

STATES OF JERSEY



MEDIA RELATIONS: CODE OF CONDUCT

Lodged au Greffe on 15th July 2010
by the Privileges and Procedures Committee

STATES GREFFE

PROPOSITION

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

- (a) to approve the Code of Conduct for media relations as set out in the report of the Privileges and Procedures Committee, dated 15th July 2010;
- (b) to charge the Privileges and Procedures Committee to introduce and keep under review as appropriate the operation of the Code of Conduct.

PRIVILEGES AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

REPORT

The Media Working Party was established in November 2009 to consider the relationship between the States Assembly and the media.

The Working Party was chaired by the President of the Chairmen's Committee, Senator B.E. Shenton, and the members were Connétable J. Gallichan, representing the Privileges and Procedures Committee, and Deputy A.E. Jeune, representing the Council of Ministers. The Working Party's final report is attached at Appendix 1.

The report was referred to the Privileges and Procedures Committee in March 2010, and recommendations 1 to 3 are being taken forward. However, the Working Party's 4th recommendation, that a Code of Conduct be adopted, is a matter for the States. The Committee has therefore agreed to bring forward this proposition on behalf of the Working Party.

The proposition asks the States to decide whether to adopt a Code of Conduct which would introduce standards of behaviour for members of the public and the media when in the States Building, and would only permit the visual or audio recording of States meetings and hearings by accredited media organisations. The view of the Chairmen's Committee was sought on this, and all other Working Party recommendations; however no collective opinion was reached. The individual views of the various Scrutiny Panels are set out in correspondence attached at Appendix 2.

The Code of Conduct proposed by the Media Working Party is as follows:

CODE OF CONDUCT

The States Building is a working environment. Members of the public and individuals working for an accredited media organisation should treat staff with courtesy and consideration and conduct themselves appropriately.

Members of the public are not permitted to make visual or audio recordings within the States Building.

Journalists and other media personnel who wish to take visual footage or audio recordings within the States Building must be able to identify themselves as doing so on behalf of an accredited media organisation, and in accordance with the following:

Media photography in the States Assembly

Accredited media may only take visual footage and/or photography during a States meeting with the prior permission of the Assembly, or with the permission of the Bailiff at times when the Assembly is not sitting. Media photography will not be permitted at any time during a States Sitting without prior consent. The media will not be allowed to enter the States Chamber when the States are not meeting to use it as a 'backdrop' for news stories or interviews with members.

Media photography in Committee/Scrutiny proceedings

Accredited media may only take visual footage and/or photography with the approval of the President/Chairman of the proceedings. Media photography will only be permitted in advance of/following the close of proceedings, and

will not be permitted during proceedings. Only those appearing in an official capacity and Committee/Panel members should be filmed.

Accreditation

The States aim to promote wide accreditation and welcomes local, national and international media organisations, all of which may apply for media accreditation. Accreditation applications for media organisations can be made to the States Greffe, Morier House, Halkett Place, St. Helier, JE1 1DD. Applicant organisations will be required to demonstrate that their work meets the following criteria:

- (a) **They operate in a regulated environment.** They and their employers adhere to principles and standards set down by independent bodies such as the National Union of Journalists, Ofcom, the BBC Trust or the Press Complaints Commission.*

- (b) **They do not act as lobbyists, paid or unpaid, for any individual or organisation that might seek to influence the political process or benefit from inside knowledge of the political process.***

If requested, individual journalists and media personnel should be able to provide identification which specifies the media organisation they work for, so that accreditation can be verified. Freelance media who require accreditation are required to demonstrate that they work in a professional capacity and that their work is likely to be used by an accredited news organisation and will require a supporting signature of an Editor/Head of News/Pictures Editor or equivalent.

Financial and manpower implications

The cost of implementing and maintaining the accreditation scheme will be met from within existing States Assembly budgets and resources.

15th July 2010

MEDIA WORKING PARTY

REPORT

Introduction

The Media Working Party was established in November 2009 to consider the relationship between the States Assembly and the media.

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Key recommendations

Following the completion of its review, the Working Party would make the following key recommendations:

1. An online, up-to-date, notice-board of forthcoming States, Committee and Scrutiny meetings should be available to view on the gov.je; statesassembly.gov.je and scrutiny.gov.je websites when these are upgraded and relaunched (*see page 3*).
2. Consideration should be given to the feasibility and cost of installing interactive electronic States notice-boards at locations such as the States Assembly Information Centre in Morier House, Jersey Library and Liberation Station (*see page 3*).
3. States Sittings and meetings of Committees and Scrutiny Panels which are being recorded should also be broadcast live on the internet, and should be available to listen to on the web until the transcript of that meeting has been uploaded (*see page 7*).
4. A Code of Conduct should be adopted which would only permit the visual or audio recording of States meetings and hearings by accredited media organisations (*see page 9*).

