

## CHAIRMEN'S COMMITTEE

Meeting of Chairmen held on 30th June 2006

Meeting No. 21

Present	Deputy R C Duhamel, President Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier, Vice-President Deputy F J Hill Deputy G.P. Southern Deputy P J D Ryan Deputy S C Ferguson Deputy J. G. Reed
Apologies	
Absent	
In attendance	Mrs A. Harris, Deputy Greffier of the States Mr. Fox, Scrutiny Officer

Ref Back	Agenda matter	Action
1.	<p><b>Minutes of previous meetings</b></p> <p>The Minutes of meetings of 19th, 24th, 25th, 26th, 30th and 31st May and 5th June 2006 were approved with no amendments but signing was held over to a subsequent meeting.</p>	
2.  19.05.06 Item 21	<p><b><u>Action Update</u></b></p> <p><b>Livelihood Preview</b></p> <p>The President reported to the Committee the results of his recent preview of the intended Livelihood training for members.</p> <p>The President was of the opinion that while the system could have advantages for administration purposes, it was not of any significant value to Scrutiny. The President requested the Deputy Greffier of the States to write to The Chief Executive of the States and the Information Services Director to request a system which would benefit scrutiny in researching or searching for information.</p>	<b>DGOS</b>
3.  31.05.06 Item 1	<p><b><u>Communications Sub-Group</u></b></p> <p>The Committee welcomed a delegation of the Communications Sub-Group consisting of Deputies S. Power and J. Gallichan.</p> <p>The delegation suggested that a sub-group of members of Panels should be formed to raise the profile of Scrutiny, using the office of the Scrutiny Manager. They recommended that there should be weekly meetings between members, the media and the Scrutiny Officers, preferably to be held on Monday mornings.</p> <p>The Committee decided that a media consultant should be engaged using financial contributions from each Panel budget, initially indicated as approximately £5,000 per Panel, to assist in the profile-raising. The sub-group was directed to list possible candidates and</p>	

	<p>make the necessary arrangements for them to present to the Committee as soon as possible. Expressions of interest were to be collected by the sub-group.</p> <p>The Sub-group noted that a leaflet detailing the nature of Scrutiny had been produced some time ago by officers. It was recommended that this should be updated by the sub-group and distributed. A brief history of the Scrutiny function was to be made available to the media by the sub-group.</p> <p>The sub-group stated that it was vital to interest young people in Scrutiny, especially schoolchildren. It was minded that a member or members might go into schools to talk to children at some point in the future, although it was recognised that with some schools having up to eight classes per year this would be a significant commitment.</p> <p>The sub-group was directed to develop the engagement strategy in more detail.</p> <p>The Citizens Panel was discussed, and it was decided to request the Deputy Greffier of the States to write to the Council of Ministers to enquire about the progress of the Citizens Panel and public engagement in general.</p>	<b>DGoS</b>
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Financial Analysis of Scrutiny reviews</u></b></p> <p>The Committee noted details of the cost of reviews undertaken as follows-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) a review into the incorporation of Jersey Post by the Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel; and</li> <li>(b) a review undertaken into the financial framework contained within the draft strategic Plan.</li> </ul> <p>Deputy Reed reported that he had spoken to the Assistant Greffier of the States about recording officer hours spent on reviews in order to monitor manpower costs and total budget.</p>	
<p><b>5.</b></p> <p><b>05.06.06 Item 1</b></p>	<p><b><u>Strategic Plan Feedback</u></b></p> <p>The Committee noted the minutes of meetings held by the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel, detailing the process by which that Panel developed its amendments to the Strategic Plan for the debate held on 27 June 2006. This had been provided in response to suggestions that the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel had not been fully supportive of a number of those amendments, and that the Panel was being used to further an individual agenda.</p> <p>Having studied the evidence, the Committee concluded that the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel was not being used to forward an individual agenda during the Strategic Plan debate.</p> <p>It was however generally re-affirmed that it would be seriously disadvantageous for the Scrutiny function as a whole if Panels were to be used to further personal political ends.</p>	

