

CHAIRMEN'S COMMITTEE

Meeting of Chairmen held on 4th April 2008

Meeting Number 75

Meeting held by electronic mail

Present	Deputy S C Ferguson, President Deputy R G Le Hérissier, Vice-President Deputy R C Duhamel Deputy P J D Ryan Deputy D.W. Mezbourian
Apologies	Deputy A. Breckon Deputy J G Reed
Absent	Deputy G P Southern
In attendance	Corporate Services Finance Sub-Panel Mrs K. Tremellen-Frost, Scrutiny Manager Mr. M. Haden, Scrutiny Officer

Ref Back	Agenda matter	Action
	<p>1. Scrutiny of Annual Business Plan</p> <p>The Committee welcomed the Corporate Services Finance Sub-Panel to the meeting to consider a scrutiny approach to the Annual Business Plan and to consider who would take responsibility in respect of the various areas.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that it was essential that scrutiny provided a co-ordinated response to the Council of Ministers in a timely manner. However, concerns were expressed that it appeared as if the Council of Ministers was merely either seeking an endorsement of its prioritisations by scrutiny or asking scrutiny to deal with their spending pressures. This was not the rôle of the scrutiny function. It considered whether it should communicate this to the Council of Ministers.</p> <p>Concerns were also expressed regarding the placing of some issues under the Chief Minister's Department within the Annual Business Plan when their rightful place was under a different Department. It was agreed that this should be questioned and consideration was given as to the practicalities of inviting the Chairman of another Panel onto the Corporate Services Panel when that Panel was interviewing the Chief Minister and/or the Minister of Treasury and Resources at a forthcoming hearing. The Committee was advised that there was no power of co-option onto a Panel and consequently explored the concept of inviting a Chairman as an adviser to the Panel. The Committee was also advised that there was no provision to permit a States Member to act as an adviser to a Scrutiny Panel. The solution, therefore, appeared to be that any Panels with any concerns or questions which they would like asked of the Chief Minister or Minister of Treasury and Resources should put a summary of those matters in writing to the Chairman of the Corporate Services Panel.</p> <p>The Committee noted that it would be attending a briefing by the Comptroller and Auditor General on 7th April 2008 in respect of the</p>	

	<p>progress of his work on spending pressures and acknowledged that these reports should provide additional insight to assist with scrutiny of the Annual Business Plan.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the Education and Home Affairs Panel had already identified a certain number of spending pressures and would be questioning the relevant Ministers on these, after which it would prepare its comments in accordance with its findings. Those comments would be forwarded to the Chairmen's Committee in accordance with a previous agreement of the Committee (meeting of 22nd February Item 8). It was agreed that Panel might not comment on the principle of States spending limits from the 2008 Business Plan being increased in light of new pressures, as some Panel Chairmen considered this inappropriate for scrutiny.</p> <p>The Committee agreed the following:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each Panel would follow the approach of the Education and Home Affairs Panel, invite in the respective Ministers and consider the identified spending pressures; 2. Each Panel would prepare a comment on the above which would be forwarded to the Chairmen's Committee by the week ending 25th April 2008; 3. Panel responses would be co-ordinated and an overarching paper prepared at the start of the week commencing 28th April for circulation to the Chairmen's Committee and subsequently the Council of Ministers before the end of that week; 4. Consideration of the principle of a contingency provision would be undertaken by the Corporate Services Finance Sub-Panel in conjunction with the Public Accounts Committee. It would consider the abolition of the general reserve and changes which had centred on the Treasury and Resources Department and consider the background behind a contingency provision; 5. The Committee would meet the Council of Ministers on 15th May to discuss its responses. 	

Signed

Date:

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President, Chairmen's Committee