Report

At its initial meeting the Working Party discussed a number of areas in respect of access to, and the recording of, States meetings, and agreed the following terms of reference:

To determine:

- (1) *the level of demand for the recording of meetings;*
- (2) *a definition of 'the media'; and*
- (3) *to refer any recommendations to PPC/the States.*

A call for evidence was made in December 2009, which invited members of the public to explain how they found out about the work of the States Assembly; whether they felt there was enough information available about meetings of the States and Scrutiny; and whether the proceedings received enough coverage. Islanders were also invited to give their views on having audio and/or visual recordings of meetings, to say whether these should be available to view on the internet, and to give their opinion on the use of weblogs. They were also asked who they believed to be 'the media'. Eleven submissions were received from members of the public and organisations, all of which were taken into account by the Working Party during its review.

In formulating its conclusions, the Working Party considered the following:

- (a) the provision of information to the public;
- (b) access to meetings by the public;
- (c) the distinction between accredited and non-accredited media;
- (d) audio recording of States meetings;
- (e) visual recording of States meetings; and,
- (f) the rights of the public and/or witnesses to refuse to be recorded and/or filmed.

The Working Party's comments and recommendations under each of these points are set out below.

(a) The provision of information to the public

The Working Party was interested to know how members of the public access information about the States Assembly and its work, and whether sufficient information was available in the public domain.

The view was expressed by some respondents that "*not enough information [was] available about meetings of the States and Scrutiny*"¹ and that Scrutiny "*would benefit from a more public profile*"². A number of submissions pointed out that the States should improve its online presence, both in terms of content and ease of navigation on the available websites, and by developing a social media presence online.

Online information

The States and Scrutiny websites detail the dates of upcoming States Sittings, meetings and hearings as well as copies of official reports, propositions, transcripts, submissions and other relevant information.

The Working Party noted that the gov.je, statesassembly.gov.je and scrutiny.gov.je websites were in the process of being upgraded and would be re-launched shortly. They would incorporate improved navigation tools and a more efficient search function in order to assist members of the public in locating information online. The

¹ Written submission from Mr. A. Fearn, 12th January 2010.

² Written submission from Mr. R. Travert, 9th January 2010.

Working Party would also **recommend** that the websites include an online notice-board of upcoming States, Committee and Scrutiny meetings. This should be kept up-to-date in accordance with any schedule changes.

One submission to the Working Party suggested that the States should publish a weekly or monthly online apolitical summary of new policies which had been approved and their impact upon members of the public. The Working Party considered the time and cost implications of preparing such a summary and noted that the statesassembly.gov.je and scrutiny.gov.je websites already provided extensive policy information, including propositions lodged, reports presented, Minutes of meetings, and transcripts of States Sittings. The Working Party recognised the level of scrutiny and accountability that the independence of local media provided, and agreed that it would not be appropriate for the States Assembly to assume the role of publisher. Accordingly, the Working Party would not recommend that this suggestion be taken forward.

With regard to establishing a States Assembly presence on social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook and MySpace, the Working Party noted that Scrutiny was currently implementing a social media strategy on a trial basis. A link to a survey on income support on Scrutiny's Facebook page was considered to have significantly boosted the number of responses, with 300 people having completed the survey to date.

It was felt the success of the Scrutiny social media strategy should continue to be monitored and the redesigned gov.je; statesassembly.gov.je and scrutiny.gov.je websites launched, prior to consideration being given to establishing a social media presence for the States Assembly.

Offline information

At present, the States Assembly advertise any meetings due to take place on a notice-board outside the States Building. The Working Party would **recommend** that more use should be made of the States Assembly Information Centre, Morier House, to include the installation of an interactive electronic notice-board to notify members of the public of any forthcoming States or Scrutiny meetings. Consideration should also be given to the feasibility and cost of the installation of an interactive electronic notice-board at locations such as the Jersey Library and Liberation Station.

(b) Access to meetings by the public

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the States and certain parts of the meetings of Scrutiny panels and other Committees.

