

STATES OF JERSEY

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DRAFT AMENDMENT (No. 29) OF THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE STATES OF JERSEY

Lodged au Greffe on 19th July 2005
by Deputy G.P. Southern of St. Helier

STATES GREFFE



Jersey

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REPORT

It seems clear to me that one of the prime aims of scrutiny is to produce better informed and higher quality debate in the Assembly. To this end any scrutiny panel will trawl through the evidence which underpins any policy or proposal which it has investigated to bring such evidence to public notice. Occasionally the evidence gathered or the topic itself will have attracted such attention that the public, via the media, will have had a thorough grounding in many aspects of the subject under scrutiny. Equally in such cases, members of the Assembly will be well informed.

Unfortunately these cases will be all too rare. Most scrutiny investigations will gather only occasional interest from the media or public, and the detail uncovered in their reports will go largely unnoticed. Thorough investigations, such as the recent work on the Solid Waste Strategy, will contain a wealth of often complex detail and argument. In the majority of cases, it will be only in the debate in the Chamber that the full panoply of arguments can be fully explored and understood.

It seems to me that to that to retain the ability to cut short any debate in which a great deal of investment of time, expertise and money has taken place to obtain the highest quality evidence through scrutiny would be a waste of such expenditure. Were any debate on such a scrutiny topic to be foreclosed, it would also suggest to those outside the chamber that the scrutiny process carries little weight or respect in the Assembly. That the Assembly is quite prepared to bring important debates to an end with a closure motion in cynical disregard for scrutiny was evidenced recently when members chose to close the Migration debate recently without having heard a single word from any of the members of relevant scrutiny panel.

I believe that as part of bedding in the culture change brought about by our adoption of scrutiny we need to offer some initial protection to the scrutiny process and to recognise its importance in the ministerial system. I believe this amendment goes some way towards these aims.

There are no financial or manpower implications for the States arising from this amendment.



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Made

[date to be inserted]

Coming into force

[date to be inserted]

THE STATES, in pursuance of Article 27 of the States of Jersey Law 1966,^[1] have made the following Act –

1 Standing Order 26A amended

In Standing Order 26A^[2] –

- (a) in paragraph (1), after the words “unless it appears to him” there shall be inserted the words “that the question is one which has been the subject of an inquiry and report by a Shadow Scrutiny Panel or”;
- (b) after paragraph (3) there shall be added the following paragraph –

“(4) In this Standing Order, “Shadow Scrutiny Panel” means a panel appointed pursuant to the arrangements in Projet No. 186 of 2003, adopted by the States on the 27th January 2004.”.

2 Citation

This Amendment may be cited as Amendment (No. 29) of the Standing Orders of the States of Jersey.

[1] Chapter 16.800.

[2] Chapter 16.800.15.