	<p>The Committee agreed that information should be shared more freely between Panels in order to improve debates in the assembly.</p> <p>Amendment No 18 (b) to the Strategic Plan was discussed, which had been intended to require the Council of Ministers to bring to the assembly the financial and manpower consequences of the Strategic Plan initiatives over the five-year lifetime of the plan. As this amendment had not been successful, it was decided to recommend a change to the relevant Standing Orders to require the Council of Ministers to include three-year financial planning in the States Business Plan.</p> <p>This item was to be included on the agenda for the next meeting, and the Deputy Greffier of the States was asked to brief the Privileges and Procedures Committee about the Committee's concerns.</p>	<b>DGOS</b>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b><u>States Business Plan</u></b></p> <p>The Committee noted that once the Business Plan was lodged, the Panels would have only six weeks to amend it, four weeks of which was to consist of the States summer recess, during which a number of members were expected to be absent.</p> <p>The Committee recalled that it had previously been agreed that Scrutiny would be invited to attend key meetings in respect of the strategic and business plans. The Deputy Greffier of the States was directed to write to the Council of Ministers, and the letter to be copied to all members, to inform it that scrutiny was disappointed to note that the Chairmen's Committee had not been included in the Business Plan planning to date as it had previously been assured. A list of all relevant meetings was to be requested.</p>	<b>DGoS</b>
<p><b>7.</b></p> <p><b>19.05.06 Item 13</b></p>	<p><b><u>The Scrutiny Website</u></b></p> <p>The Committee noted a report prepared by the Scrutiny Office in respect of discussions within the Scrutiny Website Action Group in respect of modifications to update the website.</p> <p>It then discussed the current design and operation of the website, and noted that access to the site through the main governmental portal was convoluted and that finding details of Scrutiny's activities was difficult. The access could not be altered, however as Scrutiny was a Non-Executive Department.</p> <p>The website design was also considered to be dated. The Committee indicated that it would prefer a more 'engaging' site. It was suggested that video clips of 'sound bites' by Scrutiny Chairmen should be downloadable from the site. The President suggested that this could be accomplished at less expense if the Scrutiny function was to purchase a dedicated camera.</p> <p>Officers were strongly encouraged by the Deputy Greffier of the States to spend up to 15 minutes at the start of the day ensuring that the site was up to date, as this represented the 'shop window' of the</p>	

	<p>Scrutiny function.</p> <p>The Committee directed that the aforementioned report should be returned to the Committee at its next meeting with more detailed costings included.</p>	
<p><b>8.</b></p> <p><b>25.05.06</b> <b>Item 2</b></p>	<p><b><u>Proposed Split of the Social Affairs Scrutiny Panel</u></b></p> <p>The Chairmen's Committee recalled that all Panels had been requested to provide the President with a list of topics that had been considered for review but not undertaken due to resource constraints. It was noted that the Corporate Services Scrutiny and Social Affairs Scrutiny Panels had provided this information. The Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel and Environment Panel were recommended to do so as soon as possible. The approach to the debate was also discussed.</p>	
<p><b>9.</b></p> <p><b>19.05.06</b> <b>Item 5</b></p>	<p><b><u>Register of Local Persons</u></b></p> <p>The Committee recalled that it had previously considered the preparation of a register of local persons who would be interested and suitably qualified to assist Scrutiny Panels with reviews.</p> <p>The Committee confirmed that it supported the idea of a register of local advisers. These advisers would be expected to offer services free of charge, and this register would be devised through a combination of approaches to individuals, approaches to organisations, and by advertising.</p> <p>The Committee noted that any information retained on file, be it in the form of written or electronic data would be held in accordance with the Data Protection (Jersey) Law 2005.</p>	
<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Telephone meetings</u></b></p> <p>The President informed the Committee that it had come to his attention that a number of telephone meetings had recently taken place.</p> <p>He was of the opinion that it would be more appropriate to collect items together and to hold additional meetings in most cases, although urgent items could still be dealt with by telephone meeting. Telephone meetings were to be instigated by the Chairman or by a majority of members.</p>	
<p><b>11.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Guidelines for dealing with scrutiny requests</u></b></p> <p>The Committee considered internal guidelines for staff of the Chief Minister's Department which had been circulated regarding the manner in which requests from Scrutiny were to be dealt with. It noted that this was not the agreement that had been expected, and that the process seemed overly bureaucratic. It was considered unreasonable that Scrutiny was not to be allowed access to information on a particular subject unless a review into that subject was being considered.</p>	