The public gallery is available for those who wish to attend States Sittings, unless a debate is being held *in camera*, in which case the gallery is cleared. Some Scrutiny meetings and most Scrutiny hearings are also held in open session (unless a designated exemption under the Code applies to the item being discussed).

A submission was made to the Working Party that "*the public of Jersey should have access to an open and accountable government that puts public interest first and political spin second.*"³ The Working Party considers that public access to meetings of the States is central to providing open and accountable government, enabling members

³ Written submission, Mr. R. Travert, 9th January 2010.

of the public to hear discussions taking place around the table or in the States Chamber.

The Working Party received one submission which raised concern regarding “*the general inadequacies in the access of the public to government information and activities*”⁴. The Working Party was advised that a representative of Team Voice had been present to attend a Scrutiny Panel meeting, however, as the Panel was inquorate, the meeting had not opened until an hour and a half after the scheduled meeting time.⁵ The Working Party felt it would be difficult to foresee such circumstances, however, if a meeting needed to be re-scheduled at short notice, it would **recommend** that the relevant website and any notice-boards be updated as soon as possible in order to keep members of the public informed. The Working Party agrees that it is unrealistic to expect the public to become more interested and engaged in the work of Scrutiny if members of the public who take the trouble to come to hearings are faced with situations such as last-minute cancellations and meetings being cancelled because not enough members have arrived at the specified time.

(c) The distinction between accredited and non-accredited media

The rapid growth of digital communication has altered the way in which news and information is disseminated around the world. The Working Party considered the growing level of social media including Internet blog sites to be a fundamental consideration in its efforts to establish a definition of ‘the media’. The Working Party recognized that the traditional media landscape around the world has been transformed in recent years by the Internet and believes it is important for the States to recognize that dealing with ‘the media’ in a way that may have been appropriate in the past is no longer possible in 2010.

When the Media Working Party invited the public to say who they believed ‘the media’ to be, they responded with a wide range of answers:

*“Will there ever be a further determination of the true meaning of ‘the media’? We at The Voice doubt it”*⁶

*“Most people would answer this by saying that the newspapers and TV and radio were your obvious choices. This I would agree with but would also like to add the internet as a main source of media information... I would also like to add into this debate the PR companies and advertising agencies that work alongside our government.”*⁷

*“More and more ‘e’ media – i.e. Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Weblinks, Blogs, Webcasts. Traditional media (press, TV, radio) still have a place for those not ‘e’ enabled or ‘e’ literate but electronic media will dominate in the next 7 to 10 years.”*⁸

⁴ Written submission, Mr. M. Dun, Team Voice, 26th January 2010.

⁵ <http://voiceforprotest.blogspot.com>, blog entitled: Scrutiny – En désastre, dated 26th January 2009 and submitted to the Media Working Party by Mr. M. Dun on the same date.

⁶ <http://voiceforprotest.blogspot.com>, blog entitled: Jersey Media Working Group, by Mr. T. Wellard, dated 14th January 2009 and submitted to the Media Working Party by Mr. M. Dun on the same date.

⁷ Written submission, Mr. R. Travert, 9th January 2010.

⁸ Written submission, Mr. A. Fearn, 12th January 2010.

“Blogs are for the birds and are not my definition of media.”⁹

Responses from traditional media organisations contained comments as follows:

“The public needs and wants information it can trust. That can come neither directly from the government nor from the mixture of partial pamphleteering, gossip and hearsay which typifies many blogs in both the U.K. and C.I., particularly those with politics and government as primary interests.”¹⁰

“... while the internet has challenged the idea of journalism, the need for in-depth research and reporting does not disappear. Our role as a public service broadcaster carried with it responsibilities to our viewers and to those involved in our reporting. And it is those responsibilities which distinguish our service from certain new types of ‘citizen media’ or blog sites that we see emerging at both a national and a local level.”¹¹

In considering these points, the Working Party also noted the comment on its own review, posted on the weblog <http://voiceforprotest.blogspot.com>:

“This Working Group is designed to confirm the illusion that there is a group of respectable, professional people who deserve to be called ‘accredited media’ and that they shall be treated more favourably than others – such as ‘bloggers’. This whole exercise is intended to defend the status quo where a cosy club relationship exists between Jersey government and the select few of reliable local ‘journalists’ who will report just what they are told.”¹²

The Working Party had regard for a report published by the U.K. Government in June 2009 entitled Digital Britain, which stated: *“It is important for civic society and democracy for people to have a range of sources of accurate and trustworthy news at all levels.”¹³* It also considered the following explanation of “accredited media,” as set out by the United Kingdom Ministry of Justice in April 2009 in respect of media access to family court hearings:

“Media representatives who attend must be accredited. This will be through the existing UK Press Card scheme, which has a wide membership, and is open to those working wholly or mainly in the media. It is not, however, open to bloggers, those who write an occasional newsletter, or to foreign media not working in the UK. More information about the scheme and how to apply is available from the [UK Press Card Authority](#).”

⁹ Written submission, Mr. R. Hacquoil, 9th December 2009.

¹⁰ Written submission, Mr. C. Bright, Editor, Jersey Evening Post, 13th January 2010.

¹¹ Written submission, Ms. K. Rankine, ITV Channel Television, Managing Director, Broadcast, 18th January 2010.

¹² <http://voiceforprotest.blogspot.com>, blog entitled: Jersey Media Working Group, by Mr. T. Wellard, dated 14th January 2009 and submitted to the Media Working Party by Mr. M. Dunn on the same date.

¹³ Digital Britain, Final Report, June 2009, Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Department for Business Innovation and Skills, page 141.

Account was also taken of the procedures put in place by the United Nations, the European Council, the Northern Ireland Assembly and the Scottish Parliament concerning access by journalists and other media personnel to parliament. It was noted that professional employment with a regulated media organisation tended to be a pre-requisite to obtaining press accreditation in these jurisdictions.

The Working Party recognised the evolving media landscape and the importance of social media in communicating and encouraging public discussion of States businesses. It noted that Scrutiny has its own Facebook page, and a number of blogs are used by politicians and members of the public to discuss government matters. The Working Party was also pleased that there are people in Jersey who are actively interested in Jersey politics and who have taken the trouble to establish Internet blogs to publish their views and opinions and, increasingly, publish matters such as video clip interviews with States members and others. Some may occasionally disagree with the views expressed on such sites but the ability of the public to comment, lobby, criticise and disseminate political views freely (within the boundaries of the laws on libel and defamation) has always been a fundamental hallmark of a truly open and democratic society. The Working Party would nevertheless stress that it cannot condone unnecessarily offensive or inappropriate content which can occasionally appear on such blog sites.

The Working Party nevertheless noted a series of “*professional characteristics which distinguish true journalists whether they are employed by commercial organisations or not*”, as outlined in a submission received:

“*They include:*

- *Commitment to accuracy and truth.*
- *Commitment to fairness and balance in reporting.*
- *Clear differentiation between factual reporting and comment.*
- *Clear differentiation between commercial promotion and journalism.*
- *Ethical conduct with regard to issues such as privacy, intrusion, subterfuge in newsgathering, payment for information and protection of sources.*
- *Adherence to (and training in) the relevant laws of the land, notably those concerning contempt of court, defamation and data protection.*
- *Availability of redress for parties aggrieved by publication.”¹⁴*

Knowledge of relevant legislation and the right of redress for parties aggrieved by publication were considered to be of utmost importance by the Media Working Party. Concern was expressed that, while commitment to accuracy and truth, as well as fairness and balance in reporting may be central to the work of those working outside of a media organisation, the fact that the individual was not operating in a regulated environment, governed by the principles and standards set down by an independent body (such as the National Union of Journalists, Ofcom, the BBC Trust or the Press Complaints Commission), meant that this level of regulation and right of redress could not be guaranteed. The Working Party noted that many States members and others could quite easily cite examples of occasions when they considered that the ‘traditional’ media had misrepresented their views or, for example, only broadcast short extracts from a longer interview, but the Working Party recognized that there

¹⁴ Written submission, Mr. C. Bright, Editor, Jersey Evening Post, 13th January 2010.

was always a form of redress in serious cases through the regulation in place. The complaint against BBC's Newsnight programme by former Senator Frank Walker, for example, was upheld by the BBC Trust.

The Working Party therefore agreed that while it was not feasible to determine a definition of 'the media', it would, however, be possible agree a definition of the 'accredited media' as follows:

- (a) ***They operate in a regulated environment. They and their employers adhere to principles and standards set down by independent bodies such as the National Union of Journalists, Ofcom, the BBC Trust or the Press Complaints Commission.***
- (b) ***They do not act as lobbyists, paid or unpaid, for any individual or organisation that might seek to influence the political process or benefit from inside knowledge of the political process.***

(d) Audio recording of States meetings

When considering access to meetings by the public, it was agreed that this could be improved if 'access' could be provided remotely, without members of the public needing to physically attend meetings in order to obtain an accurate, detailed, and unbiased account of what was discussed. It was agreed that the best way to ensure accountable and accurate coverage of discussions was to provide the audio, or a transcript, of proceedings.

The Working Party would therefore **recommend** that the audio of all meetings/hearings which are recorded and transcribed by the States Greffe should be streamed directly to the relevant statesassembly.gov.je or scrutiny.gov.je website when they are upgraded. The audio should be streamed live to the website, and a 'listen again' function should be available until the transcript is uploaded.

This should be a basic service, which could be implemented without additional manpower costs. The recording would be started by those present at the meeting, and automatically streamed to the 'live' link on the website. The audio would then be uploaded to the 'listen again' link, which would provide basic details about the meeting, such as the name of the Scrutiny Panel/Committee and the date of the meeting. In order to minimize cost and manpower implications, details such as the name of each speaker would not be provided, and the audio file would be deleted from the server once the transcript of the meeting became publicly available.

The Working Party would also **recommend** that members of the accredited media should be permitted to make an audio recording of any public meeting or hearing.

(e) Visual recording of States meetings

At present, it normally falls to the President/Chairman of the meeting to decide whether to permit filming, and in the States Chamber filming is only allowed with prior permission of the Assembly. In practice, filming in the Assembly is only allowed on special occasions such as a Royal Visit or Liberation Day, although the media are also allowed to come for a short period after elections to get set-up shots of the Chamber to use in subsequent news stories about the Assembly. Following concerns in

2009 about filming at Scrutiny hearings, the Chairmen's Committee issued a protocol setting out guidelines on how filming at hearings would be permitted.

Consideration was given to allowing accredited media organisations to film States Sittings. In order to minimise the number of cameras, it was considered that the footage could be pooled and shared by a variety of accredited media organisations. However, the cost of installing broadcast quality cameras would be significant, and there does not appear to be sufficient interest from media organisations to warrant the installation of such a system.

The Committee also considered the possible installation of cameras in States meeting rooms, at the cost of the States Assembly, either to allow broadcast-quality footage, or footage suitable to upload to the web. Brief consideration of general cost implications showed that web-quality footage would be the more feasible of these options; however it was agreed that poor quality visual footage would be unlikely to add to the experience of those interested in hearing the output of States meetings, and the capital outlay and running costs involved with televising proceedings were considered to be prohibitive.

It was therefore agreed that audio streaming would be a more effective way of providing virtual access to States meetings to a broad range of people.

As the Working Party would not recommend the installation of cameras in States meeting rooms by the States, the current situation with regard to filming is likely to continue. The Working Party noted the space constraints in States meeting rooms, and agreed that it would not be appropriate for members of the accredited media to move around the room filming, or taking photographs during meetings, as this would be likely to interrupt proceedings. The Working Party would accordingly **recommend** that members of the accredited media should be permitted to take a panned shot or photographs of those present prior to the commencement of any public meeting or hearing.

(f) The rights of the public and/or witnesses to refuse to be recorded and/or filmed

The Working Party considered that the rights of the public and/or witnesses attending meetings should be respected.

In order to protect the rights of those individuals it was felt that only members of the accredited media should be permitted to make visual (or audio) recordings within the States Building. The Working Party makes this **recommendation** in the expectation that members of the accredited media will be fully briefed in areas such as defamation and data protection, and in the knowledge that a form of redress is available should a breach occur of any of the principles and standards set down by the independent body by which they are governed. Although it could be argued that members of the public who operate Internet sites should be allowed to film if they agree to abide by a form of code of conduct, the Working Party noted that such sites are designed to lobby, express political views and therefore do not meet the criteria above on accreditation. Even if a voluntary code of practice was followed in relation to the actual filming at hearings, the footage would then be able to appear on a site principally designed for lobbying purposes with no redress.

In order to protect the rights of those attending meetings in an unofficial capacity, the Working Party would **recommend** that only Committee/Panel members and those appearing in an official capacity at the meeting should be filmed.

Impromptu, 'door-step' interviews should not be permitted to take place without the consent of those being filmed.

Conclusion

The Media Working Party would **recommend** that the following Code of Conduct be applied:

CODE OF CONDUCT

The States Building is a working environment. Members of the public and individuals working for an accredited media organisation should treat staff with courtesy and consideration and conduct themselves appropriately.

Members of the public are not permitted to make visual or audio recordings within the States Building.

Journalists and other media personnel who wish to take visual footage or audio recordings within the States Building must be able to identify themselves as doing so on behalf of an accredited media organisation, and in accordance with the following:

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Media photography in Committee/Scrutiny proceedings

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The States aim to promote wide accreditation and welcomes local, national and international media organisations, all of which may apply for media accreditation. Accreditation applications for media organisations can be made to the States Greffe, Morier House, Halkett Place, St. Helier, JE1 1DD. Applicant organisations will be required to demonstrate that their work meets the following criteria:

- (a) They operate in a regulated environment.** *They and their employers adhere to principles and standards set down by independent bodies such as the National Union of Journalists, Ofcom, the BBC Trust or the Press Complaints Commission.*

- (b) They do not act as lobbyists, paid or unpaid, for any individual or organisation that might seek to influence the political process or benefit from inside knowledge of the political process.**

If requested, individual journalists and media personnel should be able to provide identification which specifies the media organisation they work for, so that accreditation can be verified. Freelance media who require accreditation are required to demonstrate that they work in a professional capacity and that their work is likely to be used by an accredited news organisation and will require a supporting signature of an Editor/Head of News/Pictures Editor or equivalent.

Scrutiny Office

Connétable J. Gallichan
Chairman,
Privileges and Procedures Committee

Our Ref: 1240/10(36)

Media working party: report

4th May 2010

Dear Chairman,

The Chairmen's Committee considered the Media Working Group Report at a recent meeting. The Committee agreed to forward individual Panel comments to you and to advise you that the Committee supports live audio-webstreaming of Scrutiny hearings but not of Scrutiny meetings.

Please find attached individual Panel comments:-

Corporate Services Scrutiny Panel

As a Panel we feel that the Media Working Party report was very balanced in the way in which it presented the issue of the relationship between the States Assembly and the Media.

In particular, we thought the noted series of "professional characteristics which distinguish true journalists whether they are employed by commercial organisations or not" was interesting as it outlined what constituted towards a 'true' journalist.

In relation to the recommendation that suggests the audio of all meetings/hearings are streamed directly to the relevant statesassembly.gov.je or Scrutiny.gov.je website, we feel that this may not be effective in terms of cost.

Economic Affairs Scrutiny Panel

The Panel received the draft Media Working Group Report and agreed that an electronic version should be circulated for consideration and comment by the Panel. It was further agreed that the Chairman would raise any comments made following circulation directly with the Chairmen's Committee. No Panel Member comments have been forthcoming.

Education and Home Affairs Scrutiny Panel

The Panel was concerned that the report does not move the ongoing situation forward, and was disappointed that given the potential of citizen's media and the changes in technology, the working party did not have a more open and innovative approach to the topic.

A large part of the success of the recommendations contained within the report are based on the bringing forward of web casting. As such, given the current financial situation, the Panel wants to know when this will be moved forward. At the latest the Panel would wish to see web casting in place before the elections of 2011.

With regard to filming and the 'Citizen's Media', the Panel is firmly of the view that all media should be subject to a code of conduct, offering a level playing field to all media representatives. This would then mean that permission to film could be withdrawn if any breaches were made to this code.

Environment Scrutiny Panel

The Panel was of the view that the visual streaming of States meetings would enhance the public's awareness and knowledge of States matters.

Health, Social Security and Housing Scrutiny Panel

The Panel took a view on each of the report's four recommendations: Recommendations 1-3 were unanimously agreed by the Panel; Recommendation 4 (that a Code of Conduct should be adopted) was discussed at length but no decision was reached. The views of the Panel on this matter were:

- that there is a potential double standard, in the sense that Panel Members reserve the right to broadcast themselves online and would therefore be doing so without any formal accreditation. The Panel was reminded that the presentation and dissemination of their work is, however, subject to the *Code of Practice for Scrutiny Panels and the Public Accounts Committee*, which ensures a degree of oversight and regulation that does not apply to the 'unaccredited media' as defined in the Working Party's report.
- the terms of the proposed Code of Conduct are suggesting no innovations to existing practice, other than to prevent members of the public from making recordings within the States Building.

Scrutiny should take place in public and, if that exposes Panel Members to potential misrepresentation by the accredited or unaccredited media, then that is an occupational hazard. The issue of freedom of speech is central to this debate.

PAC

No response received

Yours sincerely



Senator B. E. Shenton
President, Chairmen's Committee

cc: Greffier of the States
Miss A. Heuston, Clerk, Privileges and Procedures Committee