

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE CHIEF MINISTER
BY THE DEPUTY OF ST. MARY
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 7th JUNE 2011**

Question

In the light of the UK government's interest and involvement in this area, can the Chief Minister inform members what steps, if any, the Council of Ministers and/or his own Department has taken to consider different ways of establishing what the levels of well-being, happiness, and fulfilment are across the Island population?

Has consideration been given to using these levels as the supreme measures of the Island's progress (or lack of it), instead of 'prosperity', as evidenced by Gross National Income or Gross Value Added?

Answer

A considerable amount of work has been undertaken in my Department towards the development of meaningful statistics to plot the Island's strategic progress. I am advised that it is impossible to develop a supreme index to cover all eventualities, but indicators measuring the economic, environmental and social aspects can be assessed and monitored. Currently the Policy Unit with the Statistics Unit are looking at the OECD Better Life Initiative (and the interactive Your Better Life Initiative), the UK ONS National Well Being Project and UN Human Development Index. More effort is now being targeted to the OECD model.

The thrust of this work is to meet the requirements of the Istanbul Declaration and the Stiglitz Commission which call "to widen the focus from measuring market production towards more complete measures of societal well-being, including quality of life and sustainability."

Until the output of such work has been assessed, it would be unwise to place too much reliance on these measures as the supreme yardstick. Indeed the objective should be one of having a range of measures rather than reliance on one single parameter.