	<p>It was also considered unreasonable to have an administrative system in place that hampered the access of members to information.</p> <p>The Deputy Greffier of the States was directed to write to the Council of Ministers expressing the opinion of the Committee that the system was overly bureaucratic that should be simplified as working practices had been established.</p> <p>Deputy Southern noted that the Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel had been required to agree to a particularly restrictive agreement in order to gain access to files held by the Regulation of Undertakings office. This was in the form of a letter, which was to be passed to the Committee.</p>	<p><b>DGOS</b></p> <p><b>NJF</b></p>
<p><b>12.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Proposed archive of national press articles</u></b></p> <p>The President noted that the national newspapers often contained articles that were of relevance to reviews. The Committee therefore considered the possibility of either purchasing these papers or collecting them second-hand, in order that the relevant articles could be held in the Scrutiny Office.</p> <p>The efficiency of this system was discussed, and it was concluded that with the availability of internet search engines, it would be more appropriate to pay for access to the electronic archives of national newspapers than to manually store and record articles. As soon as the Jersey Evening Post completed its online archive the Greffe should gain access, understood to be at a cost of £10 per month, whereupon the manual recording of articles from this journal would cease.</p>	
<p><b>13.</b></p>	<p><b><u>Proposed amendments to Standing Orders</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Lodging times</u></b></p> <p>The Committee received a report from the Scrutiny Office, in connection with the current lodging times for propositions from Scrutiny, intended to address the disparity between the six-week lodging period for a stand-alone proposition, and the eight week period of consideration after ‘calling-in’ a proposition.</p> <p>The report outlined minor changes to Standing Orders that would extend the period of consideration to 12 weeks, and reduce the lodging time for a stand-alone proposition specifically relating to items ‘called-in’ to two weeks.</p> <p>The Committee noted that another report had been produced for the Privileges and Procedures Committee (PPC), which recommended a move to a consensual system under which the Minister and the Scrutiny Panel could agree together to reduce the lodging period.</p> <p>After considering the options, the Chairmen’s Committee approved its report produced by the Scrutiny Office in principle and directed that it be passed to the Privileges and Procedures Committee for its consideration.</p>	<p><b>NJF</b></p>

	<p><b><u>Sub-Panels</u></b></p> <p>The Committee noted a minute of the Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel that recorded the formation of a sub-Panel.</p> <p>The Committee noted that it was impossible to form a sub-Panel consisting of a Panel in its entirety, which by extension meant that it was impossible to have a whole Panel operate as a sub-Panel with secondees without discarding at least one member.</p> <p>The Committee agreed in principle that this was limiting the operation of certain reviews. It agreed that a paper on this matter should be prepared for the consideration of the Committee at its next meeting.</p>	<b>KTF</b>
<b>14.</b>	<p><b><u>Accountancy Advice</u></b></p> <p>The Committee was informed that feedback from the recent review into the incorporation of Jersey Post had indicated that a lack of access to financial expertise had hampered the operation of the Panel.</p> <p>The Chairman of the Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel contended that it was necessary to have a qualified accounting advisor in order to properly interpret accounts. The Committee agreed.</p> <p>The Committee directed officers to approach several local audit companies, in order to gather expressions of interest.</p>	<b>NJF</b>
<b>15.</b>	<p><b><u>Provision of Information in members' rooms</u></b></p> <p>The President noted that it was difficult and time-consuming to study ministerial decisions in the form in which they appeared on the website. It was therefore suggested that the website list of recent decisions should be printed once a week by officers and affixed to a bulletin board to be placed in the members' computer room. This was to be updated weekly by the Scrutiny Office on Monday mornings.</p> <p>The Deputy Greffier of the States was directed to acquire the appropriate equipment.</p>	
<b>16.</b>	<p><b><u>Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel Report</u></b></p> <p>The Committee was informed that the Panel was to meet with the Treasury Minister in connection with the '20 means 20' proposals, as this was considered to be a valuable topic, although a review into it had not originally been considered.</p>	
<b>17.</b>	<p><b><u>Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel Report</u></b></p> <p>The Committee was informed that Deputy Breckon was to chair a sub-Panel to review the current status of the dairy industry. This was to draw on other Panels for its membership, which was yet to be decided.</p>	

18.	<p><b><u>Social Affairs Scrutiny Panel Report</u></b></p> <p>The Committee was informed that comments on the revised projet in respect of the new Sexual Offences legislation had been completed. Reviews into the GP Out-of-Hours service, the powers of Centeniers and the income support system were ongoing.</p>	
19.	<p><b><u>Environment Scrutiny Panel Report</u></b></p> <p>The Committee was informed that Deputy G.C.L. Baudains was not expected to be in attendance at the Panel until the end of the summer, and although the planning process review could therefore be delayed, it was anticipated that it could be completed by the end of July, or August at the latest.</p>	
20.	<p><b><u>Public Accounts Committee Report</u></b></p> <p>The Committee was informed that the Public Accounts Committee was to complete a report into the relocation of the dairy prior to the formation of the Economic Affairs sub-Panel to consider the dairy industry, as above.</p>	