

STATES OF JERSEY



JERSEY COMMUNITY RELATIONS TRUST (P.120/2003): AMENDMENTS

Presented to the States and lodged au Greffe on 7th October 2003
by the Connétable of St. Helier

STATES GREFFE

JERSEY COMMUNITY RELATIONS TRUST (P.120/2003): AMENDMENTS

- (1) *renumber the proposition as (a) and after the words “within our community” insert the words –*
- “except that in the draft Constitution –
- (i) in paragraph 5.1, under the heading ‘Members’ there shall be inserted the words –
- ‘The States shall appoint one Trustee, being a member of the States of Jersey who is not a member of the Policy and Resources Committee, and who is committed to the objectives of the Jersey Community Relations Trust as set out in paragraph 3 of the Constitution.’;
- (ii) in paragraph 5.4, after the words ‘The Chair’ insert the words ‘, the Trustee appointed by the States’; and
- (iii) in paragraph 5.11, after subclause (b) insert the following subclause –
- ‘(c) a Trustee appointed by the States;**
- the States shall be asked to appoint another Trustee.’.
- (2) *after the proposition insert the following new paragraph –*
- “(b) to agree that, once the initial grant of £100,000 has been expended, any future revenue funding requirements of the Jersey Community Relations Trust shall be met from the cash limit of the Policy and Resources Committee”.

CONNÉTABLE OF ST. HELIER

REPORT

Few would argue with the objectives of the proposed Community Relations Trust as set out in the Report accompanying the Proposition. The Racial Discrimination Forum and its working groups have clearly done a great deal of work and have engaged in a lengthy and rigorous process of research and consultation since the States gave in principle approval to its objectives in 1996, so that their collective wish to set up a coordinating body in the form of a Trust carries considerable authority. There are 2 considerations in the proposal, however which have given me sufficient concern to propose amendments.

The establishment of the Community Relations Trust, we are told, will provide ‘a permanent structure, with *political backing* and *financial resources*’ without which ‘initiatives and incentives could only be continued in the present relatively fragmented manner.’

The purpose of the first of the amendments is to ensure that the political backing is sufficiently strong and broad-based. In view of the importance of anti-discrimination policies to the Island as a whole it is my view that the interests of the people of Jersey may not be adequately voiced through their elected representatives in this important area of Island life, when the only States representation on the Community Relations Trust is the appointed member of the Policy and Resources Committee. This amendment seeks simply to provide for the appointment by the States of a second States member to the Trust, who may well have more time to devote to this important work than the over-stretched members of the Policy and Resources Committee.

The second of the amendments is designed to address the Committee’s objective of achieving appropriate financial resources for the Trust. This is a more difficult matter, given the equivocation which goes on in the Report on the subject of financing the Trust.

We are told that –

‘After consideration of all factors and information presented, the Policy and Resources Committee ... agreed, following the difficult experience encountered with the funding arrangements for the Child Care Trust, that prior to registration before the Royal Court, funding for this new Trust should be secured for a secure period, and

decided, prior to lodging “au Greffe” a report and proposition, to seek the Finance and Economics Committee’s support for these proposals.’

No one could disagree with this aim, but much depends on the length of this ‘secure period’. What the Finance and Economics Committee is proposing does not seem to me to fit the bill at all. On this crucial funding issue we are first of all asked to believe that there are philanthropists lining up to part with their money –

‘It is anticipated that with the approval of the States Assembly to the establishment of the Community Relations Trust, finances will be forthcoming from certain private sector organisations. The Committee has noted that “One World Week” and other volunteers had raised funds for the Trust in the amount of £3,000 is testament to the community’s willingness to see the Trust established.’

This would be laughable were it not from the pens of the lead committee of the States. However, Policy and Resources promptly come down from cloud-cuckoo land to make the following observation –

‘However, it has become very clear that such private and voluntary sector contributions will not provide any significant ongoing funding...’

In the same breath the Committee appears to be informing the States that the private sector will, and will not, provide financial security for the Trust.

So what exactly are the States being asked to commit to? What are the financial implications of this proposition?

We are told that –

'at its meeting of 6th February 2003, the Policy and Resources Committee decided that the matter should be debated by the States, but that in order to minimise the call on public funds a revised budget request should be formulated.'

One can only hope that the Finance and Economics Committee received more than the 'back of a cigarette packet' figures that appear as Appendix 2 to the Report –

'Funding Requirements:

Start-up costs:

-		£
	Legal costs and fees	5,000
	Fit out/refurbishment	3,000
	Furniture and equipment	2,000
	Establishment	<u>2,000</u>
		<u>12,000</u>

Running costs: (18 months)

-		£	
	Staff costs	67,500	(Co-ordinator/admin. support)
	Telephone/I.C.T., etc.	2,500	
	Office rent, rates, etc.	14,000	
	Maintenance/repairs	1,500	
	Printing, publishing, etc.	<u>2,500</u>	
		<u>88,000</u>	

These sums neatly add up to the £100,000 which the Finance and Economics Committee appear willing to spend on the project. But what is the point of going to the expense and trouble of setting up a Community Relations Trust, and raising public expectations that discrimination in Jersey will be tackled in a determined as well as a comprehensive manner, when the financial arrangements consist of –

'a one-off grant to enable the Trust to be established and to cover the first 12-18 months' running costs, in the sum of £100,000. Thereafter, and once incorporated, it will be for the Trust to bring forward proposals for its ongoing funding requirements'?

As the proverb says, no-one sets out on a journey without counting the cost, and this is particularly true in the current economic climate. What the Policy and Resources Committee is effectively asking the States to do is to commit the taxpayer to embarking on a long journey, albeit a very important one, with no idea at all whether that journey will be sustainable after its first leg. In the absence of any concrete proposals we must assume that either the taxpayer will be asked to take on the cost in anything between 12 and 18 months' time – and having by that stage already committed £100,000 it would be difficult to turn back – or, if the Policy and Resources Committee is to be believed, the necessary ongoing revenue funding will have been conjured out of thin air.

I believe that if the States believe that the establishment of the Jersey Community Relations Trust is worthwhile it should direct the Policy and Resources Committee to make proper provision for it from within its cash limit, once the initial funding approved by the Finance and Economics Committee has been expended. To approve the proposition without these amendments is to bury our heads in the sand in respect of the financial implications of the proposition.

There are no manpower implications arising out of these amendments.