPC is concerned that if the Strategic Initiative remains as currently worded it might become impossible, at a later date, for the Freedom of Information Law to be introduced. PPC therefore considers that the words “which will incur no additional cost to the States” should be deleted or, alternatively, the entire Strategic Initiative should be removed